



MEDIA RELEASE

Date of release: 10 December 2010

Terra Madre Day and International Human Rights Day

For immediate release

A media release of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance

‘Local food’ at heart of Alliance Manifesto

10 December 2010 is the Terra Madre Day: the twenty-first anniversary of the founding of the international food awareness organisation, Slow Food. It is a day on which millions of Slow Food members and their supporters worldwide join together to celebrate food diversity and the right to good, clean and fair food.

10 December is also the 62nd International Human Rights Day, commemorating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on this day in 1948 in Paris by 48 member states of the United Nations General Assembly. One of the most important human rights is the basic right to adequate food, recognised by 160 countries, including Australia.

The Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA) has chosen this day to call on community and government to debate and support the development of resilient and democratic local and national food systems in the face of profound risks and uncertainties.

AFSA national spokesperson Michael Croft – also co-leader of Slow Food Canberra – said the Manifesto launched today by AFSA proposed a framework and direction for tackling the many sustainability and sovereignty issues confronting the Australian food supply.

“Hundreds of thousands of Australians are already voting with their feet to support locally-based food systems,” Mr Croft said.

“The rapid growth of farmers’ markets and the success of award-winning community-shared agriculture models such as that developed by Food Connect in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide are part of a strong, community-led impetus for change.”

“If, as farmers and consumers, we become more self-reliant through local food production and choice, we will be better able to withstand future shocks such as oil price spikes or fuel-supply disruptions.”

“Our Alliance of community organisations seeks to work with all Australians who want farming and food systems that keep them and their families healthy, that guarantee a secure supply of food no matter the circumstances, and that ensure a fair deal for our nation's farmers,” Mr Croft said.

Alliance national co-ordinator Nick Rose said that ecologically-resilient food systems should be a central part of any national food policy debate.

“Ecological farming systems nourish the soil, restore our precious waterways, protect and enhance our unique biodiversity and store atmospheric carbon in the ground,” Mr Rose said.

“There are thousands of Australian farmers using these systems, delivering numerous benefits. The industrialised food and farming system is one of the largest contributors to global warming. We can turn that around, so that food and farming-related activities become a major part of the solution.”

Food Connect founder and executive director Robert Pekin said that a combination of innovation, creativity and diversity were at the heart of the Alliance Manifesto.

“People are hungry for options to what's currently on offer. The Alliance Manifesto provides a viable framework of what a wonderful food future this country could have if governments, farmers, business people and communities work collectively towards it,” he said.

“That's why Food Connect is proud to be a founding member of the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance and wholeheartedly endorses its Manifesto.”

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Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance contacts:

For national media comment, contact

National Spokesperson – Michael Croft: 0413 387 686

National Coordinator – Nick Rose: 0414 497 819

For local media comment, contact:

ACT – Pennie Scott 0427 441 107

New South Wales – Russ Grayson: 0414 065 203

Northern Territory – Chris Bond: 0418 833 561

Queensland – Robert Pekin: 0404 777 491

South Australia – Joel Catchlove: 0435 631 524

Tasmania – Zoe Magnus: 0407 323 761

Victoria – Jennifer Alden: 0404 255 317

Western Australia – Jamie Kronborg: 0409 912 967