SEEA Agriculture: Australia

SEEA Agriculture Expert Group Meeting
7-8 October 2014
Rome, Italy

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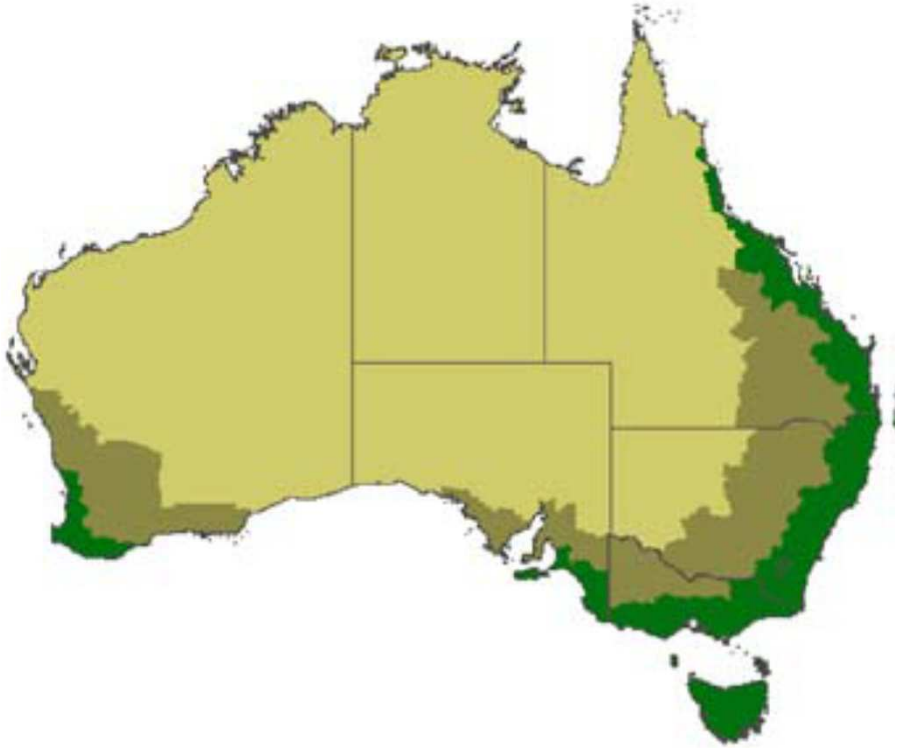
Agenda

- Agriculture in Australia
- Challenges and Policy Issues
- Agricultural Data Collections
- Existing collections and SEEA Agri
- Issues and Questions

Agriculture in Australia



- Pastoral zone—characterised by low rainfall and less fertile soils, agricultural land use is characterised by extensive grazing of native pastures.
- Wheat–sheep zone—the climate and topography generally allow regular cropping of grains in addition to the grazing of sheep and beef cattle on a more intensive basis than in the pastoral zone.
- High-rainfall zone—more suitable for grazing and intensive crop growing. Australia's dairy industry is mainly located in coastal areas of the high rainfall zone.

Agriculture in Australia

- Worth $48 billion, 2% of GDP
- Largest crop is wheat $7.2b, 23m tonnes
- Around 60% of Australia's farm production is exported
- Uses 11.9 million megalitres of water (largest industry)
- Employs 2.2% of workforce
- 136,000 businesses, declining by about 1% a year over the past 4 decades
- More than 95% of farms are family owned
- 405 million hectares were used for agriculture
- Around 60% of land is used for some form of agricultural activity
- 2.1 million hectares used for irrigation

Major Challenges for Australian agriculture

- Long term decline in the farmers terms' of trade
- Variability in real net value of farm production
- Economy wide effects of resource booms
- Climate change
- Market access for Australia's commodity exports
- Ageing of farmers
- Foreign ownership of Australian farms

Agricultural White Paper – Policy issues

- Food security
- Improving farm gate returns
- Enhancing access to finance
- Increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and its value chains
- Enhancing agriculture's contribution to regional communities
- Improving the competitiveness of inputs to the supply chain
- Reducing ineffective regulations
- Enhancing agricultural exports
- Assessing the effectiveness of incentives for investment and job creation

Left field issues

- "Paddock to the plate"
- Increasing amount of food waste
- Decreasing nutrient value of food
- Growing rate of obesity and associated diseases
- Impact of agricultural activity on environmental sustainability

Agricultural data collections used for SEEA- Agri

- ABS collections
  - Agriculture Census
  - Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS)
  - Agricultural Commodity Survey (ACS)
  - Land Management Practices Survey (LaMPS)
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)
  - Research centre
  - Farm survey data
  - State of the Forests Report
- State and territory agricultural departments

Other collections/releases used for SEEA-Agri

- Australian National Accounts
- Export and Import Data (Australian Customs)
- Labour Force Australia
- Australian Health Survey
- Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs
- National Greenhouse Emission Reporting System

Questions and issues

- While a lot of information is available there are a lot of n/a cells
- Australia does not have detailed fishing/aquaculture information
- Should forestry commodities other than roundwood be listed? (eg non-wood forest products)
- Home production of fruit and vegetables excluded but should be included
- There are a number of reporting issues:
  - poultry meat collected in numbers not weight
  - eggs collected in numbers not weight
  - wool collected in bales not weight
  - fruit and nut trees collected in numbers not hectares
  - imports data not as detailed as exports

Questions and issues (cont..)

- Employment data generally not available by commodity
- ABS has been funded to look into feasibility of reinstating the “Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs” publication
- Nutritional information available predominantly by foodstuff rather than commodity (i.e hamburger rather than wheat, beef, fats, oils). Food Standards Australia are funding the ABS to produce raw food components.
- Land use data available but what time frames should be reported (one year, five year)
- GHG emission only available in total – maybe some research by ABARES available on cattle, rice and wheat
- What is included in fertilizer-nitrogen? How should compost, mulch etc be treated?

Key outcomes

- The integrating of economic variables with environment and consumption variables is an excellent way to present information about agricultural activity
- The data would be relevant to a number of agricultural policy issues
- The data would be useful in policy making around areas other than agriculture, including health and nutrient value of food
- Most of the data is already available, although it will require some modelling to fill the table completely
- Data gaps are mainly around commodity level information
- Need to firm up some of the definitions and classifications so that countries report in a standard and comparable format
- What could be added? R&D expenditure?