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# Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Rice Production

... of growing importance

## Media Release

7 June 2004

### Rice Farmer Survey Provides Interesting Results

A survey conducted recently to gauge the attitudes of farmers to sustainable agriculture has gathered some very valuable data according to Charles Sturt University researcher, Andy Brown.

More than 120 Coleambally rice farmers took part in the telephone survey which was carried out by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Rice Production (Rice CRC) with assistance from the Ricegrowers' Association (RGA).

"We achieved a response rate of 80%, well above the average for a survey of this kind. I'd like to thank everyone who took part", Mr Brown said.

The survey explored different ideas about sustainable agriculture and was organised around several themes. Participants were first of all asked to respond to different interpretations of sustainable agriculture.

Mr Brown said "The raw data from this part of the survey indicates the vast majority of participants viewed sustainable agriculture as a practical goal and a roughly comparable emphasis on profit, environment and community. The notion that farmers only place a significant value on profit does not stand up to scrutiny here."

The survey subsequently explored the themes of profit, environment and community in greater detail before attempting to gain a measure of the significance of Rice CRC generated technologies and finally, the role of women in farming.

Mr Brown commented, "Obviously, we're very pleased the initial results strongly suggest that the Rice CRC is making a significant contribution to the development of sustainable rice-based farming systems in Coleambally.

"The fact that 20% of those who took part in the survey were women is a strong indication of their active role in agriculture. This role was recognised and valued by the overwhelming majority of participants."

Although the survey is part of Mr Brown's doctoral research, it was designed as more than just an academic exercise. Survey results will be made available to participants with assistance from the RGA once data analysis is completed. This data will also serve as a valuable guide for future Rice CRC research and development programmes.

Contact Andy Brown at CSU - 6933 4329

Photo attached to e-mail as a separate file.

**SUGGESTED PHOTO CAPTION:** Rice CRC researcher Andy Brown analyses the results of a survey on sustainable farming practices recently carried out in Coleambally.



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The Rice CRC is sponsored by the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program. The Centre coordinates the research activities of teams from Charles Sturt University, NSW Agriculture, CSIRO, Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources, University of Sydney, SunRice and the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation.

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