# The Evolution of Agricultural Statistics in Australia

statistics for informed

decision making

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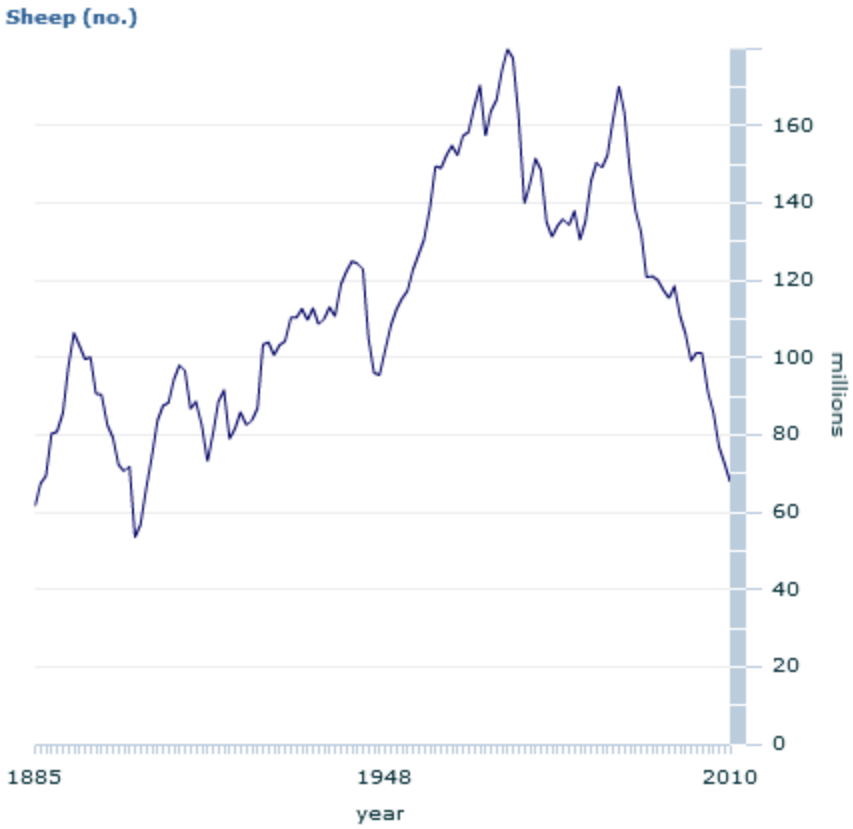
# Overview

- **Overview**
- **History**
- **The Present Day**
- **The Future**
- **Summary**

# History – The Early Years

- **Agricultural statistics date back to January 1788**
- **By the 1860s, large scale farming had been established in Australia**
- **By the 20th Century, agriculture employed nearly a quarter of Australia's population**
- **In the 1920s-30s, Australia became a major food exporter**
- **Australia - 'riding on the sheep's back'**

# History – Australia's reliance on sheep




**From a high of 180 million sheep in 1970, numbers dropped to 68 million in 2010.**

# History – Agricultural data collection

- **Prior to 1901, agricultural statistics were collected by the colonies**
- **Different jurisdictions, different collection methods**
- **In the 1970s-1980s, an emergence of agricultural statistical analysis**

