



16th April 2014

Agricultural Competitiveness Taskforce
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Australia

**Submission to the White Paper for
Australian Agricultural Competitiveness**

Dear Taskforce members,

Could you please consider the following items when formulating future Federal Government legislation, regulations and policies.

a. **Consistent Food Standards**

Australian Governments should require the same standards for all imported foods as is required for Australian produced foods.

b. **Red Tape Reduction**

Reduce unnecessary bureaucratic requirements (red tape) from government departments, statutory bodies and other organisations to minimise costs and reduce non productive time.

c. **Research Revisited**

A new approach to research is required. Past research has driven farm practices which degraded soils over the years. The outcomes of the research

has created a dependence on the addition of fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides and chemicals to crops and pastures which has led to the reduction of profitability. Furthermore, as the soils degraded the dependence on more and stronger chemicals has been increased because this was the recommended solution to this problem. The result has been increased erosion, and more weed species in greater amounts, becoming more difficult and expensive to control.

Healthy Soils = Healthy Food = Healthy People = Healthy Future & Healthy Profits.

Research methods should use a holistic approach in live situations. Research should be driven by local farmers and graziers with the aim of increasing sustainable profits. The results should be tailored to assist farmers and graziers to manage sustainable farming practices leading to improved soils, weed reduction and reduced erosion.

d. **Funding Research**

The cost of research can be reduced if universities partnered with landholders and were funded to achieve sustainable and profitable outcomes. The universities could provide peer reviewed research methodology in addition to testing equipment and expertise. Landholders could provide land and stock to use for research projects and trials. Government funding and support for this type of research would reduce the agricultural industry's reliance on government aid during severe weather events if they were more profitable during good seasons.

e. **Training Primary Producers**

Primary producers should then have the opportunity to attend approved training courses so they can gain a better understanding of the proven results from the research. The primary producers could be funded by creating a scheme similarly to the primary producers component of the discontinued FarmReady program.

Conclusion

Sustainable agricultural management practices will lead to increased long term profitability of the agricultural sector, improved natural environment, and a benefit to all Australians.