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By Liam
O'Callaghan

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Budget aims to increase agriculture output



Australian federal government's latest budget addresses farm gate output, biosecurity, labour, trade and irrigation

The Australian federal government has allocated over A\$2bn (US\$1.56bn) to the country's agriculture industry in its 2021-22 budget with a focus on helping the industry increase farm gate output to A\$100bn by 2030.

The budget will provide A\$850.4m specifically towards the industry's goal of becoming Australia's next A\$100bn industry.

Funding was dedicated to trade and protecting the country's exports, a move welcomed by Fiona Simson, president of the National Farmers Federation (NFF).

"Tonight, we've seen A\$213m for trade including the enhanced representation and promotion of Australia's interests through the WTO and the establishment of a new international agriculture envoy programme to protect agriculture's export interests," said Simson.

The budget also included funding to address a range of other challenges facing the country's farmers including biosecurity, labour and irrigation.

The government invested A\$385.5m in biosecurity systems, as well as A\$29.1m in pest and weed reduction activities to help farmers manage threats to their crops.

For labour, A\$29.8m will go to help farmers attract and retain skilled workers to create a highly trained and technologically-proficient agriculture workforce of the future.

To address the environmental challenges the government committed A\$237.9m to help farmers manage soil health and increase yields and A\$1.3bn to recover water for the environment while maintaining water for irrigation as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Simson also welcomed investment in

infrastructure and noted transporting produce was one of the major costs for Australian farmers.

"This budget has delivered more than A\$5bn investment in freight and regional roads across every state and territory," said Simson.

"These projects will go a long way to addressing NFF's previously highlighted concerns with the A\$1.3bn annual gap in regional infrastructure spending. The cost of getting produce from farm to market is one of farmers' largest cost imposts and a key determinant of our ability to compete on the world stage."

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