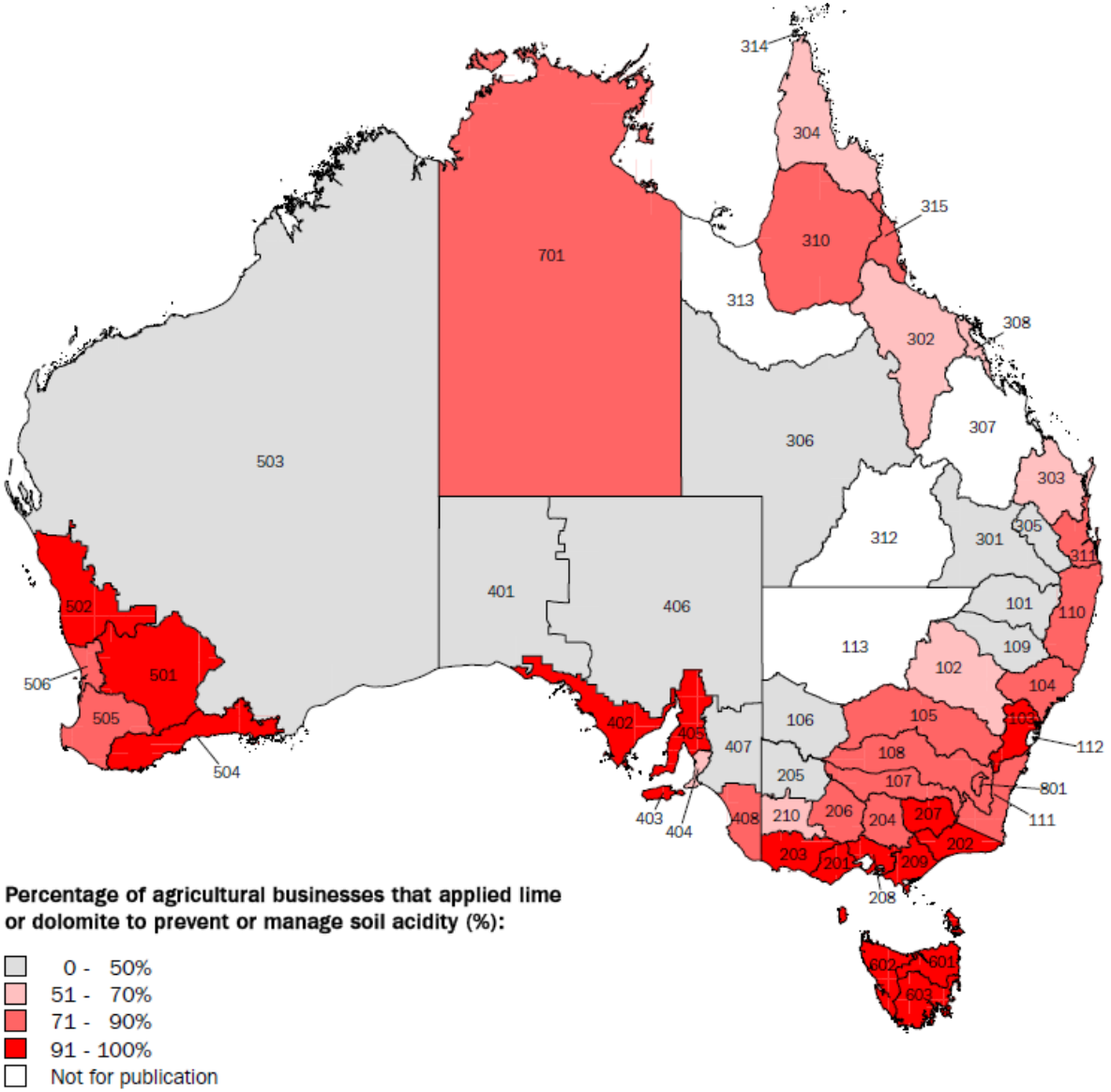
# Australian farming practices are evolving

- **In the 1990s, agricultural industries were no longer a major national economic contribution**
- **Agriculture's increasing reliance on Australia's natural resources**
- **Importance of new technologies in agriculture**
- **Increased land use and farm practice restrictions**

