

Media release

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National Food Plan needs a rethink

The Australian Government's National Food Plan needs to concentrate more on developing a resilient and knowledgeable farm and food sector in Australia and less on thinking Australia can solve the world's food shortages.

Submissions to the Plan's green paper close this week.

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) welcomes the Australian Government's draft plan for agriculture; however in its submission emphasises a need for more support for biological and organic farming, value-adding and better research and development for resilient farms and farmers.

BFA director Dr Andrew Monk says, "The green paper is heavily focused on intensive, monoculture farming, thinking that this approach is the only one that can produce high productivity. I don't think this is the only way forward for Australian agriculture nor is it a silver bullet for food security in our region."

Andrew has just returned from an International Organic Animal Husbandry Conference in Germany initiated by the world's largest organic organisation, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

The Conference addressed food security issues discussing solutions like raising animal production and intensive agriculture.

Andrew says, "One of the most interesting discussions at the Conference was from a world-renowned guest speaker who spoke about increasing animal production without intensiveness.

"Australia's National Food Plan should not be structured in a way that pushes for constant increases in food production volumes simply due to global pressures for the world to produce more food."

BFA would like to see the Plan broaden its focus and show support for multi-yield, resilient, and productive agricultural systems.

"We have the opportunity to be leaders in our region providing high value-added food products. The notions of 'food security' and 'feeding the world' are much confused and misused issues in policy thinking.

"Pushing higher monocultural yields out of a limited number of strains of crop species will be the breeding ground for longer-term food insecurity.

"There is an opportunity for Australia to be a leader in sustainable production and high value-added food products which could be achieved with more appropriate research and development."

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