



Australian Government

# National Food Plan

Our food future



© Commonwealth of Australia 2013

**Ownership of intellectual property rights**

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights, if any) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to as the Commonwealth).

**Creative Commons licence**

All material in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence, save for content supplied by third parties, logos and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence is a standard form licence agreement that allows you to copy, distribute, transmit and adapt this publication provided you attribute the work. A summary of the licence terms is available from [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en). The full licence terms are available from [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode).

Inquiries regarding the licence and any use of this document should be sent to [copyright@daff.gov.au](mailto:copyright@daff.gov.au)

The Australian Government acting through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has exercised due care and skill in the preparation and compilation of the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence, for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying upon any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.

This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAFF 2013, *National Food Plan: Our food future*. CC BY 3.0

**Cataloguing data**

DAFF 2013, *National Food Plan, Our food future*, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.

ISBN 978-1-76003-000-1 (printed)

ISBN 978-1-76003-001-8 (online)

**Internet**

National Food Plan, Our food future is available at [daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan](http://daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan)

**Contact**

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Phone +61 2 6272 3933

Email [nationalfoodplan@daff.gov.au](mailto:nationalfoodplan@daff.gov.au)

Web [daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan](http://daff.gov.au/nationalfoodplan)

# Foreword



During the 2010 election the Gillard Government committed to developing Australia's first National Food Plan to provide a vision for our food future. The National Food Plan is a roadmap for the future of Australia's food industry.

Australia's food industry stands at a gateway to new opportunities. To take advantage of these, the National Food Plan sets out a framework that will guide the food industry, the community and governments for years to come.

From classrooms to kitchens, from fields to factories and from paddocks to Asian markets the decisions that we take individually within a food producing nation spreads across the economy and across communities.

Fifteen percent of the Australian workforce is involved in food production, we export \$30.5 billion annually and produce enough to feed the country twice over. Food creation is the biggest employer in rural and regional communities.

Consumers now have more choice and a wider appreciation of different and diverse foods than at any other time in our history. There is increased demand for food across the world and Asia's growing middle-classes continue to seek higher value food products and services. Australian food is recognised as high-quality, safe and sustainable, all qualities in high demand.

The Gillard Government has been implementing a plan for Australian agriculture that first strengthens the foundation and prepares us for the future and emerging challenges. The National Food Plan is the third stage, creating new opportunities.

The National Food Plan sets out key goals to grow our domestic industry and increase the value of our food exports.

We will invest in our research and development capability so that we remain world leaders in innovation and productivity. We will work to improve access to export markets. We will build productive and collaborative relationships with our trading partners, work with our industry to tackle barriers to trade and promote Australia's brand for food. We will also work to reduce the regulatory burden for food businesses so they can remain internationally competitive.

Our food system isn't just about high-yield agriculture and exports, it is also about local communities growing, preparing and sharing food. We are committed to supporting the growing numbers of farmers' markets, food sharing networks and community gardens around the country. We will also work to embed food and agriculture within the national curriculum so that our kids know where food comes from and value the hard working Australians who produce it.

The National Food Plan has been developed by the community, industry and government working together. The Gillard Government has developed it to be owned and driven by the whole nation.

Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries  
and Forestry  
Senator for Queensland



<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Chapter 5 Families and communities</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Framework for food policy</b>	<b>13</b>	5.1 Maintaining food security in Australia	56
1.1 Introduction	14	5.2 Ensuring the safety of our food supply	59
1.2 Role of the National Food Plan	14	5.3 Accessing healthy and nutritious food	62
1.3 Vision to 2025	16	5.4 Informing our community	63
1.4 Supporting the <i>Australia in the Asian Century White Paper</i>	17	<b>Chapter 6 Global food security</b>	<b>69</b>
1.5 Policy principles	18	6.1 Providing technical and development assistance	70
1.6 Providing leadership and improving the way we work together	19	6.2 Reforming global markets and seizing the benefits of trade	72
1.7 Keeping on track	20	6.3 Helping with climate change and environmental degradation	72
<b>Chapter 2 Trends, opportunities and challenges</b>	<b>21</b>	6.4 Helping in times of emergency	72
2.1 Food demand in the Asian century	22	<b>Chapter 7 Sustainable food</b>	<b>73</b>
2.2 Potential constraints on growth	22	7.1 Producing food sustainably	74
2.3 Strengths of our food industry	23	7.2 Sustaining our marine and aquatic environment	81
2.4 Consumers defining Australia's food system	24	7.3 Improving our demonstration of sustainability	83
<b>Chapter 3 Growing exports</b>	<b>25</b>	7.4 Reducing waste	86
3.1 Tackling trade barriers	26	<b>Chapter 8 Delivering the National Food Plan</b>	<b>87</b>
3.2 Building our food trade ties	28	Our policy goals to 2025	88
3.3 Building on Australia's reputation	32	<b>Glossary</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Thriving industry</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>102</b>
4.1 An innovative and adaptive industry	34		
4.2 Building a skilled workforce	41		
4.3 Accessing capital and inputs	43		
4.4 Investing in infrastructure and biosecurity systems	45		
4.5 A well-regulated industry	48		
4.6 Empowering our food regions	51		

