

Media Release

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FUTURE FARM
INDUSTRIES CRC

PROFITABLE PERENNIALS™ FOR AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

Biofuels can help Aussie farmers contribute to food crisis solution

Australia can help alleviate the looming world food crisis by cleverly integrating an emerging biofuels industry with mainstream agriculture.

While there is a perception that agricultural land once used to grow food is increasingly being turned over to production of biofuel cash crops worldwide, Future Farm Industries CRC (FFI CRC) CEO Kevin Goss says that is not the case in Australia.

“We’re in a strong position to ensure that our emerging biofuels industry does not compete with food production. Australia can manage its way through this potential problem and turn it into a positive,” Mr Goss said.

“Australian farmers can continue to provide high quality food commodities in the face of a changing climate and increasing biofuel demands.

“Through adopting sustainable farming practices suited to a drying climate and incorporating new woody crops into traditional farming systems, farmers can continue to increase food production while contributing to biofuel production in the longer term.”

Already, FFI CRC has embarked on a new woody crop industries research initiative that could provide alternative sources for biofuels using second generation technologies and biomass energy generation through the planting of woody crops such as Oil Mallees and Acacias.

“Although there are current technology constraints, I believe there is a future for woody crops in Australia’s wheatbelt regions where they will make up a small proportion of the total land area while working in harmony with annual grain cropping,” Mr Goss said.

“Planting woody crops has other benefits such as enhancing a region’s biodiversity, offering shelter for livestock and trapping atmospheric carbon.”

FFI CRC’s other work on profitable perennials in livestock and cropping systems will continue to build productivity in dryland farming which is the best insurance policy against climate constraining food production.

FFI CRC was formed in July 2007 to build on the former Cooperative Research Centre for the Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity’s work to make dryland agriculture in southern Australia more adaptable through innovative research, education and training, and commercialisation.

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Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre aims to transform Australian agriculture and rural landscapes by developing and applying Profitable Perennials™ technologies to innovative farming systems and new regional industries.
