



Securing Australia's farming future

Federal Election 2025



National
Farmers
Federation

Leading
Australian
Agriculture

Foreword

The 2025 Federal Election comes at a critical moment for Australian agriculture and for every Australian family that relies on farmers for affordable food and fibre.

Our sector stands at the intersection of major megatrends that will reshape farming and consumer prices for generations to come.

Rising **costs and red tape** for farmers are driving up production costs, which inevitably flow through to higher prices at the supermarket checkout.

The **global trading environment** is becoming more protectionist and uncertain, threatening the market access that underpins our \$80 billion export industry.

Our **climate** is changing, demanding new approaches to farming and reshaping the expectations of our customers, regulators, and stakeholders.

Our **energy** system is evolving, creating both opportunities and risks for how we use Australia's finite farmland.

Our regions are transforming rapidly as **internal migration** accelerates - stretching housing, infrastructure, and services to their limits.

And unmet **workforce needs** continue to place a handbrake on productivity, with a growing risk that changing attitudes to migration will exacerbate this problem.

The choices we make in the coming term of Parliament could dictate not just the success of Aussie farming, but the ability of Australian families to access affordable, locally-grown food and fibre for generations to come.

These megatrends present both challenges and opportunities. Australian farmers have consistently demonstrated their capacity to

innovate and adapt in the face of change. But the pace and scale of transformation now facing the sector demands a new partnership between industry and government.

At the heart of our election platform is the call for a National Food Security Preparedness Strategy - a comprehensive framework to ensure we can continue to feed and clothe Australians as the pace of disruptive forces increases.

This strategy would help industry and government understand vulnerabilities in our food system and work in partnership to reduce the risk of disruption.

The NFF looks forward to engaging with all candidates and parties in the coming election campaign to highlight how supporting farmers helps keep food and fibre affordable for all Australians, while achieving our vision of becoming Australia's next \$100 billion industry by the year 2030.

We look forward to deepening our partnership with all sides of politics to make this happen.

David Jochinke

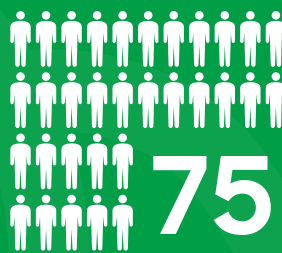
President
National Farmers' Federation



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Planning for Australia's future food security



Australia produces enough food to feed

75 million

people, but our food system faces mounting pressures that require strategic national planning.

FAO estimation

2025

2030

360 million

people will be food insecure globally by 2030



more than

30%

of Australian households already experience moderate to severe food insecurity



Australia produces enough food to feed 75 million people, but our food system faces mounting pressures that require strategic national planning. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in our supply chains, while recent extreme weather events, geopolitical tensions, and rising input costs have highlighted the need for a more coordinated approach to food security.

Our food system's resilience is challenged by significant reliance on imported inputs. From fertilisers and agricultural chemicals to fuel, processing equipment, and packaging materials, Australian agriculture and food processing depend heavily on international supply chains. While this has created cost efficiencies, this dependency creates vulnerabilities when global trade is disrupted by geopolitical tensions, pandemics, or other crises.

Global challenges are intensifying. Climate change impacts on production, increasing protectionism in international trade, and growing global food demand all present risks to Australia's food system. Meanwhile, domestic pressures including competition for agricultural land, workforce shortages, and rising production costs affect our ability to maintain food production and affordability. The FAO estimates that by 2030 there will be 360 million food insecure people globally.

Despite being a food secure country, more than 30% of Australian households already experience moderate to severe food insecurity. Without careful management, this number could increase in coming years - particularly in response to shocks in our food supply chains.

A National Food Plan would provide more than just a framework for food security - it would ensure agricultural considerations are properly weighted in broader policy decisions. As Australia navigates complex transitions in energy, climate policy, regional development, migration, and more, a comprehensive food strategy would help strike the right balance between competing priorities. This is particularly critical when considering issues such as renewable energy development on agricultural land, workforce policies, and emissions reduction initiatives.

