



Topic	Question	Answer
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Can the department able to provide modelling, or insight, to the additional income farmers can expect to receive from participating in the Agriculture Stewardship Package Pilots?	<p>The potential earnings from Carbon + Biodiversity projects vary substantially, including regionally, and due to the specifics of the project at the farm level, so it is difficult to provide an overarching guide on earnings. Despite this, the biodiversity payment is a genuine trigger for farmers undertaking projects that would otherwise not have been initiated and assists with the establishment costs of the projects. Some case studies which examine potential project costs and revenues can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Farmers participating in the upcoming Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot could earn payments for improving remnant native vegetation on their properties. Applications are open as of 29 September 2021, closing on 27 October 2021.</p>
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	If they haven't already started, when will the pilots under the Agriculture Stewardship Package commence?	<p>The Carbon + Biodiversity pilot opened 12 April 2021 and closed on 11 June 2021. Additional rounds are being planned.</p> <p>Applications for The Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot closed on 27 October 2021.</p>
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	<p>What tools are being used to measure biodiversity and the previous research and programs which have informed this approach?</p> <p>How will the outcomes be verified and how often and who by?</p>	<p>The assessment of biodiversity outcomes was informed by experts from the Australia National University. The assessment process draws on national data sets including satellite imagery from the Geoscience Australia and land use data from the Australian Bureau of Agriculture Resource Economics and Science (ABARES). The ANU assessment considered data including the size of the planting project, the type of vegetation that was to be planted, the location of that planting and site features such as the presence of remnant trees and creeklines. Carbon outcomes will be verified in the normal way for environmental plantings for carbon sequestration through the Emissions Reduction Fund.</p> <p>Reporting requirements are outlined in the relevant pilot guidelines.</p> <p>Biodiversity improvements under the Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot will also be measured using biodiversity assessment protocols designed by the Australian National University.</p>
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Can the department provide the number of participants in the Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot?	65 projects were offered funding. Until funding agreements are finalised, and projects are registered with the Emissions Reduction Fund we will not be able to confirm the number of projects that are proceeding.



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<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Will all pilot projects under the Agriculture Stewardship Package be available across Australia? What natural resource regions will participation in the pilots be available?	The Carbon + Biodiversity and Enhancing Remnant Vegetation pilots are being run in 6 Natural Resource Management Regions. The ability to list projects on the Biodiversity Trading Platform will be open to all regions.
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	What is the required timeframe for the management of biodiversity and remnant vegetation under the pilots? Is it in perpetuity? How will the government ensure outcomes are met and maintained?	Carbon + Biodiversity projects are to be retained for at least 25 years. Farmers can opt for either 25 year or 100 year registration under the Emissions Reduction Fund, and will need to retain projects for which ever period is longest.  Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot projects will run for 10-years under agreements between landholders and the department.
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Is it correct that participation in the Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot involved an upfront payment for the expected carbon + biodiversity credits earned? If so, what is the incentive for not allowing the cattle into the plantings when feed gets tight?	The Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot pays the farmer 50% of the biodiversity payment up-front, with a further 25% after planting is completed, and the remaining 25% at least a year later.
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Can the department please clarify whether you need to be the land title owner to participate in any of the Agriculture Stewardship Package pilots?	Participants in Carbon + Biodiversity need to be the land owner.  Eligibility requirements for the Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot are currently being finalised and are expected to be published when applications open in late September 2021.
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	Can the department provide more detail on how the Australian Farm Biodiversity Certification Scheme will operate as a 'meta' standard?	More details on the certification scheme will be made available later this year.
<b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b>	The intent of the Biodiversity Trading Platform is to give farmers the ability to report to the ERF, so if farmers do decide to sell ACCUs they can get more per ton of carbon. Bypassing aggregators is great for co-benefits, are	The Clean Energy Regulator is implementing the King Review. You may be interested in the environmental planting pilot which is aiming to streamline registration and crediting, offer access to a fixed price Australian Government purchasing desk outside of ERF auctions and reduced auditing requirements, more information can be found <a href="#">here</a> .



