



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Sustainable Farm Management in Australia

Balancing Environmental
Preservation with
Agricultural Productivity



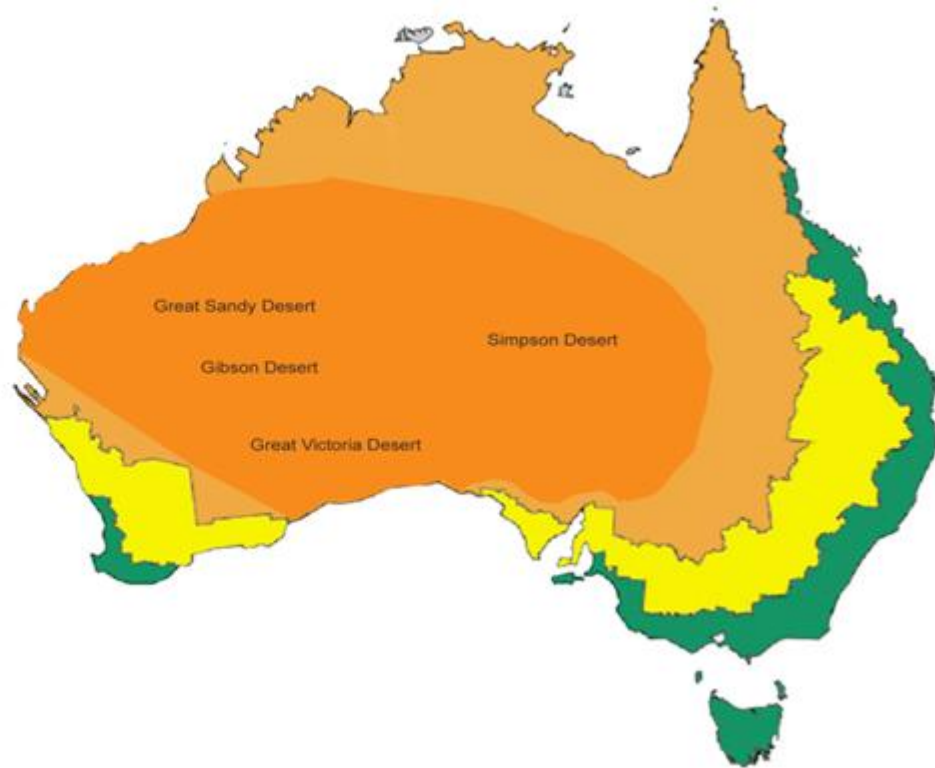
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Key Features of Australian Agriculture

Agricultural Zones in Australia

- Arid zone*
- Semi arid zone*
- Wheat-sheep zone*
- High rainfall zone*



Export orientated agriculture sector

- Australia exports two-thirds of agricultural production
- Agriculture contributes around 3% of GDP
- Major exports: beef, wheat, wool, wine and dairy products
- Major markets: China, Japan, South East Asia, United States and European Union



Challenges

- Domestic natural resource and environmental constraints:
 - water availability
 - climate change
 - soil degradation
- Biodiversity loss
 - 1,700 species and ecological communities at risk of extinction



Sustainable Farm Management

Relations between different tiers of government in natural resource management

- Land management and natural resources - State and Territory governments
- The Australian Government (federal) plays a key leadership and coordination role when there is a need for national action
- The different levels of government work together in managing agriculture, land and natural resources

The Australian Government is meeting the challenges through:

1. Environmental legislation and strategies
2. Agricultural research and development
3. Funding targeted programs



1. Environmental Legislation and Strategies

- The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation
- Australia's *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-30* is a framework for conserving our nation's biodiversity



2. Agricultural Research and Development

- Research and development is a major driver of agricultural productivity, and therefore leads to improved sustainable use of natural resources.
- The Australian Government makes a substantial investment in rural research and development - \$700 million per year.



3. Funding Targeted Programs

Landcare

- Build capacity of farmers to adopt sustainable farm and land management practices.
- More than 6,000 Landcare groups
- Collect and distribute data on land use, soil, groundcover, weeds and land management practices.



3. Funding Targeting Programs (continued)

Carbon Farming Futures

- Program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on farms
- Four elements:
 1. Filling the Research Gap
 2. Action on the Ground
 3. Extension and Outreach
 4. Conservation Tillage



3. Funding Targeted Programs (continued)

Water Reform

- One of the world's driest climates – prolonged droughts and low rainfall
- National Water Initiative – federal and state governments have agreed on consistent national approach to water management
- Water for the Future – \$15 billion to help farmers prepare for less water in the future



An Example: The Murray Darling Basin

- The Basin accounts for 40% of Australian food production
- Experienced prolonged drought over the last decade
- Stresses on water allocation – balance between agricultural and environmental requirements



Concluding remarks

- The sustainable management of our farming land is essential for the future viability of our agricultural industry
- Research and development is key to ensuring productivity increases
- Despite a range of challenges Australian agriculture remains internationally competitive

