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FACING THE UNCOMFORTABLE CHALLENGE OF FOOD SECURITY

What are the innovative approaches needed to overcome the impediments to crop production we now face, particularly if many important but less commercial crops are to remain productive?

This is the question that crop diversity conservation advocate Dr Cary Fowler will address on 10 August in the 30th Sir John Crawford Memorial address. Dr Fowler's presentation will open the Crawford Fund's annual food security conference titled *The Business of Food Security: Profitability, Sustainability and Risk* in Canberra 10-12 August which will focus on the importance of collaboration and partnership between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to achieve sustainable intensification and improved food security.

Fowler is best known as the "father" of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault which provides ultimate security to more than 864,000 unique crop varieties, the raw material for all future plant breeding and crop improvement efforts. He headed the international committee for its establishment and he chairs the Council that oversees its operations. Most recently he was nominated by US President Obama to the Board for International Food and Agriculture Development, which advises USAID on agriculture and higher education issues pertinent to food insecurity in developing countries.

"Providing adequate food for a growing population has been humanity's persistent challenge for millennia. Today, agriculture faces threats that are arguably more daunting than in any previous era.

"The basic components of food production—land, water, nutrients, climate and crops—all appear poised to undermine, rather than improve, food security and thus threaten national security and peace.

"This historically unprecedented combination of challenges to agriculture will test political leadership and governments' ability to plan, prioritise and mobilise," Dr Fowler said.

"Innovative approaches will be necessary if many important but less commercial crops are to remain productive, particularly in developing countries," he said.

Other speakers will include:

- Mr Anthony Pratt, Executive Chairman, Visy Industries
- HE Gerda Verburg, Chair of the UN Committee on World Food Security & of the World Economic Forum Council on Food Security and Nutrition
- Dr Martin Kropff, Director General, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre

The Crawford Fund wishes to thank the supporters of this event including:

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