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	<p>there similar approaches planned within the ERF itself? Does the King Review recommendations provide any insight to this?</p>	
<p><b>Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package</b></p>	<p>How can farmers who have been looking after biodiversity for a long-time become eligible for programs which financially reward good stewardship practices? Has there been any discussion to address this additionality issue?</p>	<p>The Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot guidelines were released on 29 Sept. Payments are made available for additional actions that farmers undertake to maintain and improve biodiversity outcomes. For Carbon + Biodiversity projects the presence of mature trees that provide habitat for biodiversity contributes to the biodiversity benefit score of the project, however, the existing vegetation is not included in the eligible area for a project under the Emissions Reduction Fund. For the Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot remnant vegetation which is protected by state clearing laws is eligible to be covered by a project, with the payments relating to improved biodiversity outcomes for that remnant vegetation.</p>
<p><b>Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF)</b></p>	<p>The Forestry industry has been unable to participate in the ERF as a number of projects are not eligible (e.g. the 'Water Rule' places additional constraints on where projects can be located). Is there any changes to the ERF planned to allow for greater forestry participation in the ERF?</p>	<p>Commercial tree planting projects under the Emissions Reduction Fund need to meet eligibility conditions designed to help manage impacts on water availability in higher rainfall locations (sometimes referred to as the Water Rule). The Government amended the requirements in 2020, to allow projects to meet the conditions if they are in a region where tree planting has been assessed as being unlikely to have a material adverse impact on water availability. To date, there are regions in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. A map of specified regions is available on the web site of the Department of Industry, Science Energy and Resources. Other regions will be considered in future. There are a multiple ways projects can demonstrate they meet they meet the eligibility conditions, the specified regions map is just one avenue.</p> <p>The Clean Energy Regulator has been developing a new plantation method in collaboration with industry. The new method is intended to offer more opportunities for the plantation forestry industry to deliver low-cost abatement and will be available for use in 2022.</p>



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<b>Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF)</b>	Can farmers participate in Climate Active if they are not eligible to create ACCUs?	<p>Climate Active provides farmers with an opportunity for a competitive edge by having their organisation or products certified as carbon neutral. To be certified, farmers measure their emissions, reduce these where possible, retire eligible offset units (including ACCUs) to compensate for any remaining emissions, have their carbon neutral claim independently verified and then publically report on their achievement annually.</p> <p>To measure emissions, a Climate Active carbon account is created. This includes all sources of emissions, for example, electricity, diesel and water use. Reducing your emissions, such as by changing your feedstock, is included in the carbon account. However the removal (sequestration) of carbon from the atmosphere through soils and vegetation, is not included in the carbon account and can only be used as offsets if you have generated ACCUs and not sold them to anyone else. However, a pilot project is underway exploring opportunities for more holistic carbon accounting that could enable both emission sources and removals (that are not generating offsets) to be part of a Climate Active carbon account in the future. More information on Climate Active is available at <a href="http://www.climateactive.org.au">www.climateactive.org.au</a>.</p>
<b>Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF)</b>	Is there any linkage of Climate Active and the red meat processing sector, given that JBS have announced they want to be carbon zero by 2040?	<p>Australia's first carbon neutral certified beef product under Climate Active was <a href="#">Five Founders beef</a>. Five Founders has measured and offset the emissions they produce from paddock to plate, providing a carbon-conscious choice for consumers who are increasingly mindful about the food they eat. Climate Active is interested in engaging with other businesses and industry groups from the meat and livestock industry to help them achieve carbon neutral certification. The Climate Active team can be reached by email - <a href="mailto:climate.active@industry.gov.au">climate.active@industry.gov.au</a>.</p>
<b>ERF</b>	Has the government received any negative feedback on carbon farming in western Queensland? Specifically, the potential risk of plantations creating weed and pest hotspots?	<p>Some community members and local representatives have raised concerns about Emissions Reduction Fund vegetation projects, for example in relation to poor pest and weed management. To receive carbon credits, landholders must comply with all relevant state and territory laws, including laws about weed and pest animal management.</p> <p>The Department of Industry, Science Energy and Resources has been working with regional councils in Southwest Queensland with the aim of better understanding the impacts of projects in the region.</p>



