

MEDIA RELEASE

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KNOWLEDGE REVOLUTION TO BENEFIT AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Farmers, even in the remotest areas, are now able to benefit from ‘big data’ thanks to technological advances allowing knowledge to flow across the world with accuracy, speed and volume. Small-scale farmers are better situated than ever to capitalise on this knowledge revolution, using it to shape agricultural practices and move beyond subsistence livelihoods to reach a higher quality of life.

This knowledge revolution will be the key focus of a keynote address by Andre Laperriere, Executive Director of the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) initiative at *Transforming Lives and Livelihoods: The Digital Revolution in Agriculture*, the 2017 Crawford Fund annual conference in Canberra on 7-8 August. The conference will be opened by The Hon Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister, on 8 August at 9am in Parliament House.

“For many years ‘big data’ has been considered by many as the privilege of the few. Because of its volume, it could only be handled by large corporations, essentially based in the west; because of its complexity, it required high level specialists to manage it, and because of the cost of putting it together, it rested out of reach of the common person’s purse. This has changed.”

“Three digital revolutions - the internet connecting the world; affordable smart devices bringing information to our fingertips; and now, open data allowing knowledge to flow to all corners of the world, have taken ‘big data’ to the farmer,” said Mr Laperriere.

“The world of agriculture is one of the key beneficiaries of this digital revolution.”

“We are seeing governments, researchers, the private sector, consumers and farmers sharing their data in agriculture. Farmers are voicing their needs and triggering innovation tailored specifically to their capacity, resulting in affordable and manageable options, and moving them out of subsistence farming.

“Globally this means that continents where agriculture is still the key development engine will see their economy improving, hunger decrease and innovation flourish. This will lead the world to overcome emerging food security challenges ahead of us, and beyond, contribute greatly to allow developing countries to reach their full potential,” Mr Laperriere concluded.

In his presentation Mr Laperriere described this process with concrete examples of where and how big data is now used by the small farmers and more generally how open data is changing the face of global agriculture.