



NRM SOUTH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

What is this about?

NRM South is progressing an international cooperation agreement with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). The President of CAAS, Professor Tang Huajun, will lead a delegation to Tasmania in November 2017 to sign a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NRM South and the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to develop and implement joint research, development and extension (R,D&E) activities in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

To materialise the cooperation, CAAS will participate in an Australia-China Sustainable Agriculture Technology Forum hosted by NRM South in southern Tasmania in 2018 and work with NRM South and UTAS to implement the following initial joint R,D&E projects:

- Soil nutrient and moisture management and soil health remediation through science, technology and farming practices.
- Restoration of farmland waterways and water bodies for improved water quality on farmland and the surrounding environment.
- Sustaining healthy bee populations for pollination services.
- Mobilising stakeholder partnerships and involvement for NRM outcomes.

These initial activities will lead to longer-term cooperation across a wide range of agricultural issues: science, technology, innovation, education and improved practices. The MOU will facilitate projects, study tours, conferences, forums, workshops, seminars, and exchanges between scientists, extension professionals, consultants and advisors, farmers, industry associations, students and rural communities.

Who is the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences?

CAAS is responsible for all aspects of agricultural science and technology research at the central government level in China. It has 41 research institutes located in Beijing and throughout the country. The research and policy work of the Academy is considerable and categorised into eight disciplinary clusters, 134 research fields and 309 research focus areas. In May 2017, CAAS celebrated its 60th anniversary and was congratulated by China's President Xi Jinping for its leading role in agricultural modernisation through scientific and technological progress and innovation.

Why is CAAS interested in international cooperation with NRM South?

China has embarked on an ambitious long-term plan for the modernisation of its agriculture with an emphasis on more sustainable farming practices, better natural resource management and environmental improvement. In 2013, the Chinese Government launched *The Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Program (ASTIP)* which is being delivered by CAAS. The ASTIP is supported by central government funding from 2013-2025 and aims to promote novel innovations and leverage research results to solve specific agricultural problems in China. The four objectives of ASTIP include supporting long term and interdisciplinary research, expanding research support facilities and infrastructure; capacity building and fostering international cooperation.

CAAS recognises Australia's R,D&E capabilities in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management as world leading. They acknowledge Australia's high level capacity in policy, planning, program management, research, innovation, technology transfer from science to practical farming, and our highly effective institutional structures for NRM.

What is the value of cooperation with CAAS to NRM South, Tasmania and the Australian NRM network?

China is Australia's leading trading partner. For Tasmania, it is the largest export market with agricultural produce, tourism and education prominent.

The collaboration with CAAS builds on policies of both the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to progress trading, scientific, educational, and cultural relationships with China. It aligns with the Australia China Agricultural Cooperation Agreement (ACACA) and the Joint Framework in Expanding Cooperation that the Australian and Chinese Ministers for Agriculture signed in November 2015.

The collaboration has received strong industry and government endorsement including from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, and the Tasmanian Premier, Deputy Premier and Minister for Primary Industries and Water, and the Minister for State Growth.

NRM South's goal is that cooperation with CAAS will lead to new revenue sources, knowledge and technology that will enable NRM South to grow its delivery of high quality NRM services to the region's community into the foreseeable future. It will assist our delivery of the Natural Resource Management Strategy 2015-2020 for Southern Tasmania.

The cooperation will enable NRM South and the other regional Australian NRM bodies to have access to the immense volume Chinese agricultural research and new technologies.

It will result in new business opportunities in China for Tasmanian and Australian expertise to assist CAAS and Chinese agricultural industries in the agricultural modernisation process and achieve Government targets (e.g. zero growth in the use of agricultural chemicals and fertilisers by 2020).

It will stimulate further trade between China, Tasmania and mainland Australia in high value agricultural products that can be marketed on the basis of sustainable production practices and evidence of provenance.

Through this collaboration, NRM South and other Australian regional NRM bodies will be able to partner with the world's most populous nation and through this deal with some of the global challenges of food security, conservation of the world's natural resources and the impact of climate change.

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