INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IS AID THAT WORKS - FOR AUSTRALIA AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Collaborative projects on livestock, cereals, vegetables, fruit and aquaculture are just some examples of international agricultural research, involving NSW institutions and researchers, delivering benefits to NSW. Much of the aid-funded agricultural research work is undertaken through projects funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and is assisted by training funded by the Crawford Fund.

Current and pipeline ACIAR projects involving NSW organisations account for a total expenditure commitment of approx $136 million for 92 projects. This work has involved partnerships with researchers throughout Asia and the Pacific and is having a positive impact on NSW agriculture too.

“The reasons for Australia being involved in international research and development assistance are at once altruistic and self-interested with tangible and non-tangible benefits; and our involvement is of immense benefit to our international and trade relations.”
- The Hon John Kerin AM FTSE Chairman, The Crawford Fund and The Hon Tim Fischer AC FTSE Former Chairman, The Crawford Fund

The Crawford Fund’s purpose is to make more widely known the benefits to Australia and internationally from international agricultural research. The Fund conducts a range of public awareness activities, researches food security issues, arranges specialist training in Australia and overseas for developing country scientists, and conducts master classes for developing country personnel in key topics in agricultural R&D. Please contact us for more information:
The Crawford Fund 02 6188 4370 crawford@crawfordfund.org www.crawfordfund.org @CrawfordFund

Our Doing Well by Doing Good report is available on our website or by contacting the Crawford Fund

The Fund’s NSW committee supports NSW institutions and scientists to deliver training that benefits those involved in both developing countries and Australia. By working with the Fund, institutions can gain further rewarding involvement in international agricultural research. Are you involved in an agriculture for development project that would benefit from training for your developing country partner scientists? Contact:

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The Crawford Fund believes that international agricultural research delivers a wide range of benefits to Australian agriculture. It also holds the key to alleviating rural poverty in developing countries, opening the door to economic progress and serving our national interests of regional stability. By supporting agricultural research, Australia is “Doing Well by Doing Good.”

The Crawford Fund provides an avenue for Australia’s highly experienced agriculturalists to exchange knowledge with their counterparts in developing countries.

“Supporting agricultural research for food security provides Australia with benefits worth more than we spend on it through our aid program.”
- The Hon Neil Andrew AO, horticulturalist, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and Chair of the Doing Well by Doing Good Task Force
Biosecurity and exotic disease readiness

Working overseas provides scientists and students with a first-hand opportunity to observe and treat diseases not currently in NSW, without risk of introducing them here. Such experience is crucial for the early and accurate detection of biosecurity threats and builds our capacity to deal with exotic disease outbreaks.

For example, the citrus industry now has a better awareness and readiness for devastating diseases such as Huanglongbing (HLB) disease (citrus greening) which is present in countries such as Indonesia and Bhutan. NSW DPI researchers are a partner in this work and staff from University of Western Sydney assisted with the Fund’s 2011 Master Class on HLB. Vet students from the University of Sydney have the opportunity to visit ACIAR livestock projects in Lao PDR and Cambodia. The projects have defined Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) ‘hotspots’ in the Mekong region, enabled more targeted FMD vaccination and biosecurity programs, and have been assisted by training supported by the Crawford Fund.

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A tangible benefit to growers in NSW is the unique Indo-Australian wheat germplasm developed. By crossing Indian and Australian parents, developed in isolation over the past two decades, we’ve been able to leap ahead 20 years. These materials have shown remarkable adaptation at the University of Sydney’s Narrabri Research Station. The new materials have also been accessed by commercial wheat breeding companies for NSW farmers.

Creation of useful networks

An outcome of international agricultural research is the establishment of professional networks that enable the two way flow of information beyond the duration of a project. A few examples follow:

ACIAR funded rice and maize productivity and sustainability projects in North Korea have helped maintain the capacity of a NSW DPI and CSU multidisciplinary team and assisted them to develop collaborative links.

A long-term outcome of a fish health project in Indonesia involving the University of Sydney is the development of a broad network of aquatic health experts in Indonesia and NSW, facilitated by a program of information exchange and hands-on training. The Fund’s Master Class on aquaculture feeds in PNG, involving NSW DPI, has further assisted with this fisheries network and capacity building.

ACIAR, the Fund and NSW institutions have been using their international networks to place young Australian researchers as volunteers in agriculture for development projects, which is invaluable in assisting them in their careers and work back in Australia.

Improved reputations and careers

The number of our scientists involved with international research centres is like Australia’s Olympic medal tally, with a disproportionately high number represented, relative to our population. Working on international projects broadens scientists’ experience and reputations which can lead to being able to attract more funding and be involved in more projects. Just one example of this is research on biofertilisers for rice, too costly to run in Australia, which was conducted in Vietnam with the involvement of the University of Sydney. A number of PhDs resulted from the work, one of the NSW researchers is now a leader in quality control of Australian microbial products, and the work attracted a subsequent $250,000 World Bank grant to promote this technology in the Mekong Delta. Ten publications in respected international journals were also produced.