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<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	Has the National Soil Strategy taken into account learnings from prior, similar initiatives?	Yes. The development of the National Soil Strategy was overseen by a Steering Committee, which included members of the committee responsible for the implementation of the 2014 National Soil Research Development and Extension Strategy as well as the Office of the National Soils Advocate, that has led similar initiatives in the past.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	When evaluating how soils are managed will you evaluate how water in the landscape is managed?	The National Land Management Practices Classification System is currently being developed and tested by ABARES in collaboration with DAWE. It is likely to include practices that relate to water management, such as irrigation.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	What is the Government's position on gathering farm soil data that comes from privately owned land? Is the intention to comply with the National Farmers Federation Farm Data Code?	Soil data acquired through the soil data review and capture will come from a range of sources. The department is currently working through the privacy requirements in consultation with industry.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	Does the government plan to ensure the delivery of the physical change efforts required under the National Soil Strategy are rolled out by regional delivery organisations in partnership with farmers? This would avoid a duplication of effort and therefore confusion of the receivers (farmers)	The Australian Government’s final round of Smart Farms Small grants is being utilised to support the National Soil Strategy to deliver physical change. There are a number of elements included in the final round of Smart Farms Small grants, which will ensure physical change efforts are consistent and not duplicated through regular engagement with the farming community and other industry bodies. Information will also be filtered up from the farmers and land managers on-ground to inform decisions and advice provided by the coordinators, which will also mitigate duplication. Further information about this will be made available shortly through the department’s website.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	Is there any government funding for on the ground work? For instance, reducing fertiliser is heavily dependent on using fertiliser better in the first place. How are these views/approaches being considered?	Activities funded through the Smart Farms Small Grants program include on-ground assistance. This includes \$18 million in grant funding to support Soil Extension Activities. Further information on this will be made available via the department’s website.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	Will there be opportunities for farmers to be subsidised to test and share their soil data and practices?	The Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot will provide incentives to farmers to test their soil and share the results. The first round of this program is scheduled to be available in the final quarter of 2021.
<b>National Soil Strategy</b>	Lisa's slide showed potential for a 58% increase in productivity through improved soil management. Can further	The value on Lisa's slide refers to a <a href="#">statistic</a> from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation. More specifically, the FAO suggests that sustainable soil management, including increasing soil organic matter content, keeping soil surface vegetated, using nutrients wisely,



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	<p>information be provided on how we get there.</p>	<p>promoting crop rotations and reducing erosion can lead to an average crop yield increase of 58%. It is important to note that this value will be different for different climates, soil types and other variables. The Australian Government supports these practices through a number of programs, including the National Landcare Program Smart Farms and Regional Land Partnerships programs and the Agricultural Stewardship Package, as well as through programs undertaken by organisations funded by the Australian Government, such as Soil CRC. More support for sustainable soil management is being delivered through the 2021-22 Soil Package, including the Food waste for health soils and soil extension services. More information on Australian Government programs that support sustainable soil management can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Are there any other financial opportunities available for natural resource outcomes not related to carbon or biodiversity (for example, soil condition and/or management of environmental pests).</p>	<p>The Soil Monitoring and Incentives program and the Extension Services will provide support to better understand soil condition.</p> <p>The Australian Government provides leadership and coordination and invests in research and development in pest animal and weed management, where it is in the national interest. Noting pest animal and weed management is primarily the responsibility of state and territory government and landholders.</p> <p>State and territory governments are responsible for undertaking pest management activities within their jurisdiction in accordance with their respective legislation. It is a matter for individual jurisdictions to establish or expand management programs including financial incentives. The issues around pest animal management are complex and many factors including technical, environmental, social and animal welfare issues are considered when developing appropriate policies and solutions. Decisions on the appropriate management of pest animals and use of control methods within each jurisdiction, including commercial harvesting or the use of a financial or bounty system, are matters for the relevant state or territory government.</p> <p>Nationally, the Australian Government has committed over \$212 million between 2015-16 and 2024-25 to support established pest animal and weed management programs. For further information see <a href="http://agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/pest-animals-and-weeds">agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/pest-animals-and-weeds</a>. Look out for future grant opportunities on the Grants Connect <a href="#">website</a> and also engage with your local and state government on further funding opportunities.</p>