

Media Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AusBiotech conference presents speaker on GM crops, which are crucial in achieving global food sustainability

The benefits of genetically improved crops on global food sustainability are compelling according to Dr Harvey Glick, Senior Director of Scientific Affairs - Asia at Monsanto Company, citing the growing need to increase the world's food production. Dr Glick is calling for further investment to meet global needs of a growing population, with the sustainable food production that biotechnology and genetic modification can provide.

The Federal Government recently warned that the world will have to produce 70 per cent more food by the year 2050, with the population expected to boom to 9.1 billion – and said the path of scientific research would be the only way of meeting the world's demands.

This is a sentiment shared by policy makers and leaders around the world, including Hilary Clinton and US billionaire Bill Gates, who has committed the support of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to biotechnology that will assist food production. Last week the Foundation announced nine new grants worth a total of US \$120m aimed at raising yields with genetic modification and farming expertise in the developing world. Additionally a study from the British Royal Society recommends GM crops should be grown in Britain to alleviate food shortages in the country.

Dr Glick will be presenting his views on the benefits of genetically modified (GM) crops at the *AusBiotech 2009* conference in Melbourne, Australia next week as part of the Food Security and AgBio session on Wednesday 28 October at 2.00pm.

“Global food shortages, a decrease in suitable land for agriculture, climate change and water shortages are some of the most worrying problems listed by UNEP (United Nations Environment

Further information and interviews:

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Programme). With the world consuming more grain than it produced in seven of the last eight years, increasing crop yields is an important global issue that cannot be ignored,” said Dr Glick.

He added that modern agricultural biotechnology has improved the way farmers grow corn, soybean, cotton and canola crops; and significant advances in genetically modified crops that are developed with pest and weed resistance, have already seen an improvement in crop yields.

“If we are to keep pace with the booming population modern plant biotechnology innovations such as water efficiency and drought tolerant plants need to be developed through well funded public and private research programs. Sustainable food production is a major challenge faced by every food-producing country in the world and there is a global need to ensure farmers have the necessary innovations to feed an ever growing population,” said Dr Glick.

Dr Harvey Glick has been actively involved in agriculture for over 30 years and has worked with Monsanto for the past 20 years. He is currently the Director of Scientific Affairs for Asia and is directly involved in bringing the next generation of plant biotechnology products to farmers around the world.

“Food sustainability has become an important global issue especially in the face of climate change, and one that is emerging on national agenda’s around the world,” said Dr Anna Lavelle, CEO of AusBiotech.

The Food Security and AgBio session at *AusBiotech 2009* will explore various aspects on how biotechnology can contribute to food security in Australia and abroad, a highly contentious yet vital area of debate. Dr Glick will be joined at the conference session by Dr Ganesh Kishore, CEO of Malaysian Life Sciences Capital Fund, Burrill and Company/Malaysian Technology Development Corporation who will also address the use of new biotechnology solutions in agriculture to improve productivity and sustainability.

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AusBiotech 2009 will be held from Wednesday 28 October – Friday 30 October. For additional event information visit the conference website at: <http://www.ausbiotech2009.com.au/>

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About AusBiotech

AusBiotech is Australia's voice on biotechnology, and represents more than 3,000 members, encompassing medicines, medical diagnostics and devices, agriculture, alternative fuels and climate change.

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