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**Global food security in a riskier world.
Diversification for resilient food and nutrition systems**

The Hon John Anderson AC

Chair, The Crawford Fund



I welcome you all. It's terrific to have you here for what promises to be a very interesting day indeed. I particularly welcome some groups here today. First, the 50 or so conference scholars. The Crawford Fund has brought them here to experience our conference and special mentoring, networking and learning activities. The scholar program has now been running for quite a few years and has built up real 'steam'. It's tremendously energising to meet with you, to talk with you, to hear how much you are enjoying interacting with your mentors and how you are benefiting from the whole program.

We live in an age of great change and a lot of anxiety, or even a feeling that it's all becoming 'too much'. Much of that centres on the challenges of climate change. To the members of the audience who are younger or just starting your career, I want to encourage you to see the challenges before you as challenges to be *overcome*, to be tackled with *enthusiasm* and with *boldness* and with *positivity* – and in a context of *teamwork*. As graduates, in science or other disciplines, you have been (I hope and trust) taught to think logically, to follow the evidence and deduce sensible ways forward. This is very important in an age where there is – in my opinion – too much 'feeling' and too little 'clear thinking'. Too much emotion often will lead to despair and a reluctance to think clearly about best ways forward.

You, conference scholars, have been trained to think. Your mentors are people who have thought clearly and learned how to use scientific methods well, and I think that's to be greatly encouraged. The world needs you and your care for your fellow human beings.

A special welcome also to this year's RAID Network members who have been helping us with the scholar program. Also, welcome to the group here from Western Sydney University who have made the effort to get here. And welcome to the high school student from Queensland who is here with his dad. He has just won a Department of Agriculture award related to a competition that our Queensland committee has been supporting for over ten years. Finally, welcome to this year's two keynote listeners from RAID: Camilla Humphries and Anna Mackintosh.

This year our conference is a great opportunity to celebrate the 10th birthday of the RAID Network: Researchers in Agriculture for International Development. It is a program of the Crawford Fund and an important part of our Next Gen activities.

The 2023 conference

Our conference this year looks at global food security in a riskier world. Three prominent risks – the three C's (COVID, conflict and climate change) – have been at the forefront of our thinking in recent years and were certainly at the centre of our discussions last year. The Ukraine conflict, the Russian bans on Ukrainian food exports, the impact on energy prices globally and on supply chains.



Farmers, especially, are currently very conscious that this supply problem more generally, coupled with inflation, almost needs to be added to the three C's as a category of its own. The way our costs have exploded over the last couple of years is a real problem for farmers everywhere and is an integral part of the problem of food affordability as we have heard in this year's Sir John Crawford Memorial Address. It is having impacts on the poor, but also making difficulties for farmers everywhere.

Climatic issues continue to concern us, in terms of variability and our lack of capacity to accurately model what will happen, and when and where; and where areas of lesser production and of greater production will be coupled. There may be a sudden emergence of what some people are already calling 'depopulation bombs': that is, that some of the most densely populated parts of the world may have huge declines in population over coming decades, while others continue to expand very rapidly. It is a very challenging age – one that should excite young researchers, to help us deal with the challenges.

The three C's demonstrate how sensitive the task of feeding 8 billion people is going to be. It's not going to be a straightforward environment. It's clear from the current global situation that while some of the above risks are widespread, others are localised. This suggests that all countries need to prioritise different mitigation actions and adaptation actions, and to ensure they have adequate policy frameworks, institutional capacity and participatory mechanisms to allow agriculture to adapt to threats to production at the regional, local and on-farm levels.

However, responses need to be considered in the context of other off-farm factors such as labour supply, market and trade drivers, and the broader issues of environmental sustainability. Consequently, the goal of this year's Crawford Fund annual conference is to consider how farmers the world over, who are generally facing similar significant risks, can understand those risks and adapt and diversify. Diversified agricultural production systems have the potential to lead to greater biophysical and economic resilience, and thus sustainability for all. Furthermore, diversification of production options on smallholder farms may also increase the potential for improving nutritional options for consumers.

