P2D - Media Release

ACCELERATING PRECISION AGRICULTURE TO DECISION AGRICULTURE

Enabling digital agriculture in Australia

This Project is supported by funding from the Rural R&D for Profit Program

Australian Government
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RESEARCH PARTNERS

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New digital blueprint to unleash billions of dollars in profit

A digital agriculture blueprint, launched today at ABARES, calls for an industry-wide overhaul to boost the unconstrained value of agricultural production by $20.3 billion.

The *Accelerating Precision Agriculture to Decision Agriculture Report* was launched by Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon. David Littleproud MP.

It makes 13 key recommendations, including the creation of a Digital Agriculture Taskforce, to increase farm profits through better decision making and improved efficiencies.

The project has also delivered a series of web-based tools to increase data sharing across industries and data-informed business results.

"This report comes from an unprecedented level of collaboration across the agriculture sector, including all 15 Research and Development Corporations," said Bruce Finney, Executive Director of the Cotton Research and Development Corporation.

"The same level of ongoing collaboration to implement the report's findings will be essential if Australia doesn't want to get left behind in the digital revolution.

"We have found that our digital maturity is low but the potential profit gains for individual producers in Australia are significant if we work together to remove common barriers."

Mr Finney said the size and type of potential benefits vary from one industry to the next but all industries are set to make gains from an overall production increase of 25%, based on the project's economic modelling.

The research has highlighted issues around digital literacy, grower trust, and the availability of appropriate data and decision support tools. It has also confirmed that a lack of access to mobile and internet telecommunications infrastructure is a major barrier to adoption.

"We need to increase grower confidence by showing that an investment in digital agriculture will pay off, financially and by delivering lifestyle benefits," said Mr Finney.

"But this isn't about the actions of individual producers. Staying ahead of the game will require some major changes in digital policy, strategy and private and public digital investment.

"Every RDC is conscious of the size and complexity of the task ahead, and the need for cross-industry cooperation.

"On a practical level, by looking at best practice overseas, we've realised that we must combine our spending power to attract market solutions that meet Australian industry needs.

"And on a strategic level, we need collaboration to provide the necessary leadership to drive legal and regulatory change and build digital skills and capacity from the farm to the laboratory," said Mr Finney.

"Whatever we do moving forward, we must keep checking in with the technology industry and producers across industries and geographic locations, so that we get in front of technology changes."

Producers are urged to access the P2D grower toolbox, now available on the project website. It is designed to help them make important decisions about investment in technology and navigate the legal issues around privacy and policy.

Mr Finney said other tools delivered by the P2D project - a reference architecture to design big data systems and a register of cross-sectoral agricultural and environmental datasets - will be used by RDCs to build systems that widen the scope beyond individual industries and markets but are smarter about accessing the most relevant information.

P2D summary and technical reports and the grower toolbox can be found at the project website http://www.crdc.com.au/precision-to-decision.

The P2D project is led by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation and jointly funded by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Rural R&D for Profit Program and 15 Rural Development Corporations. It involves research support from three universities, CSIRO Data 61, the Australian Farm Institute and the Data to Decisions CRC.

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