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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women to jump on board the Climate Change Roadshow

'Adapting Australian farming systems to climate change: a participatory approach' was a collaborative project between CSIRO, Birchip Cropping Group, Brigalow-Jimbour Floodplains Group, Mingenew Irwin Group and RMCG. The project examined the impact of a range of possible future climate conditions across twelve case study farms to compare the likely impacts of climate change on crop production. Rather than identifying all possible adaptations for managing climate related risks, the project sought to evaluate the suitability of adaptations according to criteria such as production impacts. The results suggest that some adaptation options provide resilience to both modest and more extensive climate change across much of Australia.

A range of both tactical and strategic response were identified and a subset of tactical adaptation options including increasing fallow or pasture, reducing planting density; changing crop rotations, selecting shorter season crops and increasing residue retention were assessed. Production in an individual paddock is assisted by improved water use efficiency measures such as fallowing, pasturing and enhanced residue management, however these may have a negative implication for overall farm productivity. While yield was found to be an important indicator of the effectiveness of a particular adaptation option the evaluation process must include a consideration of the economic and social implications as well.

BCG is undertaking its latest project focused on climate communication - with the focus on women. The '*Climate Change Roadshow*' is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under the Australia's Farming Future program. Commencing in July 2009, the project involves a series of climate forums in five regional towns in the Victorian Mallee and Wimmera region.

"Women are often involved in the financial and marketing side of running a farm business and need to be aware of the implications of climate change and how it will affect the future viability of the farm. These forums will give Wimmera Mallee women the confidence to actively contribute to farm business decisions whilst encouraging the building of networks with other women in the region" said project officer Jodie Odgers.

The target is women from across the grains and mixed farming sectors - farmers, mothers, consultants, agency, not for profit, and industry.

The forums to be held in Donald, Sea Lake, Warracknabeal, Woomelang and Birchip will focus on climate science, carbon mitigation, managing risk, making changes at home and farm viability.

The first forum, featuring the Bureau of Meteorology's Clare Mullen presenting '*Understanding climate variability and trends*'; will be held in Donald after the mid year school holidays on 14 July. The forum will be held between 10am – 2pm, with lunch provided.

For more information or to book into a forum contact Jodie Odgers at BCG on (03) 5492 2787. To read the '*Adapting Australian farming systems to climate change: a participatory approach*' report go to the BCG website www.bcg.org.au.