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F20 calls for increased global investment in R&D, education and infrastructure to meet world food challenge

Increased investment in agricultural research and development, storage capacity and logistics will be critical in feeding the world sustainably by the year 2050, the inaugural Rabobank F20 (Food) Summit, in Sydney Australia, found.

The F20 – attended by more than 650 farmers and international agribusiness industry participants ahead of the G20 Leaders’ Summit last week – called for an urgent focus on increasing research and development and improving storage and infrastructure around the world in the challenge to almost double global food supply by 2050, to feed a forecast population of nine billion people.

Improving education and access to information on food and agriculture and addressing imbalances in market power across food supply chains were also identified as crucial elements in increasing world food availability.

Rabobank executive board member Berry Marttin told the summit that, with the world’s population projected to increase by another two billion people by 2050, food production would have to increase by 60 per cent in order to meet demand, particularly with a fast-increasing ‘middle class’ in Asia.

“However, in this challenge we are faced with finite resources of land and water,” he said. “Identifying solutions as to how we manage these limited resources in a sustainable way – while increasing food availability and access and improving nutrition and food stability – are key challenges for the food and agribusiness sector and governments into the future.”

Mr Marttin said the F20 called for “collective solutions under a shared responsibility”.

“Addressing this challenge is a shared responsibility between the world’s political and food and agribusiness leaders,” he said, “however it is crucial that farmers, who after all are the ones producing this food, have a ‘strong voice at the table’.”

Conclusions from the F20 Summit will be presented in a memorandum to the 2015 G20 program, building on the 2014 G20 framework on global food security.

Among the key summit findings were the need for:

- Increased investment in government R&D to improve agricultural productivity
- Improved infrastructure and logistics to increase food availability and minimise food loss and wastage



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- Support for public private partnerships to enhance commercialisation of R&D
- Improved access to finance for primary production, particular in developing regions
- Addressing imbalances in market power, and greater horizontal and vertical integration, in food supply chains
- Education to bridge consumer and farmer knowledge gaps and to increase nutritional awareness.

Attended by leading international and Australia farmers, as well as representatives of government, industry, academia and advocacy groups, the F20 Summit heard from a range of international keynote speakers discussing the themes of increasing food production, improving access to food, encouraging balanced nutrition, and strengthening stability in markets and production chains.

Speakers included the Deputy Director-General, Agro and Food, from the Ministry of Economic Affairs in the Netherlands Roald P. Lapperre on 'Building Private-Public Partnerships for Food Security' and AACo Chairman Donald McGauchie on 'Creating Winning Supply Chains'.

The Summit also heard from FAO Deputy Director General Daniel Gustafson, who spoke by video address, highlighting the FAO's appreciation of "the unique opportunity of the F20 for the global food and agribusiness community to unite, to raise awareness and propose solutions to world leaders".

Leading international farmers presented key outcomes of the Global Farmers Master Class, highlighting the important issues around farm succession, social enabling, sustainability and imbalance in supply chains, as well as the opportunities around big data to improve yield and social media to connect consumers and new distribution models.

Chilean dairy farmer Ricardo Rios Pohl spoke on how he had successfully transformed his farming operation using knowledge learned from the New Zealand dairy industry.

Other speakers included:

- Science communicator Julian Cribb on the 'Age of Food – Healthy, Sustainable, Sufficient'
- Sense-Co CEO Ros Harvey on the use of technology in agriculture
- Managing director of Netherlands-based plant health diagnostics company ClearDetections Dr Renske Landeweert on the future of soil analysis
- National Farmers Federations president Brent Finlay on uniting farmers globally
- International social media specialist Danny Mekic on the use of social media in food and agriculture



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- Dr Alan Barclay, chief scientific officer with the Glycemic Index Foundation on the nutrition topic 'Are We Eating Ourselves to Death'
- Professor Peter Warr, director of the Poverty Research Centre on 'Why Ending Hunger is So Hard'
- Youth Food Movement founder Alexandra Iljadica and young farmer and Global Youth Ag-Summit ambassador Corbin Shuster on the youth perspective.
- Rabobank general manager Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory Australia & New Zealand Luke Chandler on 'Embracing Innovation to Unleash the Potential of Global F&A' and
- Dr Jim Woodhill, from Australia's G20 Taskforce on Food Security & Nutrition.

Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world's leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 110 years' experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative and operates in 41 countries, servicing the needs of approximately 10 million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1600 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is one of Australasia's leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region's food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 93 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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