



NORTHERN AUSTRALIA FOOD FUTURES CONFERENCE 2014

“Preparing for the future of Agriculture in the North”

It's a Wrap!

Grant Fenton - CEO NT Farmers



First off, a sincere thanks to all speakers, sponsors, delegates, organisers and support staff for making the inaugural Northern Australia Food Futures Conference an outstanding success.

With over 300 attendees, great representation by key northern Australia industry representatives and producers and a diverse range of inspiring speakers the conference provided great networking opportunities. Best of all, the event created a forum to foster ongoing collaboration on many levels including government policy, R&D and future opportunities for investment and sustainable growth.

Some of the key themes and outcomes that emerged included:

- Support for a Northern Agricultural Alliance similar to the Northern Beef Roundtable concept
- For food production to reach its potential in northern Australia there is a need for increased external investment by companies who have vertical integration with processing, logistics and market access
- Brand Australia is more important to our overseas markets and customers than regional differentiation, meaning that greater collaboration is needed across industries and regions
- Enhanced collaboration between Federal, Queensland, WA and NT governments is essential for the continued development of northern Australia
- Greater efforts by all governments jurisdictions to reduce 'red tape' is essential to driving development and investment confidence
- Acknowledgement of successes in food production past and present and the potential for future growth and diversification
- Developing food industries in Northern Australia present exciting opportunities for Indigenous people seeking to move forward in the economy



Grant Fenton, CEO
NT Farmers Association

NT Farmers and Food Futures will continue to influence the public debate next year through regional road shows and an international forum in Indonesia and plans are already underway for the 2nd Northern Australia Food Futures Conference to be held in late 2015.

A special thanks also to our media partners ABC Rural and Fairfax Agricultural media. The ABC Rural team broadcast live from the venue throughout the conference and assisted to get key speakers featured on national programs such as ABC News 24 and Business Today and on ABC Radio current affairs AM/PM. Fairfax Agricultural Media, which has great reach into regional areas, also gave the conference great coverage in the lead up and during the event.

We also had media representatives from the BBC, AAP and Guardian Australia Online attend along with SkyNews, ABC TV and the Australian newspaper which ensured the conference attracted excellent coverage nationally as well as globally.



Northern Territory Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries The Hon. Willem Westra van Holthe MLA

The inaugural Northern Australia Food Futures Conference was a triumph of ideas and vision.

Agricultural development in northern Australia is taking off, and this was reflected in the enthusiasm and quality of presentations at what is touted to be an ongoing annual event in our calendar here in Northern Australia.

Congratulations must go to the Northern Territory Farmers Association on delivering this hugely successful conference.

As the Northern Territory Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, it was pleasing to see that agricultural, horticultural and pastoral sectors were all well represented.

It was also pleasing to see my Ministerial counterparts from Western Australia, Queensland, and Federally attend this important event.

This conference brought together the wider farming sector; it showcased northern tropical agricultural opportunities and highlighted the potential for other commodities to blossom here in the north.

The outcomes from the two days of the Northern Australia Food Futures Conference will assist both Government and industry to focus our attention and capitalise on developments that will increase agricultural development and agribusiness investment opportunities. The robust and important discussions that were held will go a long way towards helping to determine future agricultural priorities right across northern Australia.

The Northern Territory Government recognises that food production will play an important part in our economic future, and we are working to develop our agricultural, horticultural and pastoral industries. We are clearly focused on addressing industry priorities and removing road blocks to industry expansion.

The Department of Land Resource Management is currently working to identify and map soils across the Northern Territory that can be used for more intensive agriculture and horticulture. This project will provide land and water information for pastoralists and other landholders to allow the development of new agricultural and horticultural enterprises.

The Northern Territory Government has worked hard to reduce red tape, increase exports to our Asian neighbours, enable greater flexibility for land use on pastoral leases and we are researching additional available land for use in primary production.

The Northern Australia Food Futures conference provided both Government and industry with the opportunity to develop an agenda that will increase agricultural development and agribusiness investment opportunities.

I look forward to these ideas being brought to realisation, and I look forward to Food Futures 2015.



The Hon. Willem
Westra van Holthe MLA





“Northern Australia will play a vital role in helping to secure Australia’s future prosperity. Blessed with a variety of natural advantages and with huge potential for growth, Australia’s North has been identified by the Coalition Government as a priority area for further development and expansion – particularly for our primary industries. We now have government and industry working together to realize the full potential of the north, and it was great to engage with people from key sectors at this year’s Northern Food Futures Conference to discuss how we can pursue our shared vision for Northern Australia.”

– Federal Minister Barnaby Joyce | Minister for Agriculture

Horizon Future Leaders Program

The opportunity to engage young people in the North Australia Food Futures conference was too good to pass up for the Northern Territory Farmers Association and The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. From a spark grew a collaboration of Northern Australia government and industry partners that brought together 15 emerging leaders from across the country to build capacity, create networks and engage across primary industry sectors.

This collaboration demonstrated the ease at which national conferences have the opportunity to engage young people in future planning and hear from the generation that will be affected by the decisions made.

All the participants reported an increased understanding of good communications in agriculture, the power of perceptions and clearer self-awareness. They left excited about the future of food in Australia and their future role.

Tell us what you thought

We would like to thank all of you who attended the Conference and would like to hear about your experience. **Please complete the survey by using the link: [Click here](#)**

Useful Information



If you are interested in **Commodity sessions presentations**, you can find them on the Conference website under **“Speaker’s presentations”** tab, or access them with the link:
<http://foodfutures.ntfarmers.org.au/index/travel>



It's not too early...

To register your interest for the Conference in 2015, please send email with your contact details to:
events@associatedadvertising.com.au

“The inaugural Northern Futures Conference was an immense opportunity to hear about prospects for further developing this economically important part of Australia. We also heard what needs to be done, and the challenges that need to be addressed, to achieve this. We must all continue to work together to ensure the aspirations we all have for a vibrant, prosperous north actually come to fruition.

– Minister Kenneth (Ken) Baston MLC, WA | Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

“The Northern Australia Food Futures conference provided a great opportunity for food producers, distributors, farmers, industry representatives and government to come together and collaborate on how we can expand and grow agriculture within northern Australia. Queensland and Northern Australia are in a great position to be a key supplier of high quality, safe food and fibre products to Asia. It was a pleasure to attend and take part in the conference and discussion panels. The representation by Government at the Conference showed the desire we all have to work together with agriculture industries to assist Australia's northern region grow and prosper.

– Minister John McVeigh MP, Qld | Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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