

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE:
A NARRATIVE TO ENCOURAGE FUTURE POLICY REFORM**

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ABSTRACT

South Australian agriculture has been production and export orientated since soon after European settlement. The associated cultural implications have influenced, and been influenced by, the neoliberal capitalist form that has framed Australian and South Australian governance since the 1980s. An extreme wave of neoliberal productivism has been encouraged that has led to numerous critiques of this pathway, especially in regard to the sustainability of socio-environmental outcomes of agricultural land use. The social and environmental consequences of agricultural land use are rarely explicitly valued or supported by policy in South Australia, however a multifunctional shift is occurring in other wealthy nations, which involves the increased valuation of the multiple functions of agricultural systems. This thesis examines the implications of liberal governance on agricultural stakeholders in South Australia in an effort to understand and address specific criticisms to help plan for a more multifunctional future.

South Australian farmers and agricultural governance stakeholders were asked to describe their opinions on current policy and outline their perceptions of what framework was required to facilitate a multifunctional agricultural industry. Four key research questions are addressed concerning: the self-perceived priorities of South Australian farmers; farmer perceptions of agricultural governance institutions; South Australian agricultural governance stakeholders' perceptions of their roles; and, whether there are other, more appropriate policy mechanisms available to increase the sustainability of South Australian agriculture.

The original contribution to knowledge includes a survey of South Australian farmers' perceptions of current policy settings, with a spatial focus around the rural Riverland town of Loxton and the peri-urban Barossa Valley. Three policy recommendations, which are deduced from primary and secondary data analysis, form the main conclusions. Firstly, farmers themselves, and future policy, must recognise the importance of education to generate resilient agri-businesses, as education level is shown to alter respondents' priorities, increase the multifunctionality of land use, and reduce dependence upon government assistance. Secondly, to maximise the benefits of any policy implemented it must be flexible, community-focused to encourage cooperation, and avoid regulatory complexity to ensure farmer support. For example, a highly bureaucratic system, such as the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, that governs agriculture in the United Kingdom, is unlikely to be popular in the South Australian context. Finally, if the first two recommendations are combined into policy settings that encourage public-private partnerships in the agricultural sector, and increase explicit support mechanisms for social and environmental outcomes from farming, there will be beneficial implications for the long-term sustainability of agriculture in South Australia.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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PREFACE

Sections of this thesis have been used to form papers that are under peer-review, have been accepted for publication, and have been published in various journals and books. To make this clear each paper has been referenced the same as any other reference in this work, when the relevant material has been used. The details of each paper can be found in the reference section at the end of the thesis. A guide to where each publication features is also included below for the sake of convenience.

Chapter 2 – Contains edited work from this paper (Fielke and Bardsley, 2015a).

Chapter 2 and section 8.3 – Ideas and conclusions from this paper (Fielke and Bardsley, 2013).

Chapter 3 and section 8.3 – Contains edited work from this book section (Fielke, 2015).

Chapters 4-6 – Results contribute to this paper (Fielke and Bardsley, 2015b).

Chapters 4-6 and section 8.4 – Results and discussion contribute to this paper (Fielke and Bardsley, 2014).

Chapter 7 and section 8.2 – Results and discussion contribute to this paper (Fielke and Wilson, Submitted).

All tables and figures containing data from the surveys conducted for this project are referenced 'South Australian farmer survey, 2011-2012'. Abbreviations and acronyms are also expanded once at the beginning of each chapter in case readers are unfamiliar with the term and are only interested in particular sections of the study.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
DEWNR	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DOA	Department of Agriculture
EMS	Environmental Management Systems
EC	Exceptional Circumstances
EU	European Union
FPA	Farmers' Professional Association
FSC	Farmers' Specialised Cooperative
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVAP	Gross Value of Agricultural Production
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NASAA	National Association for Sustainable Agriculture in Australia
NFF	National Farmers' Federation
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NLP	National Landcare Program
NRAC	National Rural Advisory Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Regions South Australia
RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SA	South Australia
SAFF	South Australian Farmers' Federation
TDM	Tailored Design Method
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation