

EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

A private future for food and fibre quality?

Historically, public authorities specified safety and quality standards for agricultural products, and provided reassurance to consumers that products were safe. Increasing consumer demands and the rise of food and fibre brands, and retailer brands have led to the development of private quality and safety standards. These private standards are a form of risk management for food and fibre brands, and retailers; but also create barriers to entry and exit for farmers supplying these brands and retailers.

The Spring 2011 *Farm Policy Journal* sheds light on the pros and cons for the farming sector of these new trends – analysing impacts on domestic and international trade and economics. The Journal also provides useful tools for upgrading your knowledge of this topic, including a lexicon, and case studies from China and South-East Asia.

'The development of well-defined supply chains that closely link farmers, processors and retailers in the production of branded foods is occurring almost universally, as food retailers and processors seek to exercise greater control over food supply chains to better manage risk and to extract increased margins' said Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute.

'The emergence of private standards in agricultural markets heralds a transfer of the control of some aspects of food systems from public authorities (which have traditionally exercised control over food safety, biosecurity and quality standards) to private sector participants, and raises a range of issues about the operation of these markets in the future.'

'The rise of private standards is certainly something that bears close scrutiny and may require consideration by policy-makers in the future, but at the same time also has the potential to provide new opportunities for Australian farmers' said Mick Keogh.

The contributors to the Spring 2011 *Farm Policy Journal* are:

- **Gaetane Potard & Mickael Hugonnet**, Agricultural product quality: lexicon and examples
- **Jill E Hobbs**, Public and private standards for food safety and quality: international trade implications
- **H Frederick Gale & Dinghuan Hu**, China's food quality challenge
- **Wendy Umberger & Garry Griffith**, Beef cattle producer strategies to accommodate more concentrated and organised value chains, and more discriminating consumers
- **Ma Lucila A Lapar & Marites M Tiongco**, Private standards in pork value chains: role, impact and potential for local innovation to improve food safety and enhance smallholder competitiveness
- **Sandrine Freguin-Gresh & Ward Anseeuw**, Contract agriculture and private norms in South Africa: trends and issues for smallholders.

A copy of the Journal can be downloaded [here](#) (media copy only).

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