

Media are welcome to attend the AARES annual conference at the Grand Chancellor Hotel Brisbane. Please contact [Cathy Reade](#) 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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INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: How to protect biodiversity, climate and food security – one steak at a time

International trade in agricultural products is driven by the consumption needs of those living in rich countries, to the detriment of biodiversity, climate and food security. Managing the consumption and production of agricultural products as well as international trade must be done in conjunction with international policies to protect biodiversity, climate and food security for effective change to occur. A key starting point for mitigating the trade-offs is a more sustainable diet.

This challenge will be outlined by Professor Katrin Rehdanz, a specialist in environmental and energy economics at Kiel University, Germany when she presents at *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.

“There are complex interactions between international agricultural trade on the one hand and biodiversity conservation, climate change and food security on the other. Can international trade be a force for good in tackling these globally important challenges?” she asked.

“In the past, food was produced and consumed within a country or a continent. The benefits and costs of production were local, and policies were developed locally to deal with the impacts. Now, with international trade, production of agricultural products and their consumption can be continents apart which brings with it not only advantages and opportunities, but also negative impacts that are often worse in poorer nations,” she explained.

“Biodiversity loss and climate change impacts are classic examples of negative impacts that are often not, or inadequately, taken into account in the price of food,” said Prof Rehdanz.

“Regulating international agricultural trade alone is not enough to protect biodiversity and the climate and ensure food security,” she said.

“Given society's high demands on land and biomass use, current production, trade and consumption practices lead to trade-offs between biodiversity conservation, climate change and food security, as all three require land.”

Professor Rehdanz argues that without changes in consumption patterns, particularly in rich countries like Australia, it will not be possible to sustainably protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change while ensuring food security.

“Changes in consumption patterns in rich countries is a great starting point to sustainably protect biodiversity and the climate while ensuring food security, including for the world's low-income populations,” she said.

“We must have action managing the consumption, production and international trade of agricultural products as well as international policies to protect biodiversity, climate and food security,” she concluded.