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Australia and the US unite to meet global horticulture challenges

The grower-owned Research and Development Corporation, Hort Innovation, has signed a historic co-operative research deal with a leading US research university, ranked among the top in the world for agricultural science programs, to support Australia's \$9.3 billion horticulture industry.

The agreement was finalised after Hort Innovation and the [University of California, Davis](#), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) yesterday, which saw both parties enter into a two-year research and information sharing agreement.

Hort Innovation CEO John Lloyd said the University's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences has an international research reputation with celebrated academics and a wealth of growing, transferable knowledge that applies to key issues in Australian horticulture.

"With a research investment spend of more than \$780 million per year, a faculty that is stacked with academic award-winners, and a wealth of other accolades for research excellence, UC Davis is the ideal institution with which to partner," he said.

"In return, UC Davis will get the opportunity to work with leading Australian research providers through Hort Innovation to build on its knowledge and share resources to tackle some of the biggest issues our countries face in modern agriculture."

Mr Lloyd said the specific research priorities of the agreement are being discussed, and it is likely key areas of focus will include smart farming, pollination, food science and a PHD exchange student program.

He said the agreement marks the culmination of several months of talks with the University, which also has an esteemed reputation in the areas of innovation and technology.

"To say we are excited by this research MoU is an understatement," Mr Lloyd said. "The US is the world's largest producer of almonds and blueberries, and second largest producer of apples, strawberries, cherries and pistachios, and its academic commitment to advancing horticulture industries is second to none.

"This agreement will allow us to combine some of North America's leading research minds with those of some of Australia's top researchers to provide benefits to Australian horticulture for years to come".

UC Davis vice provost and associate chancellor of global affairs Joanna Regulska said: "Our collaboration with Hort Innovation provides a unique opportunity for research and innovation.

"It is only through these strong cross-border and interdisciplinary collaborations that global challenges can be solved."

Hort Innovation, industry representatives, the Australian Government and UC Davis are scoping the research strategy with details expected to be released in the coming weeks.

Mr Lloyd said Hort Innovation would be calling for Expressions of Interest from potential research partners and co-investors in the coming months.

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit, research and development corporation. It delivers more than \$100 million in research, development and marketing activities each year with funding from the Australian Government, grower levies and other sources.

MEDIA CONTACT: Kelly Vorst-Parkes on 0447 304 255 or Kelly.vorst.parkes@horticulture.com.au

