



Tasmanian Greens Party Policy 2014

Agriculture

[RATIFIED: 18 JAN 2014 - VERSION: 14.1.0]

The Tasmanian Greens believe that Agriculture plays a pivotal role in Tasmania's economy and culture and is a key source of employment in rural and regional areas. These areas require adequate access to health, education and infrastructure services to support permanent populations and vibrant communities.

Tasmania's clean, GE-free, low-carbon brand underpins its agricultural sectors and access to niche export markets, nationally and globally.

Tasmania's brand must be supported with the policies and programs that continue to help primary producers who want to farm in an environmentally sustainable manner to produce nutritious and chemical free food. We believe organic farming should be encouraged to support these goals.

Protection of Tasmania's fertile soils from chemical contamination, erosion and depletion is essential to back up our brand, as is adequate funding for quarantine and quality assurance. Water quality and availability are critical issues facing our primary industry sector, and catchment management is crucial.

Measures

Planning and Development

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

1. assistance for producers to continue to transition from commodity-based production to high-return niche markets;
2. education and practical assistance to help primary producers to lower energy costs through energy-efficiency, small to medium scale on-farm renewables and the most efficient and effective management of water and waste products;
3. ongoing support for state-wide data collection on microclimates, soil capability and water availability for primary producers and industry;
4. supporting the development of local processing, manufacturing, packaging and marketing with low interest loans and competitive, transparently administered, State Government grants;
5. an end to factory farming;
6. streamlined, state-wide planning and health and safety permits for growers and retailers who sell into farmers markets and/or at local events.

Environmental Protection

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

7. legislation to protect agricultural land and water from contamination by chemical trespass;
8. supporting integrated pest management using scientifically tested biological and physical control in place of chemicals;
9. providing high quality contemporary science and data to assist primary producers in adapting to climate change, particularly in managing changing weather patterns, extreme events, the impact of invasive species and loss of biodiversity;

10. state-wide salinity audits to inform strategies to protect vulnerable land;
11. prime agricultural land being protected with robust planning legislation against inappropriate subdivision, development or encroachment by industrial scale plantations.

Transforming Communities

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

12. strategies to ensure rural and regional communities have access to affordable healthcare, public transport, NBN and education;
13. facilitate ongoing funding and support for agricultural and rural education and research;
14. supporting family farms to remain viable with appropriate regulation and access to local markets;
15. supporting development of local processing, manufacturing and packaging with no interest loans and grower cooperatives.

Clean, Green Farming

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

16. setting a target of 20% organic accredited farm production by 2020;
17. developing a Tasmanian Organic Certification program in consultation with existing organic certification bodies;
18. assisting farmers and growers in the organic certification process;
19. supporting a paddock-to-plate trace-back program;
20. reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides and identify cost-effective pest reduction methods that have no long-term negative effects on the sustainability of our agricultural commodities;
21. Tasmania remaining GE-free;
22. appropriate resourcing for an effective quarantine and biosecurity framework to minimise the impact of exotic pests, weeds and diseases;
23. ending live export and the transportation and transfer of livestock to be conducted in a humane and safe manner.

Marketing

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

24. establishing integrity of Tasmanian produce with dedicated quality mark, labelling and branding that identifies it as Tasmanian made and packaged, GE and hormonal growth promotant free;
25. ensuring affordable accreditation services are available in Tasmania for farmers seeking to access global markets with international standards;
26. supporting national introduction of country of origin labelling as well as labelling that clearly identifies whether products are organic and/or GE and chemical free;
27. identifying high-return national and international markets and assisting producers with quality assurance, research and development to access those markets.