



MEDIA ALERT
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ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AGRICULTURE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

**Scientist Behind “Doomsday” Seed Vault
to Address Climate Change and Conserving Crop Diversity**

The rising threat of climate change will present an array of serious challenges that threaten food security in the Asia-Pacific region, including increased risk of drought, higher salinity in coastal areas, energy and water constraints, and new threats to crops from pests and diseases. Unless the world puts a premium on breeding new varieties of crops resistant to the effects of climate change, we face food shortages far worse than the current crisis. Mitigating the effects of climate change and other serious challenges facing agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region will require the development of a new, efficient, rational global system that will focus on conserving unique diversity and making certain diversity is legally and practically available to all, forever.

Dr Cary Fowler, Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, leads the organization behind the opening of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, which opened in the Norwegian Arctic in February in order to safeguard the world's seed varieties. He will be speaking at the Crawford Fund annual conference “Agriculture in a Changing Climate” at Parliament House, Canberra on 3 September on the subject of *Conserving Crop Diversity: Navigating Politics and Climate Change to Create a Global System*. Information on the conference is at <http://www.crawfordfund.org/events/conference08.htm>

In addition to speaking on the important role of crop diversity in equipping crops for impending climate change, Dr Fowler is available from today to discuss the following:

- How will food security be threatened by climate change?
- What are the challenges facing crop diversity, what are the consequences, and what is the solution?
- What effort is underway to identify and save as many distinct crop varieties as possible?
- How the Global Crop Diversity Trust is working with others to preserve crops in the Pacific threatened and crucial for nutrition, food security and livelihoods?
- What does the impending global spread of wheat stem rust mean for Australia?

The Global Crop Diversity Trust (www.cropprtrust.org) has the mission to ensure the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide. Although crop diversity is fundamental to fighting hunger and to the very future of agriculture, funding is unreliable and diversity is being lost. The Trust is the only organization working worldwide to solve this problem.

Further info at www.crawfordfund.org or contact Cathy Reade on 0413 575 934. A range of press releases will be issued for the event and it is possible to prearrange interviews.

The Crawford Fund wishes to thank the sponsors for this event, including:

AusAID – the Australian Agency for International Development; Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research; Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Australian Government Department of Climate Change; CAB International; Centre for International Forestry Research; International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT); Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research; CSIRO Climate Adaptation National Research Flagship; Grains Research and Development Corporation; Industrial Research Limited; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation; South Australian Research and Development Institute; The World Bank.