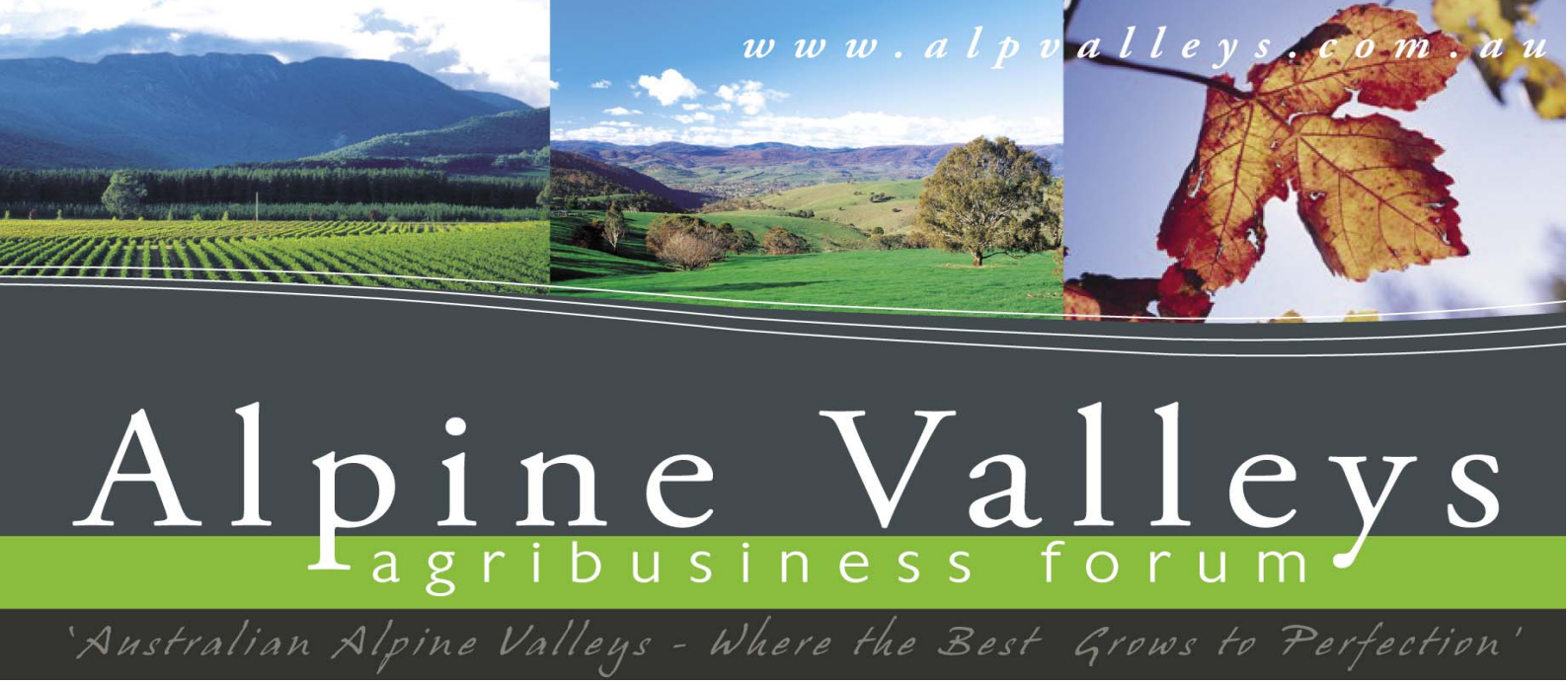

media release & photo opportunity

November 21, 2010

Exports on the slide

ALARM bells have started ringing after the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) revealed that the nation is now a net food importer.

Last year's report warned the industry's trade surplus for agriculturally-rich Australia had dropped from $4.5 billion in 2004-05 to just $150 million in 2008-09, stressing exports were only slightly exceeding imports.

Australia's food, beverage and grocery imports had grown by 40 per cent in just five years.

This year's report showed total imports now exceed industry exports by $1.8b.

"Importantly, this result must be put into context of the broader debates about food security and the need for Australia to play a role in feeding the world's projected nine billion population by 2050," the report stated.

"While Australia is a trading nation, having a robust food and grocery manufacturing sector is vital to ensuring we have a safe, affordable, nutritious and sustainable food supply for Australians well into the future." COLIN BETTLES reported

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