

The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

Agriculture

Western Australia's rural communities are essential to our food security, economy and cultural identity. The Greens (WA) recognise the important role farmers play and also recognise that many farmers and pastoralists are practising sustainable farming. However, more needs to be done to support their work.

Many of the areas farmed in Western Australia have poor soils and there are ongoing challenges of soil degradation in the form of erosion, nutrient depletion, acidification, waterlogging and salinity

Farmers face many complex agricultural, environmental, economic and social challenges. Increasing climate variability, declining and less predictable rainfall and dramatically reduced stream flows are increasing farming risks. A combination of rising costs of fuel and fertilisers, competition from imported produce, limited local markets, price pressures from the large supermarket chains and often having to compete in international markets is putting many farmers under significant financial pressure

We support a resilient agricultural sector and support farmers to remain on the land and earn a healthy return on their produce

Farming practices can have substantial impacts on climate change and many practices need to change in order for farming to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and effect upon the environment. There are also many opportunities for farmers to be supported to provide climate solutions such as carbon sequestration¹ and biomass production

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- sustainable land management²
- resilient, well-serviced rural communities which keep people on the land and provide a future for young people in agriculture (see also The Greens (WA) [Regions](#) policy)
- better access to services for primary producers (including health, social services, training and education), and also better access to expertise and technologies that improve the sustainability of their enterprises and communities
- protection of prime agricultural land from encroachment by urban, industrial and mining developments (see also The Greens (WA) [Mining](#) policy)
- stronger regulation of foreign ownership of agricultural land
- improvement in efficient water use and the prioritisation of water allocation for use for agriculture over mining
- improved quality of water resources within agricultural systems (see also The Greens (WA) [Water](#) policy)
- improved efforts to prevent further soil degradation

- establishment and restoration of corridors of native vegetation on farming properties to provide shelter belts, increased biodiversity³ and other environmental benefits
- increased farm forestry to replace the existing native forest logging, diversify sources of farm income and to provide other environmental benefits and ecosystem services (see also The Greens (WA) [Plantations](#) policy)
- increased research into sustainable agricultural innovations and industries
- more effective ecological management of invasive species, pests and diseases
- greater availability of a diverse range of locally grown fresh produce to Western Australian customers and greater promotion of Western Australian produce to West Australian consumers (see also The Greens (WA) [Food](#) policy)
- support for community-based food production systems including urban and peri-urban⁴ gardens
- support for production and processing to create higher value exports
- labelling of agricultural produce that accurately reflects its origin and any Genetically Modified content
- a greater understanding of the impact of agriculture on climate change to inform mitigation measures

Measures

The Greens (WA) will initiate and support legislation and other actions to:

- ensure agricultural land zoning reflects land use capability and protects prime agricultural land and water sources
- support food growing, trading and processing practices that support local producers and reduce transport, packaging and waste
- support initiatives that increase local product quality and nutritional value, local value-adding and local distribution, and that promote Western Australian produce to the Western Australian community
- prevent any further deregulation such as has occurred in the dairy industry
- increase support for regional and local natural resource management bodies, delivering ecologically sustainable strategies
- promote and initiate schemes to implement sustainable farming systems
- support incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through measures including, but not limited to, increasing carbon in the soil, farm forestry, changes to burning practices and the use of alternatives to fossil fuels (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)
- protect the biosecurity⁵ of local produce from the impacts of free trade agreements
- ensure resourcing of biosecurity, pest, weed and disease control measures, to protect Western Australia's agriculture, natural systems and population
- increase funding for user education in the use of agricultural chemicals
- strengthen-regulations and codes on pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers etc
- support the growing of salt-tolerant crops, pastures and other perennial systems to provide farming options for saline lands
- encourage agricultural practices that maximise nutrient recycling, water use efficiency and soil health, such as organic, biodynamic and conservation agriculture

- replace the live animal export industry with a Halal-accredited⁶, chilled and frozen carcass industry
- re-introduce the moratorium on all GM crops and, in the absence of a moratorium, seek to ensure effective regulation to prevent any adverse impacts of such crops on non-GM producers and consumers, including ensuring legal liability of producers of GM crops (see also The Greens (WA) [GM](#) policy)
- end the exploration for and extraction of coal-seam, shale or tight gas in WA, given the risks to our water, land, communities, tourism and agricultural industries, and to our climate
- support farmers who wish to exclude natural gas projects from their land

(see also The Australian Greens [Sustainable Agriculture](#) policy)

Glossary

1. **Carbon sequestration** can be either above ground, or below ground. Above ground sequestration refers to enhancing the storage of carbon in new or increasing vegetation. Below ground sequestration refers to increasing the soil biota, the living organisms in the soil, by introducing decaying plant or animal matter into the soil.
2. **Sustainable land management** - managing land without damaging ecological processes or reducing biological diversity.
3. **Biodiversity** - the variety of species, populations, habitats and ecosystems;
4. **Peri-urban** – land adjoining an urban area between the suburbs and the countryside
5. **Biosecurity** is a set of preventive measures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, quarantined pests, invasive species, and living modified organisms.
6. **Halal slaughter** – the method of slaughtering meat animals according to Islamic law for sale to Muslims.

Agriculture policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017