



# Media Release

October 23, 2014

## Australian agriculture helping Zambian farming practices

From robotic farming technology to one woman's vision of using Australian farming techniques to improve some of the human, social and disease problems facing many small African villages – these are just two highlights of a prestigious international agriculture conference continuing in Brisbane today.

The 26th Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC) conference is being hosted by the RNA at the Royal International Convention Centre.

More than 230 delegates from around the world are attending the conference which was addressed by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) on Tuesday.

The conference is primarily looking at the future sustainability of agricultural shows and the farming sector around the world.

Founded in 1957, RASC is made up of over 50 leading national and regional agricultural show societies, agricultural associations and research bodies working in 20 Commonwealth countries. RASC members convene to discuss issues facing agricultural industries and societies.

### RASC 26<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Agricultural Conference

#### DAY THREE HIGHLIGHTS – Wednesday October 23, 2014

#### 9:45am – 10.30am – Promoting positive solutions for rural health: international and Australian perspectives

**Keynote speaker** – Professor Mary-Louise Fleming PHD, Professor and Head, School of Public Health and Social Work Queensland University of Technology.

Rural communities have diverse experiences and needs and they often have a complex range of health issues some of which are not evident to their urban counterparts. These health issues are influenced by social, economic and political forces as well as more traditional impacts on health that include lifestyle, mental health and genetic determinants of health. This session will explore the nature and extent of a range of health issues and limited available health services facing rural and remote communities in Australian and internationally.



### **11.00am -12.00pm – Biosecurity**

Keynote speaker – Dr Jim Thompson, Chief Biosecurity Officer Queensland, Department of Agriculture, fisheries and Forestry

This session will explore the topic of biosecurity, which plays a key role in agricultural shows and the primary industries sector. Biosecurity has become a critical issue for maintaining productivity and market access of our agricultural products. Queensland is the frontline state for biosecurity facing a greater risk of incursions than all other states in Australia due to its geographical location and sub-tropical climate. These increasing sources of risk lead to a higher probability that exotic diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease or Avian influenza will occur. To date, Queensland has benefited enormously from its reputation for disease free agricultural goods, and the future of this sector relies on maintaining this clean and green status.

### **1.45pm - 2.45pm – Australian primary production, innovation and practice**

**Keynote speaker** – Professor Mike Gidley, University of Queensland;

Innovation is essential to the continued competitiveness and profitability of agriculture and food production. Innovation relies on continuous small incremental advances and critically on the step changes associated with new technologies. Australian agriculture has a unique opportunity to capture rapidly growing markets for high value foods in Asia.

### **Robots in Farms – Disruptive Innovation in Agricultural Practices**

**Keynote speaker** - Professor Tristan Peres, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Queensland University of Technology

Robotic technology is transforming current practices in industries such as mining and manufacturing. Following this trend and current R&D activities worldwide, it's envisaged this technology will also soon have a significant impact in agricultural practices. Robots can be used for autonomous tasks related to field, pest and crop management enabling new management practices.

### **3.15pm-4pm – My voyage and my vision for my village in Zambia**

**Keynote speaker** – Inonge Mubanga Samboko

Australian agriculture could hold the secret to many of the human social and disease problems currently facing many small African villages and communities according to Inonge Mubanga Samboko, who recently completed a one month study tour of South Australian dairy and pig farms. The young female farmer, from the village of Kaniki in Zambia, believes that agricultural enterprises can improve the lives of the 400 people in her village. Her six hectare pig, dairy cattle and banana farm currently employs three people, but Inonge has plans for a large dairy herd which when completed could employ up to 40 workers.



For a full list of the RASC program [click here](#)

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