# Executive Summary

Food is a fundamental human need and an essential part of our daily lives. Food is more than sustenance vital for health and wellbeing—it has an important social, symbolic and economic role. Growing, preparing and sharing food is part of our family life, our culture and our society. It plays a part in our celebrations and is a source of entertainment and pleasure for many people.

Food creates employment and contributes to Australia's wealth—it is a valuable part of our nation's global trade. The foods we produce are reliant on the health of our natural resources, while the food industry also brings life and prosperity to communities across our country.

Every Australian is involved in the food system—our farmers and fishers who draw on natural resources to produce food; our people and industries who transform, transport and sell food; and our families and communities who grow, buy, cook and eat food.

Australia has a strong, safe and stable food system and high levels of food security. Every year Australian farmers and fishers produce enough food to feed around 60 million people—far more food than we consume. Australia exports over half of the food it produces yet over 90 per cent of fresh produce sold here is also produced here. Most Australians can afford to buy the food they need and can access safe and nutritious food. Our enormous range of growing conditions means that we can produce a huge variety of food and have the wealth to import food when we need or want it. We can always do better, but overall Australia is fortunate when it comes to food.

But the world is changing. In the years ahead Australia's food system will face challenges, such as climate change, population growth, changing economic conditions, competition for resources and diet-related health issues. Along with the challenges there will be unprecedented opportunities for Australia's food industry.

The rise of Asia is transforming the world. In the 21st century—the Asian century—Asia's rise will have profound effects on Australia's food system. By 2050 world food consumption is expected to be 75 per cent higher than in 2007, and almost half of this increased demand will come from China alone. Australia will never be able to put food on every table in Asia, but an expanding Asian middle class offers an important opportunity for Australia's food industry. While we will continue to be a reliable and trusted supplier of quality staple foods there is

also an opportunity to supply growing markets with high-value food products that meet increasing preferences for safe, premium goods. However, the competition will be fierce and we will have to work to seize this opportunity, building on our strengths, such as our proximity to Asia and the skills and capabilities of our workforce.

Meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities will create enormous social, economic and environmental benefits for Australia. To harvest the opportunities of the future we need to focus on four priority areas.

First, Australia must compete strongly to capture a share of these new global opportunities. We need to build on our strengths and capitalise on our advantages, growing our exports and building market share against strong competition from others. We need to work persistently to break down barriers to trade and promote open markets. Our aim is that Australian food is the food of choice globally—renowned for its quality and consistency, valued for its safety and sustainable production, and attracting premium prices—whether staple foods like wheat or sugar or luxury items like lobsters and premium wines. But we need to move beyond just selling food to marketing our expertise in agricultural innovation and research, water and land use management, capitalising on our ability to grow food in some of the world's most difficult conditions. Australian businesses need to become more adept at understanding the needs of new

customers and participate in joined-up supply chains and partnerships across the region.

Second, Australia must have a competitive and productive food industry. The industry brings food to our tables, provides one-in-six Australian jobs and is the lifeblood of many regional towns. The Australian Government wants the food industry to seize the opportunities of the Asian century and become a larger part of our national economy, providing rewarding careers for Australians and strengthening our regional communities. With world food prices predicted to flatten out or fall and the costs of increasingly scarce inputs such as land, water and energy likely to rise, the challenge will not be just growing more food but lifting our productivity—doing more with less—so that food producers can grow and remain profitable.

To achieve this we need to build on our strengths—a world-leading research capacity, a talent for innovation, reliable infrastructure and a skilled workforce—making strategic investments to support a growing industry. Our food businesses need to have the skills and access to capital that will allow them to adopt new technologies, capitalise on new opportunities and adapt quickly to changing market conditions. And they mustn't be held back by inefficient regulation.

Third, we must make sure there is food on the table at home. All Australians must have access to enough safe and

nutritious food to meet their needs. The Australian Government will continue to work to improve access to safe and nutritious food for those living in remote communities or struggling with disadvantage. Beyond having enough food to eat, Australians should understand food—how it is produced; how to grow, buy and cook it; and how food choices affect our health and the Australian food system. All Australians need to be food secure and food savvy.

