

**Submission to Agricultural Competitiveness Issues Paper
(My apologies for running out of time)**

1. Ensuring food security in Australia and globally

- What opportunities exist to expand agricultural production in Australia and how can we take advantage of them?

Within Kyogle Council LGA diversification of our primary industries is a real opportunity. Toonumbar Dam is an 11,000 megalitre water reservoir constructed in 1972 for the Dairy Industry. Unfortunately England our largest market joined the European Economic Market in 1974 and stopped buying our butter. Farmers moved to Beef without much consideration of other opportunities. Investigations are underway to explore opportunities in cropping, niche` market food production and diversifying into agritourism.

- How can farm businesses, food manufacturers and the retail sector be more responsive to domestic and global food demand and better integrate into domestic and global supply chains? Develop local and regional collectives and regional food brands.

- Do farmers have access to timely, relevant and accurate information to fully inform production decisions to meet domestic and global food demands?

The roll out of wireless broadband will certainly assist our primary industry sector to gain access to information on a global scale. Opportunities for training programs are needed now and share farming to allow younger farmers IT skills entry into the industry.

- What opportunities exist for exporting Australian agricultural technology, marketing skills and expertise to improve global food security outcomes?

Australia should openly share skills and knowledge with Countries who do not compete with our exports. Helping a 3rd world country is never a bad thing but remember to equally assist Australian farmers as well.

2. Farmer decisions for improving farm gate returns

- What are the drivers and constraints to farmers adopting alternative business structures, innovations or practices that will assist them in improving farm-gate returns?

Complicated legislation structures and a very real need for the three levels of government integrate their legislation and work together through the different departments. It requires three different applications to gain a water access licence in NSW. Feeding stock on the roadside during drought conditions requires a lengthy and complicated application process, as two examples.

- What tools, skills and advice do farmers need to effectively adapt and respond to the risks they face?

Professional on farm assistance, workshops and seminars to share information, skills and knowledge this is affordable. Provide incentives to be involved.

Kyogle Council is conducting a 'Fresh Ideas for Farming Productivity Seminar - Tuesday 9th September 2014, Kyogle Cinema 26 Bloore Street Kyogle'.

- What alternative actions or measures by governments, farmers or others would result in improved financial performance at the farm gate?

Once again complicated and often competing Federal and State Legislation and poorly constructed Local Council Local Environmental Plans are extremely inhibitive to pursue diversification on the farm to allow improved performance at the farm gate. Many farmers are willing to explore opportunities but the process is far too complicated and expensive – there is no clear return on investment.

- What approaches could be used to encourage improved drought preparedness?

Education?

- During drought, what measures are most effective in supporting long term resilience?

Develop incentives for the nation to work together on such projects as the successful 'Hay Muster'. There is plenty of river flat country in high rainfall areas that could produce ample fodder if the incentives were there to produce it for drought effected areas.

- How can new farmers be attracted to agriculture and how can they succeed?

Take a fresh look at share farming, this will allow affordable access to young farmers into the industry and allow aged farmers to develop industry exit plans. Knowledge and skills shared between traditional farming practices and new initiatives can only result in a healthy industry. Remove restrictive legislation and Council planning policy to allow exploration into diversifying farm practices including agritourism.

3. Enhancing access to finance

- How do we better attract private capital into farm investment?

Local Dollars Local Cents campaign to encourage investment into farm productivity with a guaranteed return. Collectives are becoming popular but only useful for the local market at present they do not produce export quality product.

- What examples are there of innovative financing models that could be used across the industry?

- What would encourage uptake of new financing models?

Local prosperity, local returns, local sustainability.

- What alternative business structures could be developed for farming that also retain ownership with farm families?

Setting up agreements to share farm; Farm practice and product diversification:

Identifying market opportunities: how this is done, looking at the demand side of the process.

Looking at attracting external investment and establishing Kyogle as a regional digital hub. Promote incentives to keeping the kids on the farm.

- How can foreign investment best contribute to the financing and productivity growth of Australian agriculture?

Introduction of new industry China very interested. Look outside the box and traditional farming practices.

4. Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and its value chains

- How might existing laws and regulations be changed to address any market power imbalances in the agricultural supply chain, without limiting prospects for global-scale firms developing in Australia?

Far too complex a subject to address through this process, 3 TIRE Government Integration would be a great start.

- How can the agriculture sector improve its competitiveness relative to other sectors in the economy?

- Which examples of overseas approaches to improving agricultural competitiveness have relevance for Australia?

5. Enhancing agriculture's contribution to regional communities

- What impact does the growth of populations in regional centres and the decline in more rural or remote townships have on farming businesses and the agriculture sector?

- How can the agriculture sector best contribute to growth in jobs and boost investment in regional communities, including indigenous communities?

- What community and policy responses are needed in rural and regional communities to adapt and change to new pressures and opportunities in the agriculture sector?

- How do we attract the next generation of farmers?

6. Improving the competitiveness of inputs to the supply chain

- How can land, water and other farm inputs be more effectively deployed to better drive agriculture sector productivity, while maintaining or enhancing the natural resource base?
- What skills including specialised skills and training, will be required in the future and how can these be delivered and uptake encouraged?
- How can we attract workers to agriculture – particularly in remote areas?
- How can we promote career pathways for the agriculture sector, including models to enable younger farm workers to gain broader industry experience?
- How can rural industries and governments better identify, prioritise and fund research, development and extension?
- What irrigation, transport, storage and distribution infrastructure are required to support the food and fibre production systems of the future and how should this be funded?

7. Reducing ineffective regulations

- How well do regulations affecting the industry meet their policy objectives?
- What opportunities are there to reduce ineffective or inefficient regulation?
- Which regulations are disproportionate to the risks they are supposed to address?
- How do we coordinate across governments to reduce regulations whose costs exceed their benefits?

8. Enhancing agricultural exports

- How can industries and government respond to the key challenges and opportunities to increase or enhance exports?
- How can the government take best advantage of multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations (including through the World Trade Organization and through free trade agreements (FTAs)) to advance the interests of the sector?
- How can engagement between industry and government on market access priorities for Australian agricultural products be improved, including to inform negotiations on FTAs?
- What changes could be made to biosecurity arrangements, both in Australia and in other countries, that would enhance global trade in agricultural products?
- How do we provide the appropriate biosecurity controls at minimum cost?

9. Assessing the effectiveness of incentives for investment and job creation

- How well is the current set of government programmes and incentives directed at the agriculture sector meeting their objectives, in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency?
- Are government visa arrangements and programmes like relocation assistance, the Seasonal Worker Programme and Harvest Labour Services effective at channelling workers into the agriculture sector and what other approaches should be considered?
- What have other countries done to inspire agricultural investment?
- What has Australia done in the past that has had best effect?