The House of Representatives' 2023 inquiry into food security highlighted these challenges and recommended developing a National Food Security Strategy. This would provide a framework for addressing vulnerabilities, coordinating policy responses across government, and ensuring Australia maintains its capacity to feed our population while contributing to global food security.

WHAT WE NEED

- **The National Farmers' Federation is seeking a commitment to develop and implement a comprehensive National Food Security Preparedness Strategy that ensures supply chain vulnerabilities are understood and addressed.**

Reducing the cost of farming



Rising input costs, taxes and regulation present a significant challenge for Australian agriculture and have direct implications for domestic food prices and affordability.

Over the past five years, farmers have experienced substantial increases in operational expenses, with prices for diesel, electricity, fertiliser, machinery, chemicals and farmland all increasing in excess of 50% in the past 5 years.

The cost and availability of labour – a significant share of business expenses in many industries – also continues to place pressure on farming businesses.

These cost pressures, combined with regulatory requirements and compliance costs, impact both agricultural productivity and consumer food prices.

WHAT WE NEED

- **Abandon the Super Tax on family farms**
Commit to not reducing taxation concessions for superannuation holdings and to not introduce a tax on 'unrealised gains'.
- **Maintain the Fuel Tax Credits scheme in its current form**
Rule out changes to the Scheme for any industry to give farmers confidence in the stability of this critical rebate.
- **Extend the instant asset write-off for small businesses**
Help farmers reduce costs and increase their productivity by extending the highly effective instant asset write-off for small businesses and increasing the asset threshold to \$150,000.
- **Support access to essential pesticides and veterinary medicines**
Commit \$8m per annum to support the APVMA's role in regulating and controlling agricultural and veterinary chemicals, including post-market monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities.
- **Strengthen Australia's biosecurity system by implementing a container levy**
Introduce a container levy on risk creators to support the expansion of Australia's biosecurity surveillance and monitoring capabilities. The emergence of new-generation biosecurity incursion threats requires ongoing and additional investment.

- **Maintain the Regional Investment Corporation's capacity to write new loans**
Commit to the continuation of the RIC as a mechanism for delivering nationally consistent concessional loans, especially during periods of drought.
- **Introduce a legislative Right to Repair for Agricultural Machinery**
Legislate a Right to Repair applying to agricultural machinery to provide farmers with greater flexibility to use a suitably qualified repairer of their choice.
- **Boost ACCC funding for increased fresh food supply chains responsibilities**
\$12.5 million over 5 years for increased resourcing for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to implement increased roles and responsibilities with regards to fresh food supply chains resulting from 2024 changes to the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct.

A partnership on sustainable farming



Australian farmers are the nation's environmental stewards, managing more than 50% of our continent's landmass and playing a crucial role in addressing our most pressing environmental challenges. The agricultural sector has demonstrated strong leadership in sustainability, having already reduced emissions intensity by 65% since 1990 while increasing productivity.

However, complex challenges remain. From managing invasive species and protecting waterways to responding to climate change and preserving biodiversity, farmers need a genuine partnership with government to deliver environmental outcomes at scale. This is particularly critical as we seek to establish new markets for environmental services, improve animal welfare outcomes, and develop sustainable fuel alternatives.

Competition for agricultural land is intensifying, particularly from renewable energy infrastructure and other development pressures. We need balanced approaches that protect access to productive farmland while ensuring fair treatment under environmental and cultural heritage legislation.

The National Farmers' Federation is seeking strategic investments and policy reforms to support farmers in delivering environmental solutions. This includes enhanced pest control, practical water management, climate adaptation tools, and frameworks for measuring and rewarding sustainable practices. These specific initiatives should be enhanced by the development of a Federal Sustainable Agriculture Policy.

WHAT WE NEED

- **Prioritise and better resource control of vertebrate pests**
Significantly increase funding (\$1 billion per annum) for National Action Plans for feral animals including pigs, dogs, deer, carp, foxes and cats and deliver long-term funding for the National Management Coordinators and substantial eradication programs.
- **Invest in practical action to improve the health of the Murray Darling**
Reverse recent decisions to remove community safeguards on water buybacks; and invest \$2 billion in 'complementary measures' such as carp control, native fish breeding programs and bank restoration.

