



The Evolution of Agricultural Statistics in Australia

statistics for informed

decision making

24th Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics

October 2012

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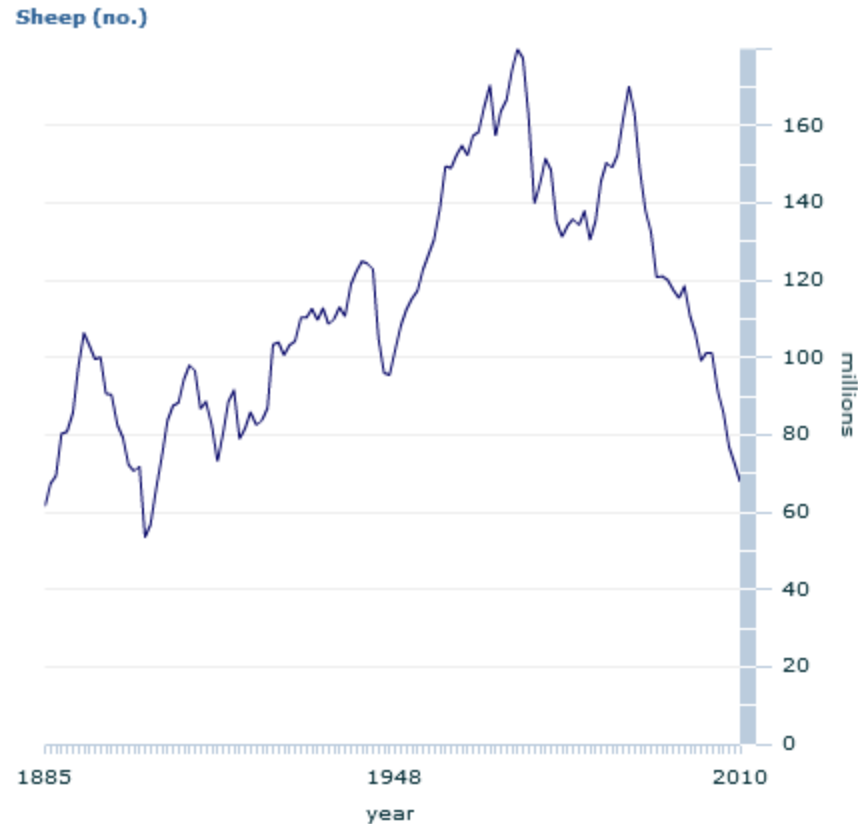
Overview

- **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**

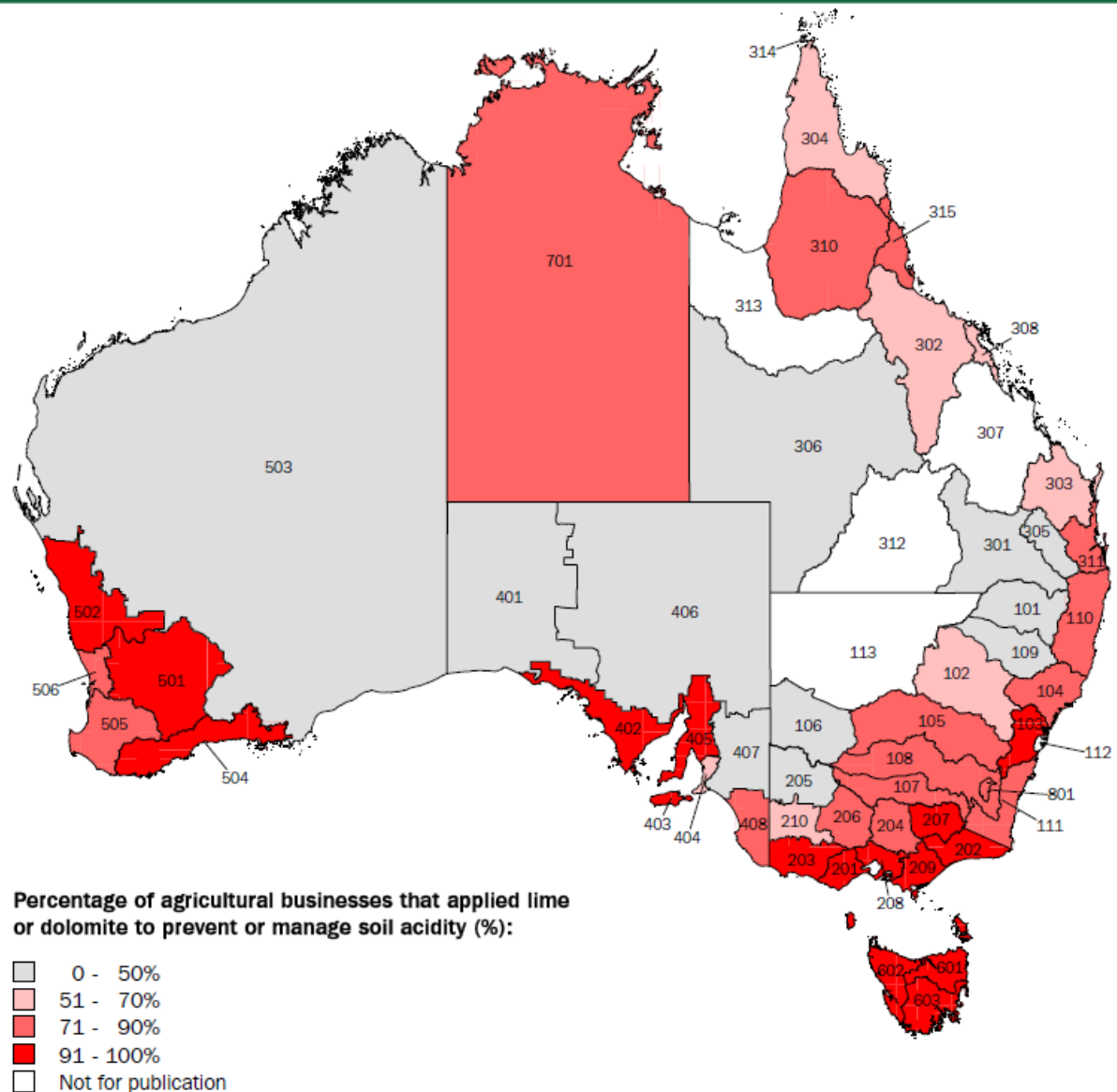
Australian farming practices are evolving

