



# Biodynamic Agriculture Australia

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Secretary: .....*[Signature]*.....

20th March, 2009

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re: Adapting farming to climate change.

Biodynamic Agriculture Australia Ltd is a not-for-profit membership company working with farmers to produce high quality food and fibre with positive ecological outcomes.

### ***Innovation identified and supported, new ideas widely accessible***

Biodynamic Agriculture Australia has experienced and capable educators and advisors, most of whom are commercial biodynamic practitioners, to support the transition to a regenerative agriculture. Biodynamic Agriculture Australia has over 600 farm members and has conducted over 150 workshops across Australia since 2000.

### ***Not just occurring in isolated pockets***

Biodynamic practitioners can be found throughout Australia, in every state and territory, across a wide range of agricultural production - grazing, cropping, horticulture, viticulture and dairy.

### ***Current adaptations to the impact of climate change on agriculture***

Biodynamic practitioners have anecdotally reported significant drought tolerance over the past 10 years; they experience better production and returns than would be expected from previous drought situations. In times of flood soils with better soil structure also do not erode or bog as badly as low organic matter soils. The use of perennial grasses to capture carbon also requires greater recognition and verification. These reported outcomes now require scientific evaluation and verification to encourage more uptake of these regenerative farming practices. Many of our members would be willing to participate.

### ***Role of government promoting resilience in the farm sector***

Government can assist by promoting the research that has been done already to give farmers confidence to adopt regenerative farming practices. There are approximately 129,000 farmers left in Australia. To enable every Australian farmer to attend a one day demonstration upskilling workshop, in groups of 50, would require 2,580 workshops. At a cost of \$6,000 per workshop, the community cost would be \$15.48 million - \$120 per farmer.

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### ***Role of government in promoting research***

There are now enough biodynamic practitioners for scientists to conduct further research on this biological approach to agriculture and verify the commercial and environmental outcomes these regenerative farmers are reporting. Local research is beginning to occur, verifying the positive outcomes the farmers are experiencing. We attach three reports that are indicative of the work being done; work that needs follow up and wider circulation.

### ***Role of government in promoting extension and training***

Government can support farmers to attend practical, how to, courses run by farmers on farms. Biodynamic Agriculture Australia has 9 years of experience in operating such courses and has found that experienced farmers have the skills to readily adopt regenerative farming methods.

### ***Role of rural research and development in assisting farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change***

Clarifying the research already completed and making that research readily available to farmers is a task as important as continuous new research. Adoption of what is already known can facilitate much improved short term results and bridge across to further research.

***Biodynamic Agriculture Australia*** has been presenting practical solutions for farmers to achieve sustainable and productive outcomes over 20 years. We would like the opportunity to report to your committee on this work and how we can continue to contribute at the farm level. Practicing farmers are often reluctant to give up their time for such inquiries. Biodynamic Agriculture Australia will encourage biodynamic farmers to attend your hearings to report on their work. A further list of farmers will be forwarded next week.

Yours truly,



Hamish Mackay, CEO

### **Attachments:**

#### Farmer letters:

David Matthews	Kilcoy	Qld	4515
John Vicary	Mundubbera	Qld	4626
Laura Livingstone	Mundubbera	Qld	4626

#### Documents

- Farmers are the Solution
- Biodynamic Agriculture Soil Health Trial
- Sustaining national water supplies by understanding the dynamic capacity that humus has to increase soil water-storage capacity
- Report on the Biodynamic Soil Activator.