

Woolworths Extends Commitment to Sustainable Farming with \$3.25 million Investment Program

Friday 5th February 2010: Woolworths has today increased its investment in Australia's rural future with the launch of a \$3.25 million Fresh Food Farming program. The program will draw together a number of initiatives designed to advance agricultural sustainability and help build leadership capacity in the sector.

Woolworths Limited CEO Michael Luscombe said: "As the debate around long term food availability and affordability intensifies, it is vital for all organisations involved in the food supply chain to adopt a leadership position and help safeguard Australia's future food security. Higher input costs, a rising population and climate change all have the potential to impact the food we eat, which is why industry must assist our farmers to adapt and thrive.

"Our previous support for the farming community has largely focused on the provision of emergency assistance grants for farming families and recovery grants for rural community infrastructure. It is now time to look to the future and ensure that our farmers are better equipped to be able to manage Australia's long term food production needs," Mr Luscombe added.

The Fresh Food Farming program will focus on two key areas:

1) Sustainable Farming

The development of sustainable farming techniques is essential to enable farmers to increase productivity, efficiency and better utilise precious resources. Woolworths has been working with Landcare for the last three years supporting a variety of major on-farm projects across the country as well as providing sustainability grants to hundreds of farmers and we are now looking to increase our investment in this area.

- more -

2) Creating Future Leaders

Greater investment needs to be made in order to attract and retain skills and leadership within the agricultural sector. In order to encourage young people outside of the industry to develop a career in agriculture, we need to create incentives and development opportunities to help them achieve their full potential. Initiatives such as the Rural Leadership Program, of which Woolworths is a sponsor, and the Woolworths Agricultural Scholarship scheme are already assisting with this objective but much more can be done.

Mr Luscombe added: “The Fresh Food Farming Program will help us to better support the projects we already have operating and develop new initiatives across the two core areas of focus. Woolworths hopes to consult with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as well as organisations such as the National Farmers Federation, the Country Women’s Association and relevant farming and agricultural bodies in order to identify optimum ways to channel our investment.”

Further information about current and future projects within the Fresh Food Farming program will be announced in due course.

- Ends -

CONTACT:

For further information please contact the Woolworths Press Office on 02 8885 1032