Therefore, key conference themes today examine on- and off-farm risks and solutions, and policy settings that will facilitate the development of resilient farming systems.

With some difficulty, the conference team has chosen a small sample of impacts and successes and on-farm and off-farm risks, focusing, as usual, on farming systems in developing countries. What is happening in terms of production and markets will not only have a major impact on food and nutrition elsewhere, but also may provide important lessons on appropriate ways in which to improve resilience.

Speakers, and thanks

We are looking forward to hearing from our terrific line-up of speakers today: Dr Cary Fowler, the US Special Envoy on Food Security; Professor Kym Anderson AC who was last night presented with this year's Sir John Crawford medal; Dr Wendy Umberger, who three weeks ago began her important role as the chair of ACIAR; and we are honoured to have speakers from the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Australian National University, The University of Western Australia, Cargill Asia Pacific and Incitec Pivot.

I thank our Chairs for today's sessions, whose organisations are loyal supporters of our conferences: the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Grains Research & Development Corporation; and CSIRO.

And the Crawford Fund would also like to thank the many supporters of our event, who are acknowledged by name on the conference website and in the forthcoming Proceedings of the conference. Many of them not only support our conference but are also involved in the Crawford Fund's training and Next Gen activities. We very much appreciate their ongoing collaboration.

This year's speakers will show that if we want to really start to ensure global security and food security going forward, we need to bring together specialists from many disciplines who will look at agriculture from different and overlapping perspectives. That way, we can work together to deliver effective on-ground sustainable solutions for food and nutrition security through the supply chain to the consumer.

Sir John Crawford and the 2023 Crawford Fund Medal

Sir John Crawford was a scientist and a statesman, with a deep compassion for the less fortunate. Churchill once quipped that if you want to understand the future, you've got to understand the past. The business of feeding people, particularly in our part of the world in the 1940s and 1950s, must have looked absolutely daunting and impossible, and a challenge that a lot of people would have walked away from. But Sir John Crawford, and others like him, did not. His story is a remarkable one of courage and heroism and optimism in the face of great difficulties. We need to keep in mind the stories of our heroes. They do matter, particularly when you're feeling a bit grim and a bit overwhelmed by the challenges that face us.

The Crawford Fund Medal recognises people who have made a considerable and continued contribution to international agricultural research. This year's medal was presented, last evening 4 September, before the Sir John Crawford Memorial Address, to one of today's speakers: leading international trade and development economist Emeritus Professor Kym Anderson, Companion of the Order of Australia.

Kym's work has been prodigious, varied and long recognised for its quality and its significance in Australia and abroad. In addition to his long association with The University of Adelaide and his lengthy and continuing connection with the Australian National University here in Canberra, Kym Anderson has held senior research leadership positions at the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, and a large number of significant research advisory positions, including in Australia. He has Chaired the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) – which had Sir John Crawford as its foundation Chair: the vision of that institute is 'a world free of hunger and malnutrition', and its mission is to provide research-based policy solutions that sustainably reduce poverty and hunger and malnutrition. Kym now Chairs the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, and we will hear of its work today. Kym was also a Commissioner on the Commission for International Agricultural Research from 2011 to 2014 and he was President of ACIAR's International Policy Advisory Council from 2014 to 2020.



The wording on the medal certificate says: 'In recognition of Professor Kym Anderson's immense contribution to the development of economics in the overlapping fields of international trade and political economy, with a strong focus on agriculture and products of importance to developing economies; and his strong governance and advisory roles with the CGIAR and with ACIAR'.

John Anderson has been a long-serving member of the Board of the Crawford Fund and has been Chair of the Board since 2017. He was recently appointed Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List for eminent service to rural and regional development, to leadership in international agricultural research and food security, to social commentary, and through contributions to not-for-profit organisations. John Anderson is the former Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party of Australia (1999–2005); Minister for Primary Industries and Energy (1996–1998); Minister for Transport and Regional Development (1998–2005); served on Expenditure Review (Budget) Committee, National Security Committee and Standing Environment Committee while in Cabinet. He was the member for Gwydir, New South Wales 1989 until his retirement in 2005. John has returned to farming, and is also active in the not-for-profit sector.