

MEDIA RELEASE

Land to Market™ Australia a world and Australian first

12 March 2018 - Australians obsess about the food we eat and how it is produced. SBS has a whole channel devoted to food and cooking, while TV series such as *Gourmet Farmer*, *River Cottage Australia*, *The Cook and the Chef*, and *Gardening Australia* are highly-successful programs with loyal audiences.

The popularity of these programs attests to a trend: more people are becoming aware of the link between food production and ecosystem health. Marketers have labelled them 'conscious consumers' but they just want to do the right thing.

It's not easy to know where to start but a new program, Land to Market™ Australia, seeks to ease this confusion. It's the first farmer-driven market transformation program to identify and address the need and emerging demand for proof that food and clothing choices support land health.

Part of a global movement inspired by the Savory Institute, Land to Market™ Australia was started by a group of forward-thinking Australian farmers who have been working to regenerate their own land for decades. The group recognised that innovative, market-based approaches to farming – generally known as 'regenerative agriculture' – offer viable global solutions to the intersection of multiple crises that afflict our planet: food security, land degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss and more.

The Land to Market™ Australia program is a world first. It is based upon ecological outcomes, rather than the inputs, processes or farm management practices followed.

Leveraging a generous grant from Farming Together; this passionate group of smart, innovative farmers has developed a program to reliably measure the impact of farming practices on the environment. To do this, the farmers are adopting robust methodologies to measure and capture data. They have developed a structured scheme to provide support, training, mentoring, data checking and verification.

The program recognises that mindful consumers, restaurateurs and food producers, local and global, are canny. They care about animal welfare, and land and soil degradation, and they also want to know they're contributing to a solution, not helping to perpetuate a problem with their spending choices.

By driving grassroots demand at scale for food and fibre produced on regenerating land, it offers a unique opportunity. Consumers, restaurants, distributors, manufacturers and food producers can partner together to support farmers and convey a valuable story of hope and optimism.

The need for change, and consumers' confusion, has been recognised by Australia's leading natural resource management group, Landcare. Its discussion paper *Twenty First Century Landcare, Policy and program innovation to improve on-farm productivity, agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management* states:

“Current land management support programs fail to support long term, measured, cumulative benefits as an integral part of day-to-day business. They fail to adequately link continuous improvement in environmental outcomes with continuous improvement in on-farm productivity [Yet] there is a broad consensus on the need to establish market-based policies and programs to support continuous improvement in natural resource management.”

The Land to Market Australia program has been launched today at <http://www.landtomarketaustralia.com.au/program.php>

ENDS

NOTE FOR EDITORS:

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Photo captions: Erika and Hayden of Epicurean Harvest @epicureanharvest
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ABOUT LAND TO MARKET AUSTRALIA:

The Land to Market Australia program has been developed and is being managed by a group of 31 farmers who practice holistic land management. Between them they manage farms totalling 47,000ha. Altogether, they manage nearly 20,000 head of livestock (mainly cattle, also sheep and pigs) and each year produce 3.7m eggs and 162 tonnes of horticultural products. The group - headed by a governing committee comprising Tony Hill, a beef and garlic producer from Braidwood, NSW; Anna Coughlan, a beef producer from Holbrook, NSW; Ian Chapman, who runs beef and pastured pork at Stuart Town (NSW) and beef producer, Brian Wehlburg of Kindee Valley (NSW) - is currently exploring the opportunity to form a Co-Operative.

Land to Market Australia is the grassroots implementation of a much larger 'Land to Market' program being spearheaded by the Savory Institute, a global NGO dedicated to the large-scale restoration of the world's grasslands through holistic management. The US-based not-for-profit is seeking to establish the world's first verified regenerative sourcing solution for meat, dairy, wool and leather and to connect values-aligned food and fibre brands with farmers from dozens of countries globally.
www.landtomarketaustralia.com.au

ABOUT SAVORY INSTITUTE'S LAND TO MARKET™ PROGRAM:

Savory Institute's Land to Market is a grassroots program that allows every participant in the agricultural supply network to regenerate the land on which we all depend. This program brings together leading ecologists and soil scientists, farmers and ranchers who produce food and fibre, brands and retailers who source livestock-derived supply, and consumers who buy food and fibre products at retail.

The program has three areas of emphasis: recognising farmers and ranchers for their positive ecological outcomes; providing sourcing solutions for conscientious brands and retailers; and empowering consumers to "vote" for a regenerative future through their purchase power. When embraced at scale, Land to Market offers an adaptive solution to the issues of climate change, carbon sequestration, water infiltration and food security. For more information visit: <https://www.savory.global/landtomarket>.

ABOUT FARMING TOGETHER:

The 'Holistic Land Management Cooperative Project' gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from The Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program (Farming Together Program) which is supported by a \$14,934,000 (incl GST) grant auspiced to Southern Cross University to administer the Program by the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. Farming Together is being delivered by Southern Cross University on behalf of the Australian Government. It comprises a highly experienced senior team drawn from a wide range of commodity groups from across Australia and is backed by an industry advisory group representing experts from Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.