

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Submission

Date submitted

12/12/2014

Name of Organisation/Individual

University of Sydney

What are the top policies from the Green Paper that the Government should focus on in the White Paper and why?

What policies from the Green Paper don't you support and why?

General Comment

With reference to policy ideas 10 (improving access to finance) and 14 (strengthening agricultural education) in the Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper, the Livestock in Landscapes Group within the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at the University of Sydney has put a considerable amount of thought and effort into exploring alternative farm ownership structures such as equity partnerships.

A discussion paper on Equity Partnerships in Agriculture is attached. Attention needs to be given to educating Australian farmers and investors on the benefits and risks of alternative farm ownership models that have been successful in other similar agricultural focused countries, such as New Zealand. Farms in Australia have typically been owned and operated as family businesses. The traditional path to ownership has been either through inheritance or bank debt funding. However, as land prices continue to increase and foreign investors circle, farm ownership by an individual is becoming increasingly difficult and unaffordable. Succession issues and sustainability of the environment are also factors that can be addressed through the establishment of equity partnerships.