

EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 11 JULY 2011

## Foreign investment in Australian agriculture: myths and realities

Foreign ownership of Australian agricultural assets is a subject that has gained a great deal of media attention over recent years, as major purchases of farmland by overseas investors have hit both rural and urban newspapers, and gained the attention of talkback radio hosts and television commentators.

*'In comparison with the issues of mining and coal seam gas production on agricultural land (which are very significant and important debates in themselves), the question of whether or not the farmland is owned by an "Australian" or a "foreigner" seems somewhat immaterial, but has gained plenty of attention because so little is known about how much farmland is owned by foreigners,'* said Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute.

*'Mandatory transparency of pricing along the supply chain (as is the case in many international locations) and disclosure of foreign ownership would have a double benefit in reassuring farmers about the scale of foreign investment, and also acting as a preventative measure to ensure that even in concentrated markets, unfair competitive behaviour does not occur,'* said Mick Keogh.

The Winter quarter *Farm Policy Journal*, 'Foreign investment in Australian agriculture: myths and realities', provides an up to date overview of existing and missing information on the topic. It also broadens the debate by looking at the foreign investment in agribusinesses and in agricultural R&D, key components of Australian agriculture.

Journal papers include the following:

- **Foreign investment in farmland: worries about a land grab in Australia are unfounded**, by Derek Byerlee and Klaus Deininger (World Bank consultants)
- **Is farmland 'up for grabs'? Patterns of land ownership in rural NSW**, by Jennifer Broadbent and Bill Pritchard (University of Sydney)
- **The national and international dynamics of public-private partnerships in biotechnology R&D**, by Jeremy J Burdon, Bruce Lee and TJV Higgins (CSIRO)
- **Foreign direct investment in agribusiness – where are the risks?** by Steve Spencer (Freshlogic)
- **Globalisation of Australian agriculture: have we sold the farm?** by Alan Winney (Emerald Group and Queensland Sugar Ltd)

The Winter 2011 quarter *Farm Policy Journal* preview is [available here](#).

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