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Dr Jo Luck appointed director of new plant biosecurity push

A renowned Australian scientist with more than 25 years' experience in plant disease, biosecurity and microbiology has been appointed the director of the national Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI).

Dr Jo Luck will lead the development and delivery of plant biosecurity research for PBRI - a new partnership between seven plant Research and Development Corporations (RDCs).

Hort Innovation chief executive John Lloyd said Dr Luck is the ideal candidate for the PBRI director role.

"Dr Luck has a strong track record of delivering results throughout her 30-odd year career in plant sciences," he said.

"With exceptional leadership skills, valuable operational experience and abundant energy, Dr Luck is ideally positioned to work with all seven of the nation's research and development corporations to propel Australia's biosecurity offering to new heights."

Dr Luck will be charged with helping unite biosecurity research efforts across the plant RDCs, stamping out any repetition in funding and making recommendations for new investment in consultation with producers and other stakeholders.

She will also work with key biosecurity stakeholders to identify research area priorities, engage funding partners and keep government and other stakeholders informed of activities.

Dr Luck is the former research director at Plant Biosecurity Co-operative Research Centre. Before that, she was the principal research scientist of microbiology at the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, and performed roles at NSW Agriculture, NSW Fisheries and La Trobe University.

Greg Fraser, PBRI chair and Plant Health Australia chief executive said Dr Luck has a detailed understanding of funding and research in biosecurity, and "is well known and well regarded by many of the key stakeholders that will be involved in the new research partnership".

PBRI – comprising the wine, wood, cotton, grain, rural industry, sugar and horticulture research and development corporations – currently invests \$55 million per year in research to manage pests and diseases that affect Australian plant crops.

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