

Blue ribbon biosecurity recognised

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lachlan Dobson, a fruit grower farming in the Ord River Irrigation Area of Kununurra, Western Australia, is the 2010 *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year – plant category*.

With Timor only 500 kilometres off the coast, exotic pests are an ever-present threat to Lachlan's 120,000 mango trees and 80,000 red flesh grapefruit trees. To combat the threat he has implemented a rigorous and integrated regime that sees biosecurity paramount on his farm – Kimberly Produce.

Biosecurity can be summed up as the measures taken to exclude, manage and eradicate unwanted biological pests and diseases.

Lachlan was named *Biosecurity Farmer of the Year – plant category* at a gala dinner in Sydney last Tuesday night. The honour was part of Kondinin Group and ABC Rural's *Australian Farmer Year of the Awards*, proudly sponsored by Plant Health Australia as part of the Farm Biosecurity initiative.

Plant Health Australia Executive Director and CEO, Greg Fraser, congratulated Lachlan on his commitment to biosecurity.

"Each day, farmers in northern Australia face the chance of pest and disease incursions. Lachlan is leading the way in demonstrating how best-practice biosecurity measures, such as undertaking regular surveillance, controlling people and product movement onto and around the property, promoting good hygiene through all parts of the farm operation, and implementing educational induction programs for staff members, can assure the long-term viability of primary production in this region."

Lachlan has had a long and successful career as a champion for biosecurity in Western Australia. He was involved in development of the Western Australian Banana Industry Biosecurity Plan and the OrdGuard Regional Biosecurity Plan. Lachlan is current chairman of [OrdGuard](#), and has supported research in the region as a PhD supervisor for two projects through Charles Darwin University in partnership with the [Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity](#).

One of his greatest contributions has been looking at biosecurity as a regional and whole of community issue. The innovations he led in this area have seen similar approaches adopted in other key plant production regions around Australia.

"Not only is he safe-guarding the productivity of his own crops, Lachlan's industry leadership and collaboration has also resulted in important developments for the future. Lachlan is an inspiration to other growers, particularly in relation to his holistic approach to better biosecurity," Mr Fraser said.

The inaugural national *Australian Farmer of the Year Award* supported by Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia, promotes a positive image of farmers, inspires and encourages career choices and investment interest in Australian agriculture.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact:
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Kimberly Produce

Kimberly Produce is a successful farming enterprise located in the Ord River Irrigation Area, Kununurra, Western Australia. Kimberly Produce is home to Lachlan Dobson, Australia's 2010 Biosecurity Farmer of the Year, where he manages 120,000 mango trees and 80,000 red flesh grapefruit trees. Lachlan purchased the 160 hectare property in 1995 and in the past has grown bananas, papaya, melons, raspberry and sweet corn.

Lachlan recognises seamless biosecurity practices as a critical component of his Kimberly Produce operations in maintaining domestic and international market access. To do this, he has implemented an ongoing induction program for staff members as well as continually providing information to them on the importance of biosecurity and environmental management.

The OrdGuard Regional Biosecurity Plan

The OrdGuard Regional Biosecurity Plan aims to reduce the risk of biological incursions into the Ord River region. The primary focus of OrdGuard is to understand how different sectors of the community learn about their environment and use the information to enhance and support more effective learning outcomes, particularly in relation to biosecurity and the reporting of biological threats in the Ord River Irrigation Area.

One of the key elements of the project is to tap into the significant community spirit that already exists in Kununurra and work with those individuals, groups and/or organisations already doing excellent work in the area.

Plant Health Australia

Plant Health Australia is the lead national coordinating body for plant health in Australia. We are a not-for-profit organisation that works in partnership with industry, governments, researchers and others to facilitate improvements in policy, practice and performance of Australia's plant biosecurity system and to build capability to respond to plant pest emergencies.

Our efforts enhance Australia's plant health status, assist trade, safeguard the livelihood of producers and support the sustainability and profitability of our plant industries and the communities that rely upon them.

For further information, visit www.phau.com.au or call (02) 6215 7700.

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