We also need to look beyond our shores—we are part of a global community in which around 870 million people regularly don't have enough to eat. We need to use our skills and advantages to help people in developing countries increase their capacity to grow food, lessen environmental degradation and lift themselves out of poverty. Helping our neighbours is not just part of being Australian, it is also in our national interest—food security is an important element in social and political stability in our region.

Fourth, Australia must produce its food sustainably. Our continued ability to produce food depends on having healthy natural resources. We need to work to improve our soils, use our land, water and marine resources wisely and protect Australia from introduced pests and diseases. Beyond the economic benefits we gain from our clean, green credentials, it is our obligation to ourselves and future generations of Australians.

Each of these areas is a priority for the Australian Government. We need to make progress in all of them if we are to continue to have a strong, safe food system. Success won't be immediate—some actions can start now, some need to be carefully planned, while others require constant effort and continual improvement.

To be successful we will all need to work together—governments, farmers, fishers, businesses, researchers, consumers and communities—collaborating across our food system. That's why we are establishing the Australian Council on Food to better engage with industry and community leaders and to guide the implementation of the National Food Plan. We will also publish a State of the Food System report every five years to monitor our progress.

We have developed this plan—Australia's first National Food Plan—to ensure our policies position the food system for the future. It provides a framework for Australia's food system, firmly grounded on the national objectives set by the *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*. The plan sets the long-term direction for our food system and will help us prioritise our actions and decide where to focus our resources.

To achieve our vision for Australia's food system we have set the following 16 goals for the nation for 2025. Some of these goals are new and ambitious, while others aim to maintain our current high standards.

## Growing exports

### Our goals to 2025

1. The value of Australia's agriculture and food-related exports will have increased by 45 per cent (in real terms), contributing to an increase in our gross domestic product.
2. Australia will have stronger food trade and investment relationships with countries across the region and the capabilities to promote Australian interests.
3. Australia will have a globally recognised food brand that is synonymous with high-quality, innovative, safe and sustainable food, services and technology.

### How we will achieve our goals

*We will continue to:*

- work, through global, regional and bilateral trade agreements, to reduce trade barriers and negotiate market access to benefit Australia's food sector
- work with Australian businesses to seize opportunities in growing markets

- help small to medium-sized food businesses sell their products overseas through trade facilitation services, including the
  - Asian Century Business Engagement Plan Grants Scheme
  - Growth Opportunities and Leadership Development Service
  - Export Market Development Grants Scheme
- promote Australia's world-class food safety management and biosecurity systems.

*We will invest:*

- \$28.5 million in the Asian Food Markets Research Fund for research that tackles roadblocks to export to help businesses increase exports of food products and services to Asian markets. This includes a *What Asia Wants* study to identify food needs and preferences in the region.
- \$5.6 million to build on relationships with trading partners in key and emerging markets by
  - expanding the network of specialists that support agricultural trade in Asia
  - having market access liaison officers for key food sectors
- \$2 million to develop a brand identity for Australian food and related technology.

# Thriving industry

## Our goals to 2025

4. Australia's agricultural productivity will have increased by 30 per cent, helping farmers grow more food using fewer inputs.
5. Innovation in Australia's food manufacturing industry will have increased, building scale and capability through collaborations to make the most of emerging opportunities in the Asian region.
6. Australia's agriculture and fisheries workforce will have built its skills base, increasing the proportion with post-school qualifications.
7. Australia's infrastructure and biosecurity systems will support a growing food industry, moving food cost-effectively and efficiently to markets and supporting new export opportunities.
8. Participation by Australian food businesses in the digital economy will have increased, driving productivity gains and innovation and creating connections with global markets.
9. Australia will be among the top five most efficiently regulated countries in the world, reducing business costs.

## How we will achieve our goals

*We will continue to:*

- support innovation along the food supply chain by
  - investing in our world-leading rural research and development system—currently around \$700 million annually

- establishing a Food Industry Innovation Precinct to improve business-to-business links
- investing \$23 million in food-related research through the first round of the Australian Research Council's Industrial Transformation Research Program
- working with industry and state and territory governments on a national approach to biotechnology in agriculture
- support the skills and workforce needs of the food industry by
  - investing \$9 billion over five years from 2012–13 through the states and territories for the National Vocational Education and Training system
  - commissioning workforce assessments of the food industry supply chain through the National Rural Advisory Council and Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency
- invest in infrastructure and biosecurity that supports our food supply chain, including
  - investing \$60 billion towards transport infrastructure through the Nation Building Program since 2008
  - investing \$5.8 billion in the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program as part of the Water for the Future initiative
  - investing up to \$30.4 billion in equity to rollout the National Broadband Network, which will provide opportunities for food businesses and consumers through the digital economy

- building a more viable, cost-effective and sustainable biosecurity system to protect the economy, the environment and our health
- support an appropriate approach to improving commercial relationships along the food supply chain and continue to consult with stakeholders about a way forward
- help regional Australia benefit from the opportunities of the Asian century by
  - investing \$8.5 million in the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program, which includes support for the northern Australia beef industry
  - investing \$10 million in the North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy.

