

Name:

Helen Lewis

Which of the following best describes your situation?

Industry representative

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or industry body?

Yes

Who are you responding on behalf of?

Australian Holistic Management Co-operative

How would you like to respond?

a. Answer discussion paper questions via the online survey

What are the opportunities to reduce emissions and build carbon stores in agriculture and the land? What are the main barriers to action?

We have to be mindful plants require carbon dioxide and green growing plant produce hydroxide- which absorbs methane. Nature functions as a whole and there is no waste in nature. We have to be very careful when we start to try and manage nature in parts. the 4 functions of life- water cycle, mineral cycle (organic matter/ carbon) , energy flow (sunlight capture) and diversity- flora and fauna operate like a tetrahedron- if one of these functions is negatively impacted effects all of them and if one is enhanced they all improve. Farmers managing holistically are working with nature and reducing external inputs. The Farming for the Future Research data indicates that people who are implementing holistic management practices are increasing the ecological health, are personally content/resilient and more profitable. When farmers try to assess their emissions, it is glaringly obvious that the algorithms/ modelling in the back end of the carbon/ emissions calculators/ accounting for nature etc are not including the nuances of production methods.. these production methods determine the level of emissions in

agriculture. This is a limiting factor and very frustrating - and concerning if these calculators, that are producing inaccurate results -are going to be used to base policy/ regulations on. Over 10,000 farmers are implementing various versions of Holistic Management across Australia- through Holistic management/ RCS consulting grazing plans/ understanding how nature functions and most importantly the understanding on how to use land management tools to improve landscape function. Farmers need to know they can change practices/ methods to reduce emissions The barriers to action is policies are not solving the root cause of the problem. Given extension services by government stopped over 10 years ago and access to the internet- Farmer groups/ research and evidence about what works. The private sector has filled the gap and is supporting farmers in their efforts to find their own answers. Farmers have done their own trials and know what works, they are getting results but government and universities don't listen to them, yet their business depends on a highly functioning landscape. Research like Farming for the Future is starting to collate what is working to deliver the reduced emissions, personal resilience, and drought preparedness. Farmers need to be supported with their trials, adaptive management and sharing of their knowledge.

How can we progress emission reduction efforts whilst also building resilience and adapting to climate change?

Implementing practices that are improving our soil and land function creating the right conditions for maximum water holding capacity, sunlight capture, diversity of plants/animals and cycling of minerals/ nutrients. In addition, the Australian Holistic Management Co-operative is implement Ecological Outcome Verification (EOV) an international protocol and offers an annual monitoring of landscape function, which enables farmers to adjust and tweak management decisions to get a better outcome the next year. This practice of early monitoring - enables continually improving with trials and trying different management practices.

Are there initiatives or innovative programs underway that could be applied or expanded on at a national scale?

Farming for the Future -research , Holistic Management education, Ecological Outcome Verification monitoring, AHMC Ltd- support and education of farmers, Grazing for Profit, Soils for Life case studies, Sustainable Table, Open Food Network, Regenerative Ag networks in Tasmania/ WA, Regrarian's Platform- Darren Doherty, Holistic Management Educators -Australia & NZ. Walter Jehne is an internationally known Australian soil microbiologist and climate scientist.

How can the Australian Government bring together existing effort and new initiatives into one coordinated plan?

We have to be assured that the government is open to new thinking and actually assess the outcomes these initiatives / practices are delivering- not just what is majority view. The effort has be delivering the preferred outcome. Before we develop the 'plan' We need to be clear what we are trying to achieve- what is the best possible outcome for Australian Ag. If the Government compiled the values and vision from the Ag sector to contribute the values and vision of where we want Australian ag to be well into the future. We ask the Ag sector- When Australian ag is at its best- what attributes does it have- what attributes do the farmers have to have , what attributes does the community/ consumers have to have, what attributes does our infrastructure/ tech/ systems have to have, when our environment is at its best - what attributes does it have? These answers create a context and reference point to ensure policies, programmes, support and decisions are in line with these values and the described future we are heading towards. Do we need a co-ordinated plan or a host of options, pathways and farmer driven initiatives that move Australian Ag towards this Context/ picture we are trying to create. The Local Landcare groups could be an instrumental local support network on the ground with a huge level of trust within the farming communities. To be ready for the future these initiatives also need to encompass and combine the policy from Health, Ag and Environment departments. Healthy soil/landscapes, healthy food, healthy people.

