

**Media Release - Wednesday 14 November 2012**

## **John Ralph Essay Competition winners announced**

Mr David Anthony, Chairman of the Australian Farm Institute, has announced the winners of the annual John Ralph Essay Competition at the opening of the Institute's Australian Agriculture Roundtable Conference. This year's competition comprised essays on the question 'Can Australia become the food bowl of Asia?'

The winning professional essay this year was submitted by Sydney based food industry consultant Geoff Ball. The winning student essay was submitted by Edward Perrett, a student at the University of Melbourne.

'Geoff's essay proposed that large-scale, market and consumer led exports of packaged consumer foods would provide the best path for agriculture to maximise economic growth for the nation and become an important regional food leader', said Executive Director Mick Keogh.

As a student, Edward's essay positions the topic as a 'wicked problem', and suggests if Australian agriculture is going to go anywhere near supplying Asian demand, everyone from farmers to the Australian Government has a role to play. 'The three issues that seem to attract most attention in all of the papers were enhanced research and development, the need for a better funded and more comprehensive approach to natural resource management, and a focus on the "people" issues. None of these are easy areas to bring about change, but all are issues about which there is a strong agreement that change is needed', Mick Keogh said.

'The judging choice was difficult, and the two essays selected as the winning entries were of a high standard. A total of thirty entries were received and all the entrants should be congratulated on their efforts,' Mr Keogh concluded.

Geoff Ball's and Edward Perrett's papers will be printed in the summer 2012 *Farm Policy Journal*.

The cash prize for the professional category was \$5000 and for the student category was \$1000, and both winners also receive a complimentary one year membership to the Australian Farm Institute.

The entries were judged by:

- Mr David Anthony, Chairman of the Australian Farm Institute
- Mr Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute
- Professor Ross Kingwell, Australian Farm Institute Research Advisory Committee



**Professional category winner** - Geoff Ball, Food industry consultant is a food industry consultant with a particular interest in research management and strategic planning. Geoff recently has helped out on a strategic plan development for CSIRO's food division and as an editor assisting with development of the PISC Food and Nutrition Research and Development and Technology Transfer strategy.



**Student category winner** - Edward Perrett has studied anthropology and geography at the University of Melbourne and has graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours from The University of Melbourne. His honours thesis focused on how policy changes to groundwater entitlements in New South Wales could be better understood by examining how different types of risk are framed by policy-makers. He is now completing his Masters in an Environment course, specialising in Governance, Policy, and Communication.

**John Ralph Essay Competition** - John Ralph was the inaugural Chairman of the Institute and argued strongly for comprehensive and objective research as the basis for sound policy decision-making, particularly for the agriculture sector. This competition was established to recognise John Ralph's contribution. The annual John Ralph Essay competition gives students and professionals the opportunity to have their policy ideas heard and printed in the *Farm Policy Journal*.

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