*We will invest:*

- \$2.2 million for research and analysis of food industry trends to help business and governments plan infrastructure to support a growing industry to 2025. This research will be funded through the Asian Food Markets Research Fund.
- in appointing an experienced business leader as the Food and Beverage Supplier Advocate to encourage business-to-business links between food suppliers and their customers
- in a Productivity Commission review to identify priority areas for reform of food supply chain regulations looking from the paddock to the plate
- \$1.5 million to develop resources and provide professional development to support teaching about food and agriculture through the Australian Curriculum.

## People

### Our goals to 2025

10. Australia will have built on its high level of food security by continuing to improve access to safe and nutritious food for those living in remote communities or struggling with disadvantage.
11. Australia will be considered to be in the top three countries in the world for food safety, increasing the reputation of Australia's exports.
12. Australians will have the information they need to help them make decisions about food.
13. Australian children will have a better understanding of how food is produced.
14. Australia will have contributed to global food security by helping farmers in developing countries gain access to new agricultural technologies.

### How we will achieve our goals

*We will continue to:*

- build on our high level of food security by
  - supporting a competitive local food industry and open markets
  - maintaining a strong economy and improving opportunities for employment among disadvantaged groups
  - supporting disadvantaged Australians through our social safety nets and programs, including community stores in remote Indigenous communities
- ensure the safety of our food supply, in partnership with state and territory governments and the New Zealand Government, through a scientific and risk-based regulatory approach
- improve the information on food labelling, including country of origin labelling, by implementing our response to *Labelling logic: review of food labelling law and policy*
- promote healthy behaviours and address lifestyle-related diseases, including obesity through
  - developing a National Nutrition Policy to guide future health and nutrition programs
  - investing \$932 million over nine years for the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health

- investing up to \$87 million in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chronic Disease Fund to promote healthy, active lifestyles in Indigenous communities over four years from 2013–14
- providing practical information and advice on nutrition and physical activity, including the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- investing \$18.2 million in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program to develop gardens in more than 650 schools across Australia to 2015
- invest in improving global food security (\$411 million in 2013-14), including sharing research and development expertise to help developing countries produce food sustainably.

*We will invest:*

- \$1.5 million to support community food initiatives by providing grants to community groups to support the establishment and development of initiatives like community gardens and farmers' markets
- \$1.5 million to develop resources and provide professional development to support teaching about food and agriculture through the Australian Curriculum.

## Sustainable food

### Our goals to 2025

15. Australia will produce food sustainably and will have adopted innovative practices to improve productive and environmental outcomes.
16. Australia will have reduced per capita food waste.

### How we will achieve our goals

*We will continue to:*

- support sustainable agriculture and natural resource management by
  - investing over \$600 million under Caring for our Country Sustainable Agriculture Stream over the next five years to ensure our natural resources remain sustainable, productive and resilient
  - appointing a Soil Health Advocate to raise awareness of the importance of soil health
  - implementing the Murray–Darling Basin Plan to restore our rivers to health, support strong regional communities and sustainable food production
  - investing more than \$15 billion in the Water for the Future initiative, including investment in infrastructure to improve water use efficiency (on and off the farm) and supporting irrigators and food processors position themselves for a future with less water

- address the causes of climate change and its consequences by
  - introducing a carbon price through the Clean Energy Future Plan to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, drive investment in energy efficiency and promote innovation
  - investing \$429 million through the Carbon Farming Futures program to identify ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, store carbon in our vegetation and soils, and enhance sustainable agricultural practices
  - investing \$44 million through the Carbon Energy Future Plan to support regional natural resource management organisations across Australia to plan for the impacts of climate change
- reduce food waste through the National Waste Policy, which includes a food and garden organics best practice collection manual, supermarket food waste benchmarks and national food waste assessments.

*We will invest:*

- \$1.5 million to support community food initiatives by providing grants to community groups to support the establishment and development of initiatives like food aid and food rescue organisations.

## How we will keep on track

To guide our progress, we will:

- establish the Australian Council on Food to engage with industry and community leaders, consider long-term strategic challenges for the food system and provide advice to the government in implementing the National Food Plan
- publish the State of the Food System report every five years to highlight key information about the food system and analyse trends
- review the National Food Plan every five years to ensure we meet our food policy aims.

