



March
2021

Agriculture Stewardship package



Australia's agriculture industry depends on a biodiverse and well-managed natural resource base.

Agricultural land managers play a key role in environmental management. They are responsible for managing 58% of our landmass.

The \$34 million Agriculture Stewardship package aims to support the adoption of improved on-farm land management practices. It will develop a mechanism where farmers are rewarded for their efforts in delivering biodiversity and sustainability services that benefit their farms and the broader community.

Benefits of the package

The package will have wide reaching benefits for farmers, the environment and across agricultural communities and landscapes.

It will demonstrate that environmental markets and other mechanisms, such as certification systems, that reward farmers for protecting and improving biodiversity, can provide a real way to diversify, and potentially boost, farm income.

Well-managed agricultural landscapes will sustain high quality ecosystem services, such as:

- healthy soils
- clean air and water
- soil carbon storage and biodiversity.

They will also help drive industry profitability and build resilience.

Key points

- The Australian Government is investing \$34 million over four years (2018–19 to June 2023) to deliver an Agriculture Stewardship package.
- The Package comprises the Agriculture Biodiversity Policy, the Agriculture Stewardship Pilots with the Australian National University, and the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF).
- Pilot programs will demonstrate ways to diversify and boost farm income by rewarding landholders for biodiversity outcomes.
- Pilot programs will inform national solutions to providing farmers with opportunities to diversify into less drought-exposed income streams, making farm income more secure and improving environmental outcomes.

Pilot programs

The pilot programs are being designed in collaboration with The Australian National University and will be delivered by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

These pilots will demonstrate how to diversify and boost farm income by rewarding landholders for biodiversity outcomes. They will also help improve the resilience of farm businesses by providing opportunities to expand into less drought-exposed income streams.

Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot – March 2021

This pilot will develop arrangements to reward farmers for increasing biodiversity.

Farmers who undertake plantings for carbon can receive additional payments for maximising biodiversity benefits by planting a mix of species and looking after the vegetation.

Plantings can also benefit farmers by providing shelter for animals, protecting dams and waterways and reducing erosion.

Enhanced Remnant Vegetation Pilot – in development

Through this program, farmers could receive payments to protect, manage and enhance high conservation value remnant native vegetation on-farm. Activity examples may include,

- installing fencing
- carrying out weeding
- pest control
- replanting.

Certification and Trading schemes for farm biodiversity – mid 2021

The voluntary Australian Farm Biodiversity Certification Scheme will allow Australian farmers to showcase best practice natural resource management to sustain and build biodiversity.

Biodiversity Certification could help improve the profitability of farm businesses by ensuring access to markets, enabling them to receive price premiums for their produce, lowering capital costs and giving farmers access to information about ways of improving land management practices.

A trading platform will also be trialled to help bring buyers and sellers together. This will create new opportunities for farmer income and for green investors.

Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework – led by the NFF

Consultation with industry stakeholders and investors is being undertaken to create an Australian agriculture sustainability framework, verifying and connecting existing schemes.

The framework will look at market opportunities and existing industry schemes to grow market value in Australia and across the globe.

Agriculture Biodiversity Policy Statement – late 2021

The Agriculture Biodiversity Policy Statement will be informed by other components of the Agriculture Stewardship package. The policy will be a statement of agriculture's role in improving Australia's biodiversity outcomes.

Be Informed

For more information, visit our website at agriculture.gov.au/agriculturestewardship. Enquiries about the program can be directed to agstewardship@awe.gov.au or the department's contact number at **1800 900 090**.

