

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### HEALTH & AGRICULTURE MONOLITHS SHOULD SHARE LESSONS ON BIOSECURITY: Threats to Food Security and Health Increasing

Rising population density and mobility, growing global trade, greater loss of natural habitat and environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change are all adding to the increasing threats to food security and health. It's time the monolithic agriculture and health sectors worked better together to stem the threats they both face.

This was the main message of The Hon John Anderson, Chair of the Crawford Fund and former Deputy Prime Minister at the Crawford Fund's international conference titled *Food & Nutrition Security – The Biosecurity, Health, Trade Nexus*, in Canberra and online on 13-14 December.

"I hope that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a wakeup call for Australia to focus on the overlap between agriculture, health and trade. In particular, with human and agriculture biosecurity a shared responsibility between Commonwealth and State governments and industry, they should work closer together now that we know that they share risks from existing and emerging pest and diseases."

"State and Federal Government departments and industry across health and agriculture should share the lessons each has learned during their battle against COVID-19 and during the years of success of Australian agricultural biosecurity measures. This would improve not only our systems for future human health pandemics but also help agriculture's constant battle against plant and animal pests and diseases in Australia and our region."

"If there's one thing that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown us, it's the importance of working together domestically and internationally, including on first rate research and development."

"For around two decades we have had standing arrangements between State and Federal authorities and industry to best manage agricultural biosecurity."

"Australia is a world leader in agricultural research around biosecurity to keep our agricultural industries safe and help our neighbours. There may well be lessons for the health sector to improve the way that our State and Federal Governments manage pandemics in the future."

"It's a two-way street, especially now we know the impact that zoonotic disease can have without vigilance, monitoring and global cooperation," said Mr Anderson.

The Fund's annual conference will bring together international and Australian specialists to identify current key threats and showcase where Australia and partners have had success.

The conference will have specialists addressing key threats and work at home and in neighbouring countries including on Fall Army Worm, African Swine Fever, Foot and Mouth Disease, antimicrobial resistance and cereal rusts.

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