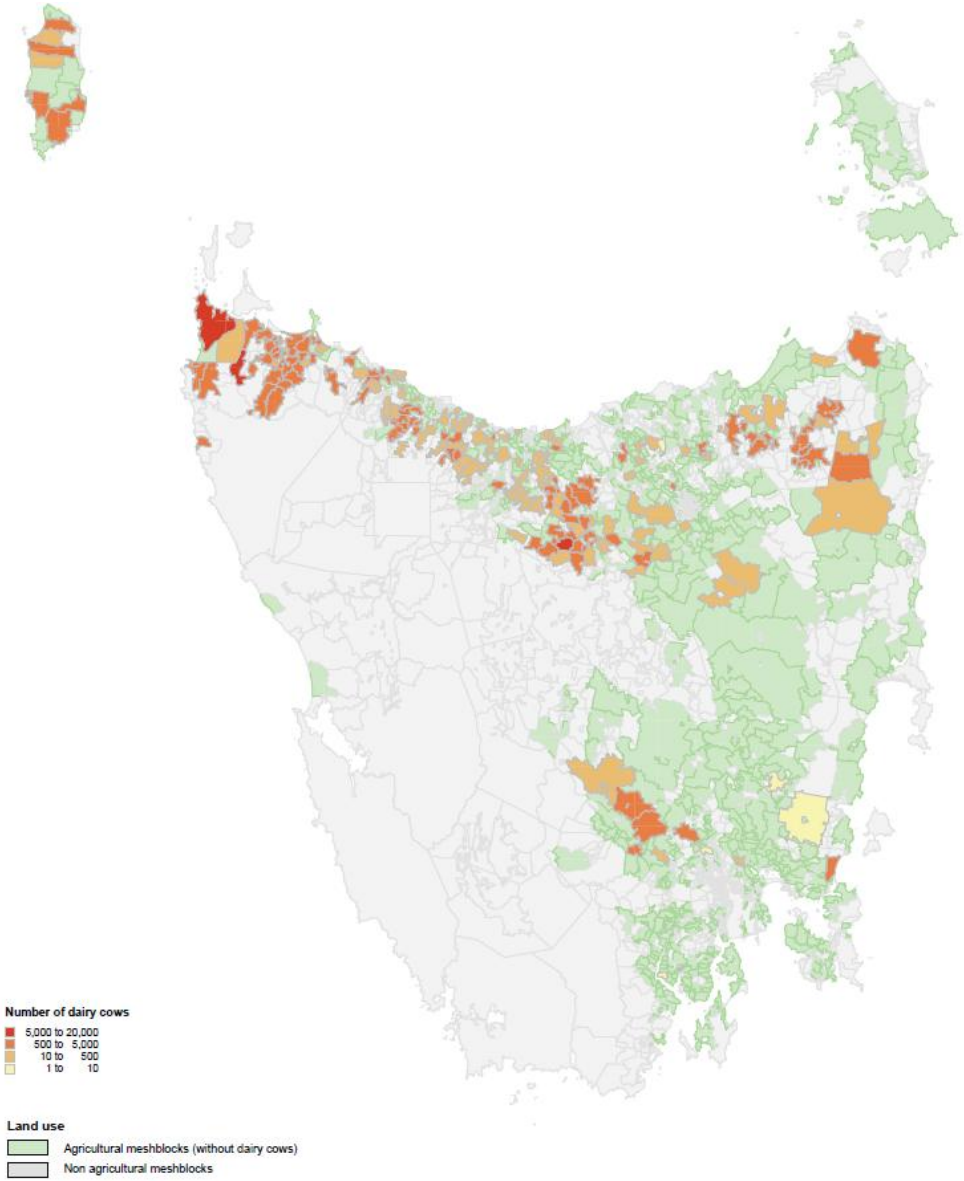
# The Present Day – Changing focus of agricultural statistics

- **From livestock numbers to water usage**
- **Review of rural environment and agriculture statistics**
- **International drivers for consideration**
- **Key messages from stakeholders:**
  - Regional commodity data still required
  - Increased demand for environment and land use data
  - Consistency of data over time
  - A statistical survey program responsive to the policy environment
  - Increased leadership and facilitation role for ABS in the statistical community

