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# Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture

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## Communiqué

Thursday, 3 April 2008

### Australian Agriculture at risk from shortage of Uni graduates

Agriculture in Australia and around the world is experiencing a boom in demand, with food prices increasing due to growing world population, more demand for animal protein in diets, and the use of agricultural crops for biofuels.

Agriculture also faces great challenges due climate change and increasing costs of energy, crying out for more high tech solutions.

However, a recent study by the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture (ACDA) has shown that the supply of agriculture graduates to meet these opportunities and challenges is falling way behind the demand for such graduates.

The study has shown that there is a market for about 2000 graduates within Australia, but the 12 universities teaching agriculture are only providing about 800 graduates between them per year.

ACDA President Roger Leigh notes that "The predictions are for substantial growth in the job market but the number of students choosing an agricultural degree continues to decline and so the situation is set to become worse.

"Further, training in agriculture is so comprehensive and integrative it enables graduates to gain jobs outside agriculture. This leakage also adds to the problem" Professor Leigh continued.

One of the problems facing the industry is the often seen negative image portrayed in the media.

"We don't have enough students enrolling in our programs.

"This is unfortunate because agriculture is an exciting and challenging career involving a high degree of technology. There are endless opportunities for agricultural graduates", Leigh added.

Based on feedback received by Deans, these results will come as little surprise to recruiters in consulting and supply companies in agriculture and forestry, who are often forced to employ underqualified candidates or leave positions unfilled.

The ACDA has called for all sectors of the industry to promote careers in agriculture as it is in everyone's interest to ensure there are enough highly qualified professionals for the challenges ahead.

The Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture represents all 12 Universities across Australia that offer significant training in agriculture.

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