



Doing Well by Doing Good – benefits to developing countries and Australia from investment in international agricultural research

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International investment in international agricultural research (IAR) fed 5 billion more people over the last 60 years as global population rose from 3 to 8 billion and reduced the proportion of the hungry and malnourished. Australia's contribution to IAR and capacity building have facilitated the development of sustainable agricultural industries, gender equity, adaptation to pest and disease threats, and helped countries meet UN Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the investment has assisted in maintaining the economic competitiveness of Australian farmers through access to new plant varieties and contributed to early recognition and mitigation strategies for emerging pest and diseases. Similarly, Australia's significant contribution brings diplomatic and soft power outcomes regionally. This presentation will detail the benefits across the above areas and highlight some outcomes relevant to quarantine and plant protection.

Agricultural development has been shown by the World Bank to be the best way to reduce poverty and raise the GDP of the world's poorest countries. Unfortunately, Australia's budget for this work has fallen recently to 2.5% of our international assistance budget. This is concerning in that the statistics demonstrate that there are still 2.3 billion people in the world (31.9% female; 27.6% males) who were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021 and that we are unlikely to achieve the UN SDG 2 of Zero Hunger by 2030. Food insecurity can lead to social unrest and political instability with significant impacts on developed countries.