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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Leading international and national extension researchers will be keynote speakers at the *Stimulating Private Sector Extension in Australia agriculture to increase returns from R&D* forum in Melbourne later this month.

The participatory forum, to be held at The Metropolis in Southbank on May 17, will feature presentations from Associate Professor Laurens Klerkx, who is based at Wageningen University in The Netherlands, Dr Mark Paine, from DairyNZ, and University of Melbourne's Associate Professor Ruth Nettle.

Project manager Ian Linley said the international presenters would speak on how the approaches in other countries could provide insight to strategic actions in Australian private sector extension.

"Both Associate Professor Klerkx and Dr Paine are part of the project's Expert Panel and have provided vital insights into what other countries are experiencing in private sector extension," Mr Linley said.

"They will provide information to forum participants which will be thought-provoking and will encourage the audience to consider opportunities for the Australian private sector extension system.

Mr Linley said there had been strong interest shown in the forum from agriculture private and public sector advisers, producers and researchers from around Australia.

"Another highlight will be the private sector panel, which will include observations from a range of agricultural extension perspectives including agribusiness, farm advisory services, producer/farming systems groups and Research and Development Corporations," he said.

"Forum participant contributions will be instrumental in informing the project consultation and research as we move into the third year of this project."

The project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as part of its Rural R&D programme.

It is also supported by six RDCs, the NSW and Victorian governments and the University of Melbourne, which is conducting the research component of the project.

More information is available at [rirg.fvas.unimelb.edu.au/ag-extension](http://rirg.fvas.unimelb.edu.au/ag-extension)

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