



WORLD FOOD SECURITY: CAN PRIVATE SECTOR R&D FEED THE POOR?

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INCENTIVES NEEDED FOR POORER FARMERS TO COMBAT LIVESTOCK DISEASE

A lack of cooperation between the private and public sector has allowed certain livestock diseases to thrive in many poor countries in Asia and Africa at a time when producers are coming under increased scrutiny due to the emergence of new animal diseases that can infect people and the need to respond to the global challenge of climate change..

This was the message given by Dr Doug Gray, Research Program Manager at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and formerly Regional Coordinator for the International Livestock Research Institute, speaking at the 2009 Crawford Fund International Conference "World Food Security: Can Private Sector R&D Feed the Poor?" in Parliament House Canberra on 27-28 October.

Other speakers including senior Federal politicians, senior representatives from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The UN World Food Program, A Green Revolution in Africa, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, DuPont and Monsanto, addressed the intersecting roles of the private, not for profit and public sectors in global food security and how to get the private sector better engaged for the benefit of the rural poor.

In welcoming delegates to the event, The Hon Neil Andrew AO, chairman of the Crawford Fund, noted that while some technologies, such as the mobile phone, flourish in the developing world, desperately needed agricultural technologies don't find their way to the countries that need them.

"While this is an issue giving rise to considerable controversy, especially questions such as intellectual property rights, multinational profits, the development of GMOs for the developing world and biopiracy, the private sector can and does provide much-needed R&D," he said.

Dr Gray told the conference about the vital role livestock plays within agricultural systems and how we can prevent the emergence of livestock diseases which infect people by developing new arrangements for public and private sector vaccine R&D and building demand for vaccines amongst poor livestock producers.

"The contributions of livestock to food security and poverty alleviation are coming under increasing international scrutiny, particularly as livestock producers are also challenged to respond to global warming and the emergence of new diseases."

"Research is vital to increase efficiency, to better understand the importance of livestock in agricultural systems, and to protect animals and people through disease control programs."

"For animal health research one of the challenges is to balance public and private efforts and ensure that the demands for livestock and human health are met," he said.

"There is a significant gap in the development of vaccines for a number of important livestock diseases, such as tick-borne diseases and viral diseases of poultry. Either the vaccines are not developed or poor livestock keepers have no access to them," he said.

Dr Gray explained that a leading new approach is the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVMed) which builds relationships at the outset of research and continually manages the partnership when results emerge, products are evaluated and opportunities arise.

A second approach is to improve the access of poor livestock keepers to the markets for their livestock which in turn provides access to animal health products and the technical support to use them effectively.

“Australia supports projects to increase market access for livestock products and animal health inputs in many Asian and African countries,” he said.

“For example, ACIAR-supported research projects are working closely with AusAID development initiatives in Indonesia for the future control of avian influenza through vaccination and village-based biosecurity”.

“The combination of these approaches: improving the supply of appropriate product from industry, and enhancing access of poor farmers to markets, builds new pathways for research to deliver benefits to the poor.”

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Speakers at this year's Crawford Fund annual event include:

- *The Hon Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs opening the event;*
- *The Hon Bob McMullan MP, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance making the inaugural Sir John Crawford Memorial Address;*
- *Ms Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the World Food Program;*
- *Dr Prabhu Pingali of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;*
- *Dr Marco Ferroni, Executive Director, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture;*
- *Dr Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa;*
- *Dr Bill Niebur, DuPont Vice President, Crop Genetics Research and Development*
- *Ms Janice Armstrong from Monsanto Company*
- *Professor Philip Pardey, an internationally renowned Australian agricultural economist*
- *Leaders from public good international and Australian agricultural research centres*

Further press [materials](#) and [background](#) on website or by contacting Cathy Reade, 0413575934

The Crawford Fund's mission is to increase Australia's engagement in international agricultural research, development and education for the benefit of developing countries and Australia.

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