- **Ensure farmers are treated fairly through the energy transition**

Farmers need to be given appropriate tools and protection to deal with conflicts arising from the proposed establishment of transmission lines, renewable generation, and storage on their land. This could include national mandatory guidelines, help desks, and other support to correct information asymmetry and unwanted imposition on farm businesses.

- **Support farmers with new knowledge and tools to respond to climate change**

Recognising the development of the Agriculture and Land Sector Plan, we support continued adherence to the principles outlined by the Government at its Sustainable Agriculture Summit in Toowoomba and urge that appropriate investment be continually made available to enable farmers to make informed and sensible choices when considering climate change.

- **Sensible National Environmental Law reform to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999.**

Implementation of National Environmental Law Reform that is:

- in line with Samuel Review recommendations;
- is sensible for the economy and business;
- provides clarity on environmental outcomes sought;
- reduces duplication; and,
- streamlines environmental assessment and decision-making processes.

- **Fund the establishment of functioning markets for nature repair**

Budget \$2 billion over four years to support implementation of Nature Repair methodologies with a particular focus on reducing predation by vertebrate pests, eradication of carp, and invasion of noxious weeds.

- **Commit further funding to the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework**

\$10 million over four years to cement Australia's position as a world leader in agricultural sustainability via the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework.

- **Support the development of a national feedstock strategy for biofuels**

\$1 million for the development of a National Feedstock Strategy to optimise Australia's feedstock production for low carbon liquid fuels, working in partnership with industry to ensure a sustainable and consistent supply of raw materials.

A productive and safe workforce



The agricultural sector faces significant workforce challenges that threaten productivity and growth potential.

Recent industrial relations reforms have added complexity and costs to job creation, while changes to migration settings have reduced access to critical workers. These regulatory changes are compounding existing labour shortages and undermining the sector's ability to maintain and expand production.

Farm safety remains critically underfunded, requiring urgent government investment to complement industry's increased focus and resourcing in this area. FarmSafe Australia reports a concerning spike in farm accidents and fatalities during 2024, highlighting the pressing need for partnership between government and industry to address this challenge.

The mental health crisis in farming communities also demands immediate attention. Farmers die by suicide at twice the rate of other working Australians, reflecting the unique pressures of agricultural life including climate variability, financial stress, and isolation.

The National Farmers' Federation is seeking comprehensive policy solutions to address these interconnected challenges and build a safer, more resilient and productive agricultural workforce.

WHAT WE NEED

- **Review industrial relations laws to enhance workforce productivity**
Deliver an industrial relations system which drives productivity, and recognises the foundational role of business viability and the fundamental need for clarity and useability.
- **Invest in local workforce development**
 - Commit \$4 million to extend the AgCAREERSTART gap year program for another 3 years
 - Prioritise the development and roll-out of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship scheme.
- **Restore visa pathways and introduce a dedicated agricultural visa**
 - Roll back disruptive changes to the PALM Scheme;
 - Optimise the operation and accessibility of the skilled visa system;
 - Retain specified work requirements for Working Holiday Makers; and
 - Establish a dedicated agricultural visa.

- **Invest in the safety and wellbeing of the farm workforce**

\$55 million over 5 years to urgently boost farm safety and wellbeing initiatives nationwide, specifically:

- \$50 million over 5 years for national programs addressing farmer mental health and wellbeing; and,
- \$5 million over 5 years to support the work of FarmSafe Australia.



Secure Australia's access to global markets



Australia's agricultural sector, exporting over 70% of its production, depends critically on secure and competitive access to international markets.

While recent progress in restoring trade relationships with China has been welcome, new uncertainties are emerging with the return of the Trump Administration in the United States and its protectionist trade agenda.

Despite global trade volatility and weakening multilateral institutions, Australian agriculture continues to demonstrate resilience, with export values exceeding \$80 billion annually. Maintaining this export strength will require a strong partnership between industry and government.

