



THE CRAWFORD FUND
For a Food Secure World

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MEDIA RELEASE

Media are welcome to attend

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INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY APPROACHES SET TO TRANSFORM GLOBAL AGRICULTURE

Globally, the agriculture sector lags behind other sectors in the development and uptake of digital services needed for safe and sustainable food production. Innovative platforms involving digital solutions, based on experimentation, customer feedback and services that can be scaled and repurposed are key to the sector's transformation for food security and greater profit.

This will be the key focus of Dr Mike Briers AO, Chief Executive of the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre, when he speaks at *Transforming Lives and Livelihoods: The Digital Revolution in Agriculture*, the 2017 Crawford Fund annual conference in Canberra on 07-08 August. The conference will be addressed by The Hon Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister, on 8 August at 9am in Parliament House.

"Australia is lagging our international competitors in preparing for a digital future. Lean start ups, characterised less by traditional business plans and more by customer-focused testing, offer great potential to transform the agricultural sector in advanced economies and developing countries alike," said Dr Briers, who is also co-founder of the Internet of Things Alliance Australia.

"Beyond the obvious concerns over internet connectivity, real challenges to digital readiness in the agriculture sector the world over include the absence of a so-called "knowledge infrastructure" and a process to ensure demand-driven products which will encourage greater adoption, but this is changing rapidly. By incorporating agile methods, Food Agility CRC will embed deliberate service innovation in an environment that otherwise can be dominated by entrepreneurial hopes and fears."

"Digital technology approaches which bring agile methods and more collaboration to tackle pressing global challenges are key for the agricultural sector. This is the case for the extremes of highly sophisticated precision agriculture in Australia through to small family farms in the developing world, which all face highly complex and volatile conditions," said Dr Briers.

"Global food production needs to double by 2050, presenting tremendous opportunities for the Australian food industry as well as critical humanitarian challenges. The application of digital technologies can deliver exponential productivity, sustainability and innovation gains."

Dr Briers is providing an overview of opportunities for transformational change in agriculture with case studies also being presented by Salah Sukkarieh, Professor of Robotics and Intelligent Systems at the University of Sydney, who is working in Indonesia using data analytics and robotics for food and nutrition security, and by Dr Pham Thi Sen, Researcher at the Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute in Vietnam, who is using farm level data for decision making, evaluation, traceability and quality assurance.

About the Food Agility CRC

The Food Agility CRC was launched in March '17 and has 54 partners across the food value chain. It is funded with \$50m over ten years through the Federal Government's CRC program. It aims to create digitally-enabled solutions by focusing on 3 critical components - hardware, software and liveware; by addressing the sensor and communication technologies that underpin data across food value chains; transforming poorly designed, utilised and connected data into information and insights for decision making; and ensuring best practices are integrated into the workflows of governments, industry and consumers, and building a capable workforce.