What are the most important options to be further adopted or supported, looking in the short and the longer-term?

A wider understanding how nature functions, and the consequences of the management tools on the landscape, in either a damp/ humid environment or seasonal dry environment, as the consequences.

What are the practical solutions to increase uptake?

A sharing of information about the social, environmental and market/ economic imperatives coming, the benefits from the change, impact from other policies - delivered in the spirit of setting farmers up for success and with the carrot not the stick. Access to education and on-ground practice change - curiosity groups to explore and implement change on farm with safe to fail trials. Utilise existing training bodies in the private sector who can deliver this information towards creating the preferred future of Australian Ag as captured in the context mentioned earlier in this submission.

How do you see the agriculture and land sectors contributing over the medium and longer-term? What are the opportunities to deliver emission reductions in parallel with wider goals?

With improved land management practices and understanding how we can work with nature, we can actively reduce input cost. With this update understanding it becomes clear we need to know the emissions we are reducing to reflect the nuances of production methods ie; nuances of feedlot produced beef emissions and the nuances of grass fed beef emissions (and the natural processes needing methane, needing CO₂ etc) These nuances need to be reflected in the emission calculators so we have more accurate readings so the efforts by farmers are targeted. There are some gross assumptions being made which are not fair and are inaccurate so farmers keep doing what they know works to improve their land but ignore these calculators as they know they are flawed. On farm changes- reduced man made fertilisers/ chemical inputs- instead add biology and living inputs, install solar power or gravity for moving water/ cover/ pasture cropping , landscape rehydration, integrate animals with cropping/ trees. Some key areas for improvement as we move product off farm- the value of online trading- reducing fuel consumption/ shorter supply chains- local abattoir's and food systems/ logistics efficiency/ backloading- information technology solutions.

How can the Australian Government better support agriculture and land sectors to:

a) drive innovation

b) build capacity

c) ensure the system enables emissions reductions

Build capacity- engage with organisations that are delivering the desired outcomes and can offer the monitoring for continuous improvement in practices. Practice change on ground. Technology only serves us if it is addressing the root cause of the problem, enhances the soil health/ life/ biology, and keeps the soil covered.

What new initiatives could the Australian Government design that would support emissions reduction and carbon storage in agriculture and land and help ensure a productive, profitable, resilient and sustainable future for the sectors?

Listen to farmers who have been doing the work, and ask them for a way forward - farmer initiatives that are funded.

A consistent and trusted approach for assessing and reporting emissions is often raised as a barrier to reducing emissions. Is there a role for the Australian Government in addressing this concern, and how can producers and land managers be supported?

As previously mentioned- the nuances of production methods need to be imbedded into the calculators with out those nuances and understanding about how nature functions in wholes and we can't pull apart the natural gases - Co2/ methane/ Nitrogen etc - they work simultaneously in the natural environment and require each other to deliver the benefit for plants and animals. a grass plant eaten by a cow recovers 18 x faster than a grass plant cut by a blade... there is a symbiotic relationship between plants and animals that we can not see or document as a whole process... we need to be very aware of interfering with what we don't understand, just to measure something in isolation, to our detriment.

What skills, knowledge and capabilities do you think producers and land managers need to implement change? What information and data would help them make decisions about emissions reductions and sustainable land management in the short and longer-term?

The Ecological Outcome Monitoring is very valuable as it monitors 15 indicators - and checks if the landscape function is enhancing. Looking at soil function and natural capital, I have outlined the additional information that would be helpful for farmers. Farmers need to be able to initiate their own solutions with adequate monitoring not prescribed by government.

Do you have any additional views or feedback that you would like to include in your response?

There are many Australian Farmers who have been proactive and are part of the solution. They have tried and have the results to demonstrate what works and what doesn't... they need to be listened to and taken seriously. We have access the network of farmers that have made these changes.

Is your response confidential?

No

Do you agree to your response being published on our website?

Yes

I have read and understood the privacy notice and consent to the collection, use and disclosure of my personal information as outlined in the privacy notice.

Yes

Confirm that you have read and understand this declaration.

Yes
