

Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture

Media Release

Agriculture Deans indicate emissions as key issue

Finding options of reducing greenhouse gas emissions that also deliver productivity gains is one of the urgent research imperatives in agriculture according to the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture (ACDA). The ACDA met in Canberra recently to consider the research issues facing the sector.

ACDA President, Professor Roger Leigh, indicated that 2013 is the date set to review the involvement of agriculture in any carbon trading scheme. "Doing nothing in the meantime to address agricultural emissions will see agricultural costs of production increase and these costs need to be offset by productivity increases" Professor Leigh said.

Australian agriculture has a substantial long term opportunity to contribute to addressing the world's food shortages as well as continuing to underpin the Australian economy through its export earnings. However, the industry is under pressure to reduce its carbon footprint.

Professor Leigh commented that agriculture has long been addressing some aspects of its emissions through the adoption of conservation farming, resulting in a decline in fuel usage of about 70%. However, agricultural emissions are second only to those from the energy sector, due mainly to the methane emissions from ruminant livestock. Agriculture contributes 18% of Australia's emissions of which more than 60 % are methane emissions.

"Research urgently needs to find ways to reduce methane emissions but these solutions also need to be profitable to primary producers so that such options are readily adopted on farm" added Professor Leigh. "Whilst agriculture needs to play its part in combating greenhouse gases, it is important that the associated costs are contained so that food production and Australia's significant export earnings from agriculture are not compromised".

Contact persons for the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture:

President of ACDA – Professor Roger Leigh
08 8303 7136 or 0406 383578 or roger.leigh@adelaide.edu.au

Vice-President of ACDA – Professor Rick Roush 03 8344 5029
Rick.roush@unimelb.edu.au

Secretary of ACDA – Professor Jim Pratley
02 69 332862 or jpratley@csu.edu.au

