

## Ethics in Agriculture Workshop

The production and delivery of 'clean green' food is a complex process underpinned by scientific and technological, social, political and ethical inputs. For example, water provides for both food production and environmental protection such as biodiversity, but how do we optimise the benefits to these competing needs? People want meat at affordable prices, but what is the cost to animal welfare? Such dilemmas will become critical as the challenges of food security, climate change and water scarcity, population growth, decreasing land availability, and a skills shortage further pressure agriculture. We must address some of these ethical issues to inform future policy and practice.



*From left, Prof Michiel Korthals<sup>†</sup> (workshop facilitator) with organising committee, Dr Emma Rush, Prof John Weckert and Prof Deirdre Lemerle. Photo: Virginia Gawler.*

A workshop was organised by Professor Deirdre Lemerle together with Dr Emma Rush and Professor John Weckert, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, at CSU Wagga Wagga on 30 November and 1 December, 2010, to commence a discussion on Agricultural Ethics. A select group of around 20 agricultural scientists and applied philosophers attended to develop a multi-disciplinary team addressing issues around agricultural ethics. This activity was a collaboration between the Graham Centre and the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE), a partnership between CSU and the University of Melbourne. Sustainable food production and environmental protection is a core requirement for the future of Australia's economic, environmental and social growth.

Professor Michiel Korthals<sup>†</sup> from Wageningen University, The Netherlands, gave the opening address and facilitated discussion. The outcomes were the formation of a team of scientists, ethicists and applied philosophers to address the issues; we identified the current situation and information gaps (research needs were

identified); and we commenced the development of a research proposal and identified potential funding sources.

*<sup>†</sup>Michiel Korthals is Professor of Applied Philosophy at Wageningen University, The Netherlands. He studied Philosophy, Sociology, German and Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam and the Karl Ruprecht Universität in Heidelberg. His academic interests include bioethics and ethical problems concerning food production and environmental issues, deliberative theories, and American Pragmatism.*