The National Farmers' Federation is seeking commitments to strengthen market access and competitiveness through enhanced trade diplomacy, market development, and measures ensuring fair competition in domestic markets.

WHAT WE NEED

● **Renew the Global Agriculture Leadership Initiative**

Commit \$15 million over 4 years to renew the Global Agriculture Leadership Initiative within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The renewed program should seek to strengthen the effectiveness and capacity of Australia to engage with institutions and international trading partners to support ongoing access to export markets, promote Australia's sustainability and climate-smart credentials and support regional and global food security.

Allocated funding should include:

- Renew the funding for the Special Representative of Australian Agriculture for a further 4 years lift our engagement and influence in international institutions and strengthen relationships with key likeminded partners.
- Renewed funding of Australian membership of the World Farmers Organisation for a further 3 years, to ensure Australian priorities help shape the agenda of global agricultural discussion and positions.
- Support for increased activity by the Cairns Group of Farm Leaders in Southeast Asia to support Australia's trade and economic strategy in the region.

- **Commit to long term funding of the Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) program**

Allocate \$30 million over four years for the long-term continuation of the ATMAC Program. Expansion of this program will play a key role in further supporting market diversification.

- **Repeal the ban on live sheep exports and commit to the live cattle trade**

The Australian agricultural industry stands united in its opposition to the policy to phase out live sheep exports by sea. The policy does not accurately reflect community sentiment or Australia's world-leading regulatory framework for animal welfare.

The policy will have significant and far-reaching adverse impacts on Australia's standing as a reliable food security partner.

Infrastructure and services for growing regions



The sustained population shift to regional Australia continues to place unprecedented pressure on local infrastructure and services. This ongoing demographic transformation, which accelerated during the pandemic and has continued through recent years, has created significant challenges for regional communities.

Housing availability remains a critical issue, with many regional centres experiencing persistent low vacancy rates and rising prices. Essential services including healthcare, childcare, and education facilities are struggling to meet increased demand, while digital connectivity and transport infrastructure require significant upgrading to support growing populations and link farms to markets.

The National Farmers' Federation is seeking comprehensive investment in regional infrastructure and services to support both growing communities and agricultural productivity. This includes addressing housing supply, improving telecommunications coverage, upgrading regional roads and transport links, and ensuring access to essential services.

WHAT WE NEED

- **Commit to ongoing investments in key freight supply chain improvement programs**
Commit \$5 billion through the increase of the Roads to Recovery funding to \$1 billion, and \$4 billion to reinstate the Roads of Strategic Importance program, providing targeted funding for key regional freight corridors to build resilience through works such as road sealing, flood immunity and pavement rehabilitation. Increase the allocation to Financial Assistance Grants to 1% of Commonwealth Tax Revenue to increase support for infrastructure, service responsibilities and prioritisation of road repair and maintenance.
- **Invest in reliable connectivity for farmers and rural communities**
Commit to full implementation of recommendations from the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, including investing in improved mobile coverage, additional funding for the Regional Tech Hub, and development of a Regional Telecommunications Strategy.



- **Continue the successful On Farm Connectivity Program**

Deliver \$20 million p.a. ongoing for further rounds of the On Farm Connectivity Program to further accelerate the uptake of digital technologies to promote a more productive, safe, and sustainable agricultural industry.

- **Deliver a new stimulus program to promote investment in farmworker accommodation**

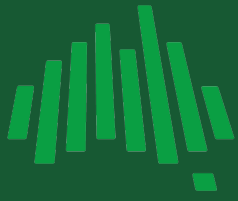
\$175 million over four years for a ‘farmworker accommodation stimulus package’ of taxation concessions and incentives to accelerate the construction and upkeep of farmworker accommodation.

- **Invest in new regional childcare centres**

All parties should commit to the \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund to build more than 160 new childcare centres in areas of most need.

- **Focus on critical national water infrastructure in a renewed national Water Grid Program**

As northern Australia continues to develop and diversify sustainable water infrastructure will be a critical component of success and directly contribute to the expansion of Australian agriculture.



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