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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **SAVING FOOD FROM THE FARM TO THE FORK**

#### **Wastage in rich and poor countries alike**

Globally, about one-third of food produced for human consumption every year is either lost or wasted while moving from farm to fork. This occurs in wealthy and poor countries alike for reasons ranging from poor roads and refrigeration through to sheer neglect.

This topic will be explored by Professor Ashok Gulati, Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, in his address 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.

"While in developing countries food losses occur due to poor infrastructure, in developed countries it is wasted at the retail and consumer end due to higher standards or sheer neglect," said Professor Gulati, who is a prominent Indian economist and former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, the advisory body of the Government of India on food supplies and pricing policies.

"Apart from leading to less food available for all, food loss and wastage entails loss of precious scarce resources and adversely affects the environment with greater GHG emissions. Wealthy and poor countries need to do a lot to transform this situation," he said.

"Saving the already produced food is much more cost effective and sustainable than trying to produce more and more to rot."

"Food can be saved by building strong, efficient, compressed and reliable value chains in developing countries through infrastructural investment, institutional changes and innovation in technology, products, practices and policies."

"The role of packaging at the farm level before moving the produce for processing needs to be recognized in poor countries where packaging is minimal," he said.

For wealthier countries Professor Gulati says the focus needs to be on better production management, de-emphasizing appearance standards, more explanatory date marking systems and raising awareness among consumers about better buying, cooking and recycling methods.

The conference will have a set of innovative case studies from Australia and around the world to highlight positive examples of what can be achieved to reduce food loss and waste and reuse wasted food.

Other speakers will include:

- Dr Karen Brooks, Director, CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets, International Food Policy Research Institute who will look at the research and policy solutions needed to reduce losses and waste, improve livelihoods of small producers and benefit the environment
- Professor Louise Fresco, President of Wageningen University and Research, addressing 'The Future of Food' and her new book "Hamburgers in Paradise"
- Mr Brian Lipinski, World Resources Institute who was involved in the development of the new international Food Loss and Waste Protocol, will highlight how to reduce on-farm losses