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Agbiotech leaders head to New Zealand

The world's top international agricultural biotechnology conference will be held in New Zealand in 2012, bringing unprecedented opportunities to stimulate and showcase Australasia's agbiotech capability.

NZBIO, which represents New Zealand's biotechnology industry, has been announced as host of ABIC 2012 - the annual conference of the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference. Support from **AusBiotech**, Australia's biotechnology organisation, was central to New Zealand winning the bid and the two bodies will work closely to demonstrate the contribution the region can make to the global agbiotech sector.

The Ministry of Science and Innovation (MSI), a major supporter of the bioscience sector, has also played a key role in bringing ABIC to New Zealand.

ABIC is attended by industry leaders, researchers and scientists, investors and policy makers. Delegates from around the world, including a big contingent from Australia, are expected at the conference in Rotorua in September, 2012.

ABIC brings industry professionals together to learn about the latest advances in agbiotech and discuss how technologies can be applied to global issues such as climate change, sustainability, food production and health and nutrition.

NZBIO Chair Maxine Simmons says securing ABIC hosting rights is a significant achievement which offers huge potential to advance agbiotech in this part of the world.

"New Zealand is an acknowledged leader in biological science. The application of this expertise supports, and adds tremendous value to, our primary industries. This international conference will put the spotlight on the breadth and depth of our capabilities and innovation in agbiotech.

"As host of ABIC 2012, we can also facilitate robust international debate on important global issues."

Through decades of experience in adding value to agricultural products in the fields of agricultural technology, animal health, food technology and human health, agricultural biotechnology has become a major contributor to the New Zealand economy. In the last financial year, agriculture generated more than NZ\$24.5 billion in exports.

NZBIO's Chief Executive Michelle Sullivan says ABIC 2012 will have both a research and a commercial focus.

"Both New Zealand and Australia are known for ideas, innovation and cutting edge agbiotech technologies but this is very much a global industry and that means our companies need the right partnerships and investment to take their innovations to the world.

"ABIC 2012 will provide a forum to forge collaborations and joint ventures with premium partners."

The conference will feature keynote speeches from global experts and innovators. The theme of the conference is "Adapting to a Changing World" including environmental, social, and economic change.

Influential expatriate New Zealander Dr John Bedbrook, vice president DuPont Agricultural Biotechnology, who leads biotechnology research efforts at DuPont business [Pioneer Hi-Bred](#), has already been confirmed as a speaker. Dr Bedbrook has a PhD from the University of Auckland, was a Fullbright Scholar to Harvard Medical School, and is at the forefront of molecular breeding internationally.

"New Zealand is an exciting hub for agricultural biotechnology given the quality of research carried out there, the level of entrepreneurship and its position as a major food producer.

"I am looking forward to contributing to debate at the conference and learning more about the ongoing innovation and developments in the New Zealand and Australian agbiotech industries."

Organisers say Rotorua is an excellent location for the conference given its sightseeing attractions and proximity to facilities such as crown research institute Scion, Waikato University and the Waikato Innovation Hub, AgResearch's Ruakura facility and the Clean Energy Centre in Taupo.

Responsibility for ABIC 2012 is being handed to New Zealand at the 2011 conference in Johannesburg this week (6 - 9 September).

About ABIC

The first ABIC conference was held in Canada in 1996 and in 1998 the ABIC Foundation was set up to ensure the continued success of ABIC meetings. The Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation overseen by a board of directors with representation from several countries and based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Its goal is to ensure ongoing opportunities for continuous learning and networking within the agbiotech community through the annual Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference. ABIC conferences are held on a four year rotation in the following regions: Europe/Africa/Middle East; Asia Pacific; United States/Canada/Mexico; and South America.

www.abic.ca

About NZBIO

NZBIO is a vibrant member-based organisation focused on growing New Zealand's prosperous bioeconomy. With hundreds of individual and corporate members from across agbiotech, human health, industrial and environmental and food bioscience, NZBIO plays a leading role in providing practical support for companies to grow. NZBIO's activities include member events, seminars and conferences, policy advocacy, national and international outreach and promotion. Our membership base ranges from start up bioscience companies, to mature corporates and major multinationals. We also represent New Zealand research institutes and universities, specialist service professionals, corporate, institutional, individual and student members from New Zealand and around the world.

NZBIO is an important voice of the New Zealand bioscience sector informing policy makers, enabling collaboration and investment, showcasing New Zealand's capability to the world and demonstrating how biosciences can contribute to societal, economic and environmental challenges.

www.nzbio.org.nz

About AusBiotech

AusBiotech is Australia's biotechnology industry organisation representing 3,000 members covering the human health, agricultural, medical devices and diagnostics, food technology,

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environmental and industrial sectors in biotechnology. **AusBiotech** is dedicated to the development, growth and prosperity of the Australian biotechnology industry, by providing initiatives to drive sustainability and growth, outreach and access to markets, and representation and support for members nationally and around the world. Its membership base includes biotechnology companies, ranging from start-ups to mature multinationals, research institutes and universities, specialist service professionals, corporate, institutional, individual and student members from Australia and globally.