

**“WHAT CAN FARMERS DO?”**  
**FARMER-LED, SCIENCE-BASED GREENHOUSE GAS MITIGATION:**  
**STRATEGIES FOR AUSTRALIA AND ABROAD**  
**TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021**

## **Introductory Statement by The Hon John Anderson, Chair, Crawford Fund**

We will now have an Acknowledgement of Country:

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which we are today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this event. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and recognise and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the land.*

Welcome to all physically present and those on-line. Special welcome to all our speakers for giving up their valuable time.

Special thanks to our partner ACIAR for encouraging us to hold this workshop to coincide with their chairing of the Council of the Global Research Council on Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Agriculture and note that Andrew Campbell at ACIAR is soon to take on the chairing role.

I'd also like to make mention of the diverse group who we have managed to assemble in this room and online. We have represented in the room some key organisations active in the climate change policy and research space including ATSE, NFF, Australian Farm Institute, CSIRO, ANU, Departments of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, Meat and Livestock Australia, the GRDC and private sector organisations, and of course the RAID Network.

Online we have over people registered from around Australia and I especially want to welcome those from so many countries and time zones making a special effort to be here including France, PNG, Nigeria, Timor Leste, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia, Uganda, Bhutan, Philippines, India, Vietnam Nepal, USA, Solomon Islands, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Russia, Fiji, and Nigeria.

I'd also like to note that this workshop has also been sanctioned as an official Australian Independent Dialogue of the UN's Food System Summit. These dialogues are aimed at highlighting a diversity of issues and views that will be important in defining our future food systems.

Consequently, this workshop is incredibly timely given an increasing national focus on greenhouse gas mitigation in agriculture. This focus is often farmer led and based on sound science. That is what we want to discuss today.

Total emissions from agriculture, excluding farm energy and transport use and land-use change, were estimated to be 13% of total Australian emissions in 2017. This share has fallen slightly in recent years, largely as a result of drought's impact on cattle and sheep numbers, but it is projected to increase by about 1.2% per year in the future. However, this does not include emissions from land use change and fuel costs associated with agriculture.

Globally, the entire food chain accounts for 26% of emissions. If we are to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, or before, then all sectors of the economy have to do their part. Improving soil carbon levels is a win for farmers who benefit from improved soil physical, chemical and biological fertility and a win for the policies aimed at greenhouse gas abatement and to keep global warming at <1.5-2.0 degrees C. We can't decarbonise overnight, but there are trade-offs to be made between sectors of the economy to help us move to net zero emissions in the next 20-30 years. Agriculture won't be immune from required actions and trade-offs.

In fact, many farmers in Australia and in our region are already leading the charge in this regard. The Crawford Fund and ACIAR have invited four leading Australian farmers (Fiona Simson, Lucinda Corrigan, Mark Wootton and Terry McCosker) to talk to us about what they see as both actual and possible ways forward to reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas footprint. They will be followed by two leading scientists who will further consider key issues and opportunities in both animal production and cropping systems.

Given that Australian farmers have a long history of adaptability to often hostile climatic conditions, and given both ACIAR and the Crawford Fund's overseas focus, we will then consider how what we have learned here may be used overseas in similar climatic environments. Australia's Ambassador for the Environment (Jamie Isbister) will highlight just how our contributions may fit into the international frameworks around climate change.

I will now welcome and hand over to Fiona Simson, Chair of the Commission for International Agricultural Research and President of the National Farmers Federation, who is joining us online to explain how she believes Australian farm sector can contribute to reducing GHG emissions at home and abroad. Fiona will be followed by Prof. Andrew Campbell, who will explain the role of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases