



The Crawford Fund
Wetlands House
Unit 7, 1 Dairy Road
Fyshwick ACT 2609

www.crawfordfund.org

Contact: Cathy Reade | 0413 575 934

MEDIA RELEASE

Media are welcome to attend

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UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL AGRICULTURE FOR FARMERS, THE ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND ECONOMIES

Millions of smallholder farmers do not have direct access to key inputs and market information but digital innovation in agriculture could fundamentally transform their productivity and profitability.

This will be a key message by Dr David Bergvinson, Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, when he speaks at the 2017 Crawford Fund annual conference *'Transforming Lives and Livelihoods: The Digital Revolution in Agriculture'*, in Canberra on 7-8 August. It will be opened by The Hon Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister, on 8 August in Parliament House.

Speaking on unlocking the potential of digital agriculture, Dr Bergvinson said "New technologies have proven effects in shortening the value chain from farm to fork and reducing costs. However, their impacts on nutrition, rural economies and natural resource management also need to be developed."

"With climate change, we need to move even faster to deliver solutions," said Dr Bergvinson, who previously headed the Digital Agriculture Initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

"We need to help farmers tap into the digital and big data revolution to make the best decisions in managing risks and economic opportunities," he noted. In his address, he will be explaining these opportunities, the impediments to their uptake and how these may be overcome.

Solutions are being developed through the ICRISAT [Innovation Hub](#) which brings together entrepreneurs, funders and scientists to get demand driven innovations to farmers faster using digital technology.

Dr Bergvinson provided examples of their partnerships on mobile applications:

- with Progressive Environmental & Agricultural Technologies on its Plantix app to diagnose crop damage using pictures taken on farmers' mobile phones. Plantix has nearly 500,000 downloads on Google Play.
- with Microsoft to develop a 'Sowing app' that combines climate advisory services with a personalized village dashboard. It's helped farmers in Andhra Pradesh improve yields by 30%.

About ICRISAT

The **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics** (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and several millions of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT innovations help the dryland poor move from poverty to prosperity by harnessing markets while managing risks – a strategy called Inclusive Market-Oriented Development (IMOD). ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana, India, with two regional hubs and six country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It is a member of the CGIAR System Organization www.icrisat.org; For ICRISAT's scientific information <http://EXPLOREit.icrisat.org>

CGIAR is a global agricultural research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by 15 research Centers who are members of the CGIAR in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations. www.cgiar.org