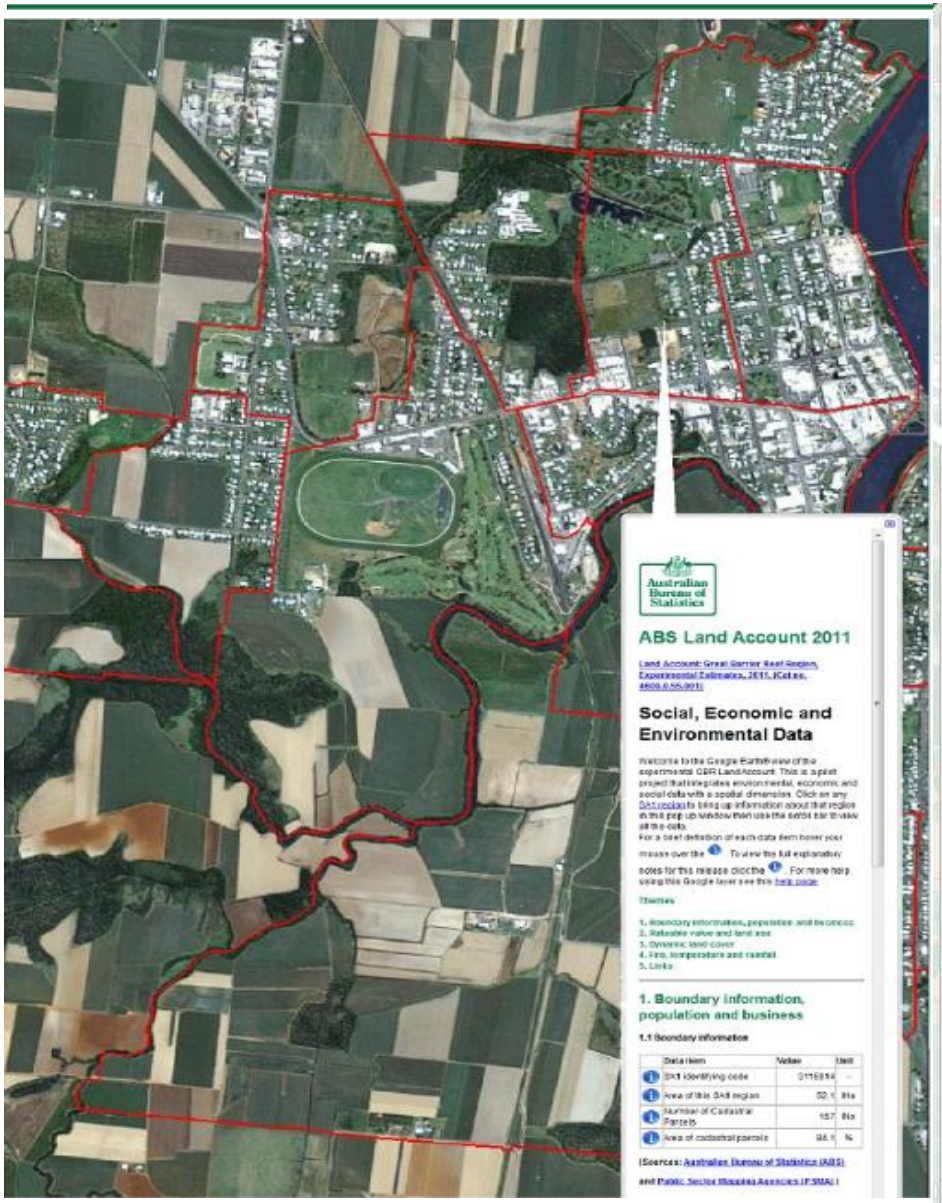
# Managing Australia's natural resources - Soil



# The Present Day – Regional perspective



# The Present Day – Land accounts



## ABS Land Account 2011

Land Account: Great Barrier Reef Region, Experimental Estimates, 2011. (Cat no. 4609.0.55.001)

### Social, Economic and Environmental Data

Welcome to the Google Earth® view of the experimental GBR Land Account. This is a pilot project that integrates environmental, economic and social data with a spatial dimension. Click on any SA1 region to bring up information about that region in this pop up window then use the scroll bar to view all the data.
For a brief definition of each data item hover your mouse over the . To view the full explanatory notes for this release click the . For more help using this Google layer see this help page.

**Themes**

1. Boundary information, population and business
2. Rateable value and land use
3. Dynamic land cover
4. Fire, temperature and rainfall
5. Links

### 1. Boundary information, population and business

**1.1 Boundary information**

| | Data item | Value | Unit |
|---|---|---|---|
| i | SA1 identifying code | 3135010 | - |
| i | Area of this SA1 region | 1,250.8 | Ha |
| i | Number of Cadastral Parcels | 210 | No |
| i | Area of cadastral parcels | 94.1 | % |

(Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

# The Present Day – Outcomes of review and policy context

- **Key outcomes of program review:**
  - Core commodity data items
  - Core land management practices themes
  - Consistency in core data items until next Agricultural Census in 2016
- **Policy areas utilising rural environment and agriculture statistics**
  - Caring for our Country
  - Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI)
  - National Greenhouse Accounts

# The Present Day – Emerging data needs

- **Emerging areas of interest from program review:**
  - Food security
  - Ownership of agricultural assets
  - Biodiversity
  - Biosecurity

# The Future – The need for change

- **Information Management Transformation Program**
- **Ongoing demand for better management of statistical information**
- **Collaboration between NSOs**
- **Changing role of NSOs**

# The Future – Using statistical assets

- **Statistical Data Integration Program**
- **Increasing use of administrative datasets**

# Summary

- **Humble beginnings for Australian agriculture**
- **Evolution of the agricultural industry into a diverse sector**
- **Evolution has driven information demands**
- **Increased focus on environmental impact of agriculture**
- **Technological advancements required to support increasing demands of data users**
- **Increased emphasis on engaging stakeholders across domestic and international communities**

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