- **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**

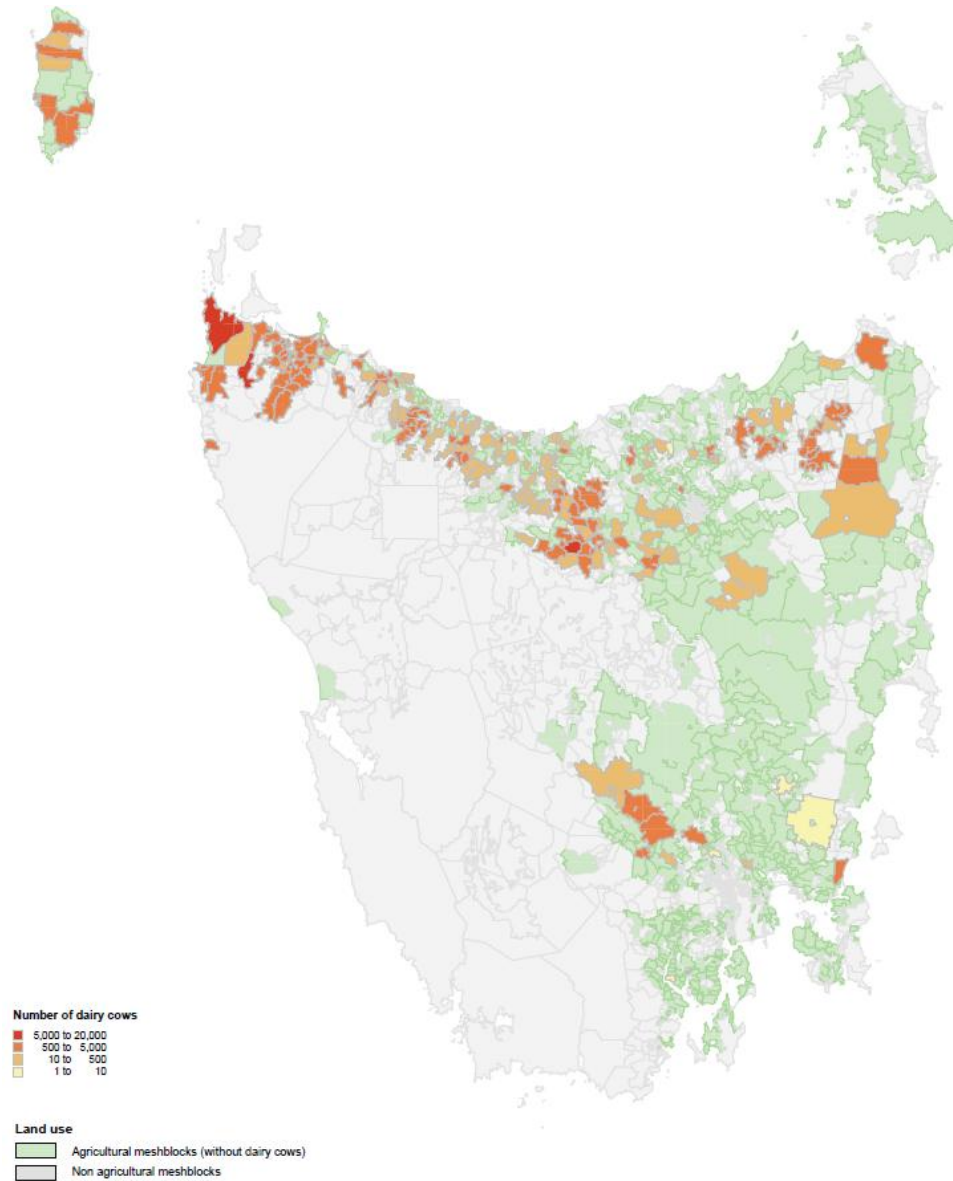
The Present Day – Changing focus of agricultural statistics

