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MEDIA RELEASE

Making the most of our world class rural R&D (23 July 2012)



Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator for Queensland**

The Gillard Government today announced significant improvements to rural research, development and extension which will see greater collaboration on research, efforts to increase investment, and a drive to improve the adoption of innovation across the sector.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, who released the rural R&D policy statement at an AgForce breakfast in Brisbane, said the Government remained committed to partnering with industry to drive innovation and productivity.

“The current rural R&D model has proven results, with rural productivity in Australia increasing at more than twice the rate of other industries’ in this country in recent decades,” Minister Ludwig said.

“Successive Labor governments have a strong history of collaborating with our rural sector on research and development, contributing more than \$700 million annually through the Research and Development Corporations (RDC’s), Cooperative Research Centres, CSIRO and universities.

“This is a government committed to rural R&D, and committed to the RDC model as the fundamental way that we fund and deliver it.

“This policy statement builds on the strengths of the RDC model, including the strong partnership we have with industry in funding and setting priorities.”

The policy statement includes the government’s final response to the Productivity Commission’s inquiry report on Rural RDCs and the National Strategic Rural R&D Investment Plan.

The improvements will:

- increase transparency and accountability in the RDC model;
- improve coordination and priority setting across the whole rural R&D system;
- increase the pursuit of productivity growth; and
- increase operational efficiencies and value for money on investment.

Key changes include:

- measuring performance across the broader rural R&D system;
- greater collaboration of RDCs on cross-sectoral research such as soils and climate change;
- enabling RDCs to undertake marketing if requested by industry and funded by a dedicated levy;
- matching government funding for private voluntary contributions where research findings are public; and
- moves to attract more private domestic and international investment.

“This statement goes hand in hand with work we’re already doing as part of the National Food Plan green paper which asks whether the best way to increase innovation and productivity over the medium to long term is to increase investment in rural R&D,” Minister Ludwig said.

“Research and development underpins future productivity and innovation within our rural industries. It drives growth, maintains our competitiveness internationally, and means rural Australia can make the most of opportunities and respond to challenges.

“Australian producers are some of the most innovative and productive in the world, and ongoing government and industry commitment to R&D will help keep us on the front foot.”

The statement and more information are available at www.daff.gov.au/rdpolicy statement.