

Australia to push ahead with first national food plan

Australia's role in providing global food security has been highlighted with the recent release of *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2011* report, jointly published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme.



Credit: Carl Davies/ScienceImage

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, said the report shows that volatile global food prices are likely to continue, significantly affecting the world's most vulnerable communities.

'Australia has been working with international organisations and through forums such as the G20 to find ways to reduce the volatility of food prices by strengthening agricultural productivity and improving information on agricultural markets,' Minister Ludwig said.

He added that forecast global population growth and increasing affluence in developing economies suggest strong prospects for the Australian agrifood sector to supply a greater share of global food needs.

However, Australia's ability to supply the world with high quality food will not be without its challenges.

'Global competition, land-use competition, climate change, and growing community expectations about the safety, sustainability and provenance of food pose significant challenges for the agricultural sector and policymakers within Australia,' said Minister Ludwig.

'The Australian Government is committed to developing the nation's first ever national food plan with a broad scope, considering these significant issues, including domestic and global food security, productivity and efficiency, sustainability, health and nutrition, as well as other economic policies that affect the food sector.

'The government believes that an overarching approach will help protect and improve Australia's enviable food security status, support population health outcomes and maximise food production opportunities that serve Australia and the

world.'

Australia is one of 191 countries participating in the Committee on World Food Security, which will focus on finding solutions to food price volatility and improvements in productivity for small-holder farmers, especially women.

Source: Ministerial media release

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC11082>