

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN FARMS GOING FROM CARBON EMISSIONS TO CARBON SINKS

According to an UN-backed study, more than one-third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by human activity can be attributed to the way we produce, process and package food. But farmers in Australia are leading the charge in reducing emissions on-farm, based on sound science, and are demonstrating a way forward for policy makers to assist in achieving their objectives.

This is the key message of The Hon John Anderson, Chair of the Crawford Fund and former Deputy Prime Minister, at *"What Can Farmers Do? Farmer-led, Science-Based GHG Mitigation"*, being held this week in Canberra and with an additional online audience of over 350 from more than 25 countries. The event is co-hosted by the Crawford Fund and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research to focus on how innovation in Australia could inform farmers in developing countries.

"It's such a good-news and win-win story. Australian farmers are already using strategies that offer real climate change impacts for Australia and our neighbours, but also for their bottom lines, their families, and the globe," said Mr Anderson.

"In hearing exactly what science has to offer and what farmers' agricultural and land management strategies can do, and are doing, to mitigate GHG emissions, it's clear that these practices are making a difference and should be implemented more widely across Australia and around the world. We need policy and capacity building to broaden awareness and uptake," he said.

"It's quite normal for farmers to learn from their neighbours – we want farmers in our neighbouring countries, facing the same tough climatic and soil conditions as we do, to learn what is working here in Australia to reduce agriculture's impact."

Fiona Simson, President of the National Farmers Federation and chair of the Commission for International Agricultural Research is presenting on just how much the Australian farm sector contributes to reducing GHG emissions at home and abroad, and other innovative farmers presenting on how they are already reducing agriculture's GHG footprint.

"We have farmers getting emissions down through forages and new feeds for livestock, by changing livestock and manure management practices, through improved pasture management, by shifting to conservation tillage, reducing the amount of nitrogen fertilizer applied to crops, and planting trees," said Mr Anderson.

"Something I believe is a particular win-win is improving soil carbon levels - a win for farmers who benefit from improved soil fertility and a win for the climate change policies. When measurement of soil carbon gets cheaper, soil carbon sequestration offers real opportunities for farmers to benefit from carbon credits traded on international markets."

"We can't decarbonise overnight, but some aspects of food production are likely to continue to cause some emissions while other parts of agriculture are likely, in the future, to reduce them. This reflects the fact that there will always be trade-offs within sectors and between sectors, including within and beyond Australia's shores," he said.

"We want the community to understand just how much Australian farmers are already achieving on their farms, and also the importance of cooperation and investment in research activities to reduce agricultural GHG emissions," concluded Mr Anderson.

The event coincides with the Council meeting of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural GHG Emissions, with 64 member countries and 24 global partners, and was also sanctioned as an official Independent Dialogue of the UN's Food Systems Summit.

