

Media are welcome to attend the AARES annual conference at the Grand Chancellor Hotel Brisbane. Please contact [Cathy Reade](mailto:Cathy.Reade@AARES.org.au) 0413 575 934 to arrange interviews or to register to attend. The conference program is [here](#), with Australian and international specialists making over 200 presentations across a broad range of energy, agriculture, development and environment issues.

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FARMER vs BREEDER RIGHTS - HOW TO BEST SHARE BENEFITS FROM IMPROVED CROP VARIETIES

Australian farmers know well that research and innovation has realized big payoffs for agriculture, but looking ahead, new and recurring challenges to local and global food supply chains loom large. If we can bring together public and private investment in research and innovation, we have the greatest chance of tackling the key issues – productive and Sustainable food and nutrition systems, climate challenges, pest and diseases, and resource risks. In the midst of this is an issue with broad implications - farmer vs breeder rights.

Professor Philip G. Pardey, a global expert in sustainable agricultural productivity growth and the economic impacts of agricultural R&D, will present new evidence on the rapidly changing global landscape for agricultural production and agri-food R&D, and suggest ways to better create and share the benefits from improved crop varieties. He's addressing *Meeting the Challenges of Transition to a Sustainable Future*, the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) Conference, 11-14 February in Brisbane. AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, and resource economics and agribusiness.

"We are facing developments that have significant implications for the respective public and private roles in creating and scaling agri-food innovations," said Professor Pardey, Professor of Science and Technology Policy and Director of the GEMS Informatics Center at the University of Minnesota. He also serves as Special Advisor to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's ATIO (Agricultural Technology and Innovation) initiative.

"We have the rapid rise of the world's large agricultural economies - Brazil, India and China - and the growing private sector presence in agri-food research, development and innovation. In addition, middle-income countries now dominate global agricultural production, and as their per capita incomes rise so too does the demand for post-farm food processing, supermarket and food-away-from-home services. To add to this complexity, we now have the disruption to R&D and agricultural aid funding by the new US. Administration."

"A significant share of public and private agri-food R&D concerns crop improvement. Assigning the farmer versus breeder their shares of the economic value derived from improved crop varieties remains a contentious issue, with real world crop innovation, food security, poverty alleviation and environmental health consequences."

"Australia has been at the forefront of policy and institutional innovations to encourage and reward innovation in crop varieties. But there are on-going tensions in Australia and throughout the world concerning the returns to increasingly private crop breeders - breeder rights - versus the rewards for past breeding efforts of farmers and the public sector - farmer rights," said Professor Pardey.

"We have developed a new way of attributing the added value derived from crop varietal improvement between current breeding programs and the recent and distant past efforts of prior breeders. We then investigate the implications of different attribution rules for breeder versus farmer benefits."

"The evidence-based policy options we suggest can constitute a win-win fix for crop breeding throughout the world, with more equitable benefit sharing and innovation encouragement," he concluded.