- **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

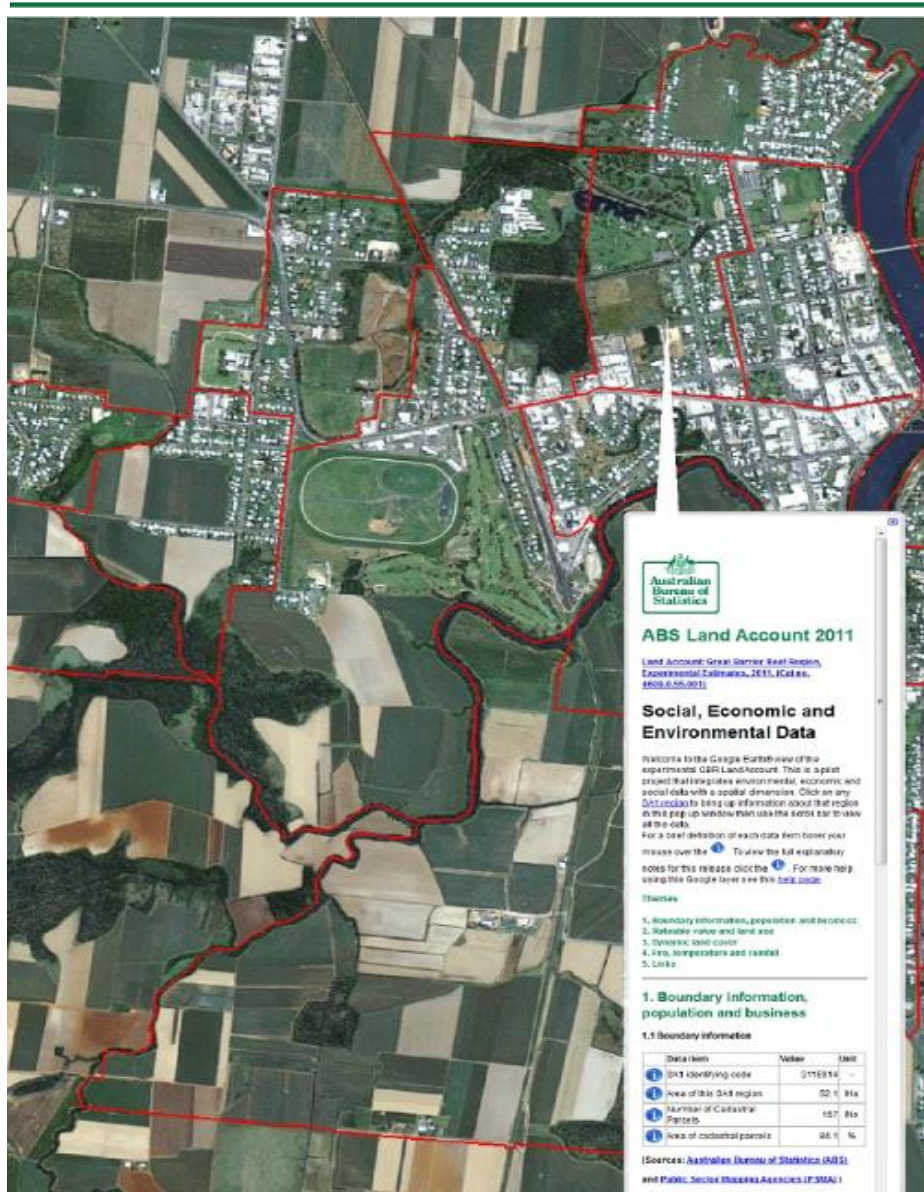
Managing Australia's natural resources - Soil



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
 SA1 identifying code	3135010	-
 Area of this SA1 region	1,250.8	Ha
 Number of Cadastral Parcels	210	No
 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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