



Our rice production 'leading the world'

EXPERTS have claimed the region's rice production development is setting a global example.

The importance of the work farmers in the region do in helping feed the world was never more apparent as keynote speaker Dr Matthew Morell addressed the crowd at the International Temperate Rice Conference in Griffith this week.

Day two of the global conference had Dr Morell, who is the director general of the International Rice Research Institute, speak on the future of rice in a changing world, praising the advancements of local irrigators to date.

"Our goal, much like the Murrumbidgee Irrigation

Area ... is really about using systems for social and economic transformations, that is what has happened here in Griffith and that's our objective globally," he said.

"Global challenges, require global action."

According to the World Health Organisation rice is

the dominant staple food crop for an estimated half of the world's population, a demand Dr Morell says is expected to increase with projected population growth.

Speaking to the theatre, Dr Morell emphasised the importance of rice science in meeting such challenges like population growth as well as

others the next 25 years are likely to bring.

It was a challenge he said

required a co-ordinated approach to innovation across a number of platforms to maintain the ability of communities worldwide to continue producing rice.

"It is not just about economics, it is also about so-

cial factors, maintaining the vibrancy of rural communities," he said.

Dr Morell further explained the importance of developing drought-resistant and salt-tolerant rice, and empowering women left behind in rural areas as male populations move to urban areas.