Agriculture and Climate Change in the ACT and Region: Linking Climate Change, Farm Practices and Policies

Upper Shoalhaven Case Study

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Major Research Essay (ENVS8101)

Project scope

• Climate change projections for SE NSW and anticipated impacts on agriculture
• Climate change policy, NGGI, CPRS, Copenhagen and industry
• Sustainable farm practices
• Upper Shoalhaven Case Study
Sustainable Farm Practices – what are they?

*Sustainable farm practices are practices that maintain or improve Australia’s capacity to produce food and fibre while enhancing the capacity of agricultural lands to deliver other ecosystem services, such as clean air and water, healthy soils and biodiversity conservation.*

Sustainable Farm Practices – what are they?

Only two types of farm practices:
- Practices that improve the soil
- Practices that degrade the soil

Only two types of farmers:
- Farmers that [try to] work with nature
- Farmers that try to fight nature
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Interviews
8 farmers
4 stakeholders
  DPI climate change
  DPI extension
  Palerang Council
  Southern Fivers SMA

Survey topics
1. Background
2. Farm
3. Farm practices
4. Farm economics
5. Change drivers
6. Climate
7. Policy
Upper Shoalhaven Case Study – influences and drivers

- Financial
- Risk
- Health and wellbeing
- Lifestyle, family and community
- Technology, trying things out
- Government policy
- Information
- Market
- Other farmers
- Passion for farming
- Desire to leave the farm better than came into it
- Always improving
- Environment
- Climate, water
Upper Shoalhaven Case Study – policy options

• Land planning changes
• Easy to use toolkit for calculating farm’s carbon footprint
• Accurate, affordable way to estimate soil Carbon
• Refocus or resource CMAs to larger landholdings
• Decentralisation, regionalisation
• Certification
• Consumer education
• Environmental stewardship
• Accountability
Upper Shoalhaven Case Study – some quotes

• healthier soil, healthier pastures, healthier stock
• our problem used to be waterlogging
• less pressure on land, water, self
• if not cleared by now, it’s not worth clearing
• patience is the key, if try to do too much to quickly can cost money
• Landcare ... once started paradigm shift, the next step is easier
• ... stress of feeding animals, day in day out, it’s not good for headspace, real mental problems, social aspect, affects family members, carting away dead animals, it gets to you
• how long’s a piece of string, $100K in bank, 3 months of feed, what happens then?
• it’s OK for him, he didn’t have the drought we had
• ploughing should be illegal in some places
• ... poisoned myself, saw link to cattle
• saw devastation in Africa from clearing, in the early 80s, came back and started planting trees
Thank you

Questions?