

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOW BAD WILL WE LET THE FOOD CRISES GET?

As the Russia-Ukraine war continues to degrade global food security, the Australian who leads the global effort on improving wheat production has set out the concrete actions needed by governments and investors to mitigate the food crisis, stabilise supply and transition to greater agrifood system resilience.

Dr Alison Bentley leads the Global Wheat Program at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and will be addressing the Crawford Fund's international conference *Celebrating Agriculture for Development – Outcomes, Impacts and the Way Ahead* this week in Parliament House, Canberra. The conference will also be addressed by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator The Hon, Murray Watt.

"The broad food security impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war highlight the fragility of the global food supply, but the war is only one of a multitude of problems that we'll be facing for many years to come. Few will remain unaffected," said Dr Alison Bentley, who was the lead author in a recently published related article in *Nature Food*.

"More than 2.5 billion people worldwide consume wheat-based foods. We need to move beyond defining the problem to implementing practical actions to ensure stable food supply, safeguard the livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people and bring resilience to our global agrifood system, and we will all benefit," she said.

"The first priority is to mitigate the immediate crisis by boosting wheat production by bundling existing agronomic and breeding improvements and sustainable farming practices, just as Australia and other wealthy countries are doing. This will reduce dependence on imported grain and fertilizer in poorer countries."

"We have learned since the Green Revolution that this must be done within agro-ecological boundaries, with high-yielding disease-resistant wheat and by mainstreaming capacity for pest and disease monitoring. Importantly, we also need to address climate change, gender disparities, nutrition insufficiency and increase investment in agricultural research," she concluded.

The Fund's annual conference will bring together international and Australian specialists to look at the mutual benefit and impacts of investment in global food security and poverty alleviation, and consider the effects of emerging threats including climate change and changing geo-political conditions on agricultural production, food chains and the environment.

Other speakers include international affairs specialist Allan Gyngell, climate change and security specialist Dr Robert Glasser and renowned international economist Dr Phil Pardey.

Other press releases are available [here](#).

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