

MEDIA RELEASE

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What will climate change do to water availability? Almond growers to get latest answers from CSIRO

Australian almond growers will learn how climate change is going to impact on their water supply at their annual national conference this week.

A record crowd will attend the Almond Board of Australia's We're Blossoming Conference at the Novotel Resort in the Barossa Valley on Thursday and Friday.

CSIRO principal research scientist Dr Penny Whetton will reveal the latest findings on what climate change could do to water availability for irrigators across the Murray Darling Basin.

Dr Whetton leads a research team that is charged with the responsibility of analyzing climate impact and risk on industries such as almonds.

She is internationally recognised as one of the leading authorities on assessing the link between climate change and water supplies.

Dr Whetton is a former Melbourne University lecturer who has given almost 200 conference presentations on climate change on behalf of the CSIRO.

Her fields of expertise include:

- Regional climate change scenarios
- Climate change impacts and integrated impact assessment
- Climate variability
- Climate modeling
- Areas of climate impact, in particular, hydrology and snow cover.

Almond Board of Australia chief executive officer Julie Haslett said today that the ABA conference is now regarded as a leading industry event.

"We like to provide our growers and allied members with the most authoritative information possible and we have been fortunate to attract high calibre presenters like Dr Whetton. The growth of the almond industry is one of the real success stories of Australia horticulture and as a result we are commanding more attention from everyone involved, including government agencies."

Ms Haslett said the conference would give delegates an update on a wide range of issues confronting the industry. Issues to be discussed include:

- Meeting the pollination needs of the nation's growing almond plantings.
- Marketing bigger Australia crops to the world. California's almond industry global marketing manager Shirley Horn will cover this issue in depth.
- What does the global financial crisis mean for the almond industry?
- The latest findings in reduced irrigation research.

"Giving people the latest news to make informed decisions about the future has never been more important than right now," Ms Haslett said.

- **Dr Whetton can be contacted on 0400 525 978**
- **Julie Haslett can be contacted on 0418 958 187**

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Almond Board of Australia (ABA) is a non profit, membership based organisation representing the interests of Australian almond growers, processors and marketers.

As the Australian almond industry's peak industry body, the ABA facilitates further growth of the industry, seeks to maximise its profitability and ensure its sustainability, by providing a platform for industry members to collectively respond to industry-wide issues, invest in research and marketing, share knowledge and interact with government and other stakeholders.

The Australian Almond Industry currently produces 25,000 tonnes of almonds on an annual basis, with a related farm gate value of \$150 million dollars. Production is expected to triple by 2015 as new plantings reach full maturity, with a related value of \$500 million dollars.

Key almond growing areas are located in Sunraysia (Victoria), the Riverland and Adelaide (South Australia) and the Riverina region (New South Wales).

For more information visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or email: admin@australianalmonds.com.au