

MEDIA RELEASE

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WASTE NOT, WARM NOT

Both required in the complexity of food waste and climate change

With as many as 800 million people still undernourished, of whom about 160 million are stunted young children, wasting food is in many ways unconscionable. What are the research and policy solutions needed to reduce losses and waste, improve livelihoods of small producers and benefit the environment?

This will be the focus of the keynote opening address by Dr Karen Brooks, Director of the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets to the Crawford Fund's annual food security conference on 29 and 30 August. Titled 'Waste Not, Want Not: The Circular Economy to Food Security,' the event brings international and Australian specialists together to draw national attention to food loss and waste issues in production, in getting product to market, and in the management and reuse of waste, with special presentations on the role of supermarkets and the private sector.

"Much of the discussion of food loss and waste has been predicated on the assumption that the shortfall in food for the hungry can be made up by better management and distribution of existing supplies, and somehow substitute for investment in increased production," Dr Brooks said.

"The assumption is in part borne out by empirical evidence, but as is often the case, the full picture is more complex."

"For starters, we are a long way from a realistic measurement of food loss and waste. And people who could benefit are often a continent away from where food is lost or wasted."

"Moreover, discussion of food loss and waste in terms of feeding the hungry misses the environmental benefits associated with better management of existing production."

"Food systems that lose and waste less will generate fewer greenhouse gases and contribute less to global warming. The economics of reduced loss and waste creates both winners and losers, but the environmental calculus has only winners," she said.

Dr Brooks will discuss the research and policy solutions needed to reduce losses and waste, improve livelihoods of small producers and benefit the environment.

A set of innovative case studies from Australia and around the world will be presenting showing positive examples of what can be achieved to reduce food loss and waste and reuse wasted food.

Other speakers will include:

- Professor Louise Fresco, President of Wageningen University and Research, addressing 'The Future of Food' and her new book "Hamburgers in Paradise"
- Mr Daniel Lagger, Executive Director, Technical and Production, Nestlé Oceania will explain how the private sector can help with food waste
- Mr Brian Lipinski, Food Program, World Resources Institute who was involved in the development of the new international Food Loss & Waste Protocol, will highlight how to reduce on-farm losses.