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**MEDIA RELEASE
FRUIT FLY BEER BAIT A BOON FOR VIETNAM**

The hard work, long-term collaboration and dedication of Australian and Vietnamese agricultural researchers has come to fruition with the opening today (9 May) of a commercial fruit fly protein bait facility at the An Think Brewery, near Hanoi, Vietnam.

Australian Ambassador to Vietnam, His Excellency Mr Bill Tweddell, said "Australian and Vietnamese agricultural researchers have been collaborating since 2001 to develop a low-cost, low-pollution means of controlling fruit flies, the scourge of Vietnam's domestic and export fruit industries.

"The facility we are dedicating today will provide fruit farmers with this means – through the production of a high protein bait derived from the spent yeast from the brewery. This protein bait is laced with pesticide and forms an irresistible but fatal fruit fly bait.

"The opening of the An Think Brewery protein bait facility means that Vietnam's fruit farmers now have a new source of low-cost, safe, environmentally-friendly product to control fruit fly, and to increase fruit yields and food safety," Mr Tweddell said.

The broad range of products that will benefit from the fly baits includes peaches, rose-apples, dragon fruits, mangoes, litchis, persimmons, grapefruits, oranges, bitter lemons, melons, pumpkins and papaw.

Mr Tweddell was speaking at the launch of the new An Think facility, to distinguished guests who included His Excellency Dr Tran Duc Minh, Vice Minister for Trade; Dr Nguyen Van Bo, President of the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Science; Mr Peter Core, Director of Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); Mr Nguyen Huu Truong, Vice Director of the Bac Ninh Agriculture and Rural Development Department; and senior representatives of the Plant Protection Research Institute (PPRI), Griffith University, Hoa Binh and An Think Companies and other key institutions.

The An Think facility in northern Vietnam is the second such facility in Vietnam. It has been set up as a commercial venture by Vietnam Safe Bio-Technology Shareholding Company, a joint venture involving the Plant Protection Research Institute (PPRI), Hoa Binh Agricultural Chemical Company, and the An Think Brewery.

This has been facilitated by the success of the first protein bait production factory at Foster's Brewery in Tien Giang, which was opened with the support of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and Foster's Brewery in May last year. While the first facility has capacity to provide baits for the Tien Giang region, the new joint venture facility will produce a greater volume to cover the northern and central regions of Vietnam.

"The partners in the joint-venture company undertaking this commercialising activity are to be congratulated for their efforts,"

"It is hoped that the lessons learned in this commercialisation activity will assist in the further commercialisation of pro-poor research results in the agricultural area in Vietnam," said Mr Tweddell.

"This is also a fine example of Vietnamese research institutions meeting the challenges of Vietnam's Decree 115, which was designed to transform research institutes into autonomous organisations responsible for raising their own revenue, including through the commercialisation of research products."

"The research and business partnerships between the Australian Government's international aid program through ACIAR, Griffith University, Plant Protection Research Institute, An Thinh Brewery and Hoa Binh Agricultural Chemical Company, are now reaching and benefiting farmers on a large scale through this new fruit fly bait facility," he said.

The Ambassador highlighted the role that Dr. Shanmugam Vijaysegaran, the Deputy Director of the International Centre for Management of Pest Fruit Flies, Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University, as the Australian Project leader of the longstanding ACIAR project that supported the development of the bait technology and the two facilities.

He also noted the enthusiasm and determination of the Directors of An Thinh and Hoa Binh companies, who played very important roles in supplying the intakes for the production and ensuring the distribution of the products to Vietnam's fruit farmers.

The fruit fly work is one of 50 ACIAR projects being designed and implemented in Vietnam. ACIAR has been partnering with Vietnamese and Australian research institutions since 1993, and is involved in a wide range of projects in forestry, land and water resource management, animal and crop production and health, and fisheries.

ACIAR's strategy in Vietnam emphasises research to assist the enhancement of smallholder farmer's incomes; and improving production and market access through improving the safety and quality of agricultural products.

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