

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: 9am 13 December 2021

Media are welcome to attend. Interviews can be prearranged for Mon, 13 or Tues, 14 December. All media releases will be available [here](#) and the full program is [online](#).

BIOSECURITY - IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

The interconnectedness of people, international markets and biosecurity threats is illustrated perfectly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Biosecurity incursions are not rare or new, and inevitably more will come. Sustainable funding of the biosecurity system will allow the kinds of long-term investments into infrastructure and data capture that will be essential to make our efforts more targeted and effective.

The need to change the way we think about biosecurity will be the focus of an overview presentation by Professor Andrew Robinson, CEO of the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA) at the University of Melbourne on 14 December to the 2021 Crawford Fund annual conference, titled *Food & Nutrition Security – The Biosecurity, Health, Trade Nexus*.

"Biosecurity is the sum of the actions that we all take to prevent generational threats to human health, to agriculture-driven economies, to unique and fragile ecosystems, and to our many ways of life."

"In analysing the threats to food security, nutrition and human health that arise from inadequate biosecurity understanding and management, more attention is needed on how we can all be involved in materially reduce biosecurity risks for the land-manager and the landscape," said Prof Robinson.

"Invasive pests are out there: we want Australia's biosecurity system to protect us and the things that we care about, including agriculture and the economy, animal and plant health, the environment and social amenity, and human health. It's everyone's business," he said.

Professor Robinson is well placed to review the current and future impacts of emerging biosecurity threats to plant and animal production and human health and biodiversity as an eminent specialist in targeted research and the development of risk analysis tools.

"The increasing interconnectedness of consumers and international markets means that we are now all stakeholders of and participants in the biosecurity system. Changing trade patterns, changing global alliances, and changing climate all press us to think and act today," he said.

"If we allow biosecurity to be someone else's problem, trouble will come to our shores because biosecurity is not a zero-sum game - strengthening our neighbours' systems strengthens ours too."

"The biosecurity system has to be all of us. We need to change the way we think about biosecurity as a system of organisations, as a regulatory framework, and as an outcome."

"Fall army worm, myrtle rust, and red imported fire ant are just some of the pests causing headaches in Australia," said Professor Robinson, who will review the current and future impacts of emerging biosecurity threats, outline trends in the emergence and spread of plant and zoonotic diseases, and identify key factors that both promote and reduce disease spread.

Other speakers at the event include:

- **Dr Agnes Kalibata**, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to the 2021 Food Systems Summit
- **Su McCluskey**, Special Representative for Australian Agriculture
- **Professor Prabhu Pingali**, Founding Director, Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition
- **Dr Rob Horsch**, Advisor, Global Commission on Adaptation at World Resources Institute
- **Rob Kaan**, Managing Director for Australia & New Zealand, Corteva Agriscience

- ENDS -

