

Native agriculture

For consideration to be included as an innovative investment stream for the Future Drought Fund Investment Strategy and Funding Plan

Australian species are underutilised in Australian agriculture, despite their local adaptations to drought and usually lower cost of production.

In many instances local Australian species have been removed to make way for introduced agricultural species, many of which are not well adapted to Australian drought conditions which is likely to become increasingly relevant with climate change.

Increased use of native species in agriculture will attract further benefits for the environment including, soil, landscape and ecosystem services, biodiversity, enterprise diversity and sustainability, all which have flow on effects for drought resilience.

The area of Australia capable of producing crops is likely to reduce with the increasing aridity. Species adapted to those environments require closer examination and conservation for a variety of benefits.

Many of these lands are held in Indigenous or freehold title. The proposed Native Agriculture would focus on trials and local collaboration to apply research and encourage investment for sustainable development including adaptation to recurring drought.

Without its own investment stream, conventional agriculture (non-Australian/introduced species) will continue to dominate as successful grant front-runners under the current funding stream with little chance for native agriculture to advance or even commence during drought, despite its large potential.

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