



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Australian Agriculture on the World Stage

*Insights, opportunities and
challenges*

November 2023

Su McCluskey

Special Representative for Australian Agriculture
[@AusAgSpecialRep](#)



Special Representative for Australian Agriculture

- Unique role – but proving influential
- Bridge between industry and government
- Builds engagement with the multilateral system
- Builds alliances with like-minded country officials
- Demonstrates Australia's global agricultural leadership and sustainability actions
- Other roles in ag sector complement role





This year so far.....

Focus now on climate change, agri-food systems, food security, measurement, data

- Chile – Conference on Low Emission Food Systems
- Vietnam – Conference, Sustainable Food Systems
- Washington – AIM4Climate Summit
- Rome – FAO Food Systems Conference, World Food Forum, Committee on World Food Security
- Ireland - Teagasc
- Paris – Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation
- EvokeAg, Nature-based conference, AGIC, Digital Agri-Food Summit

Coming up - COP28 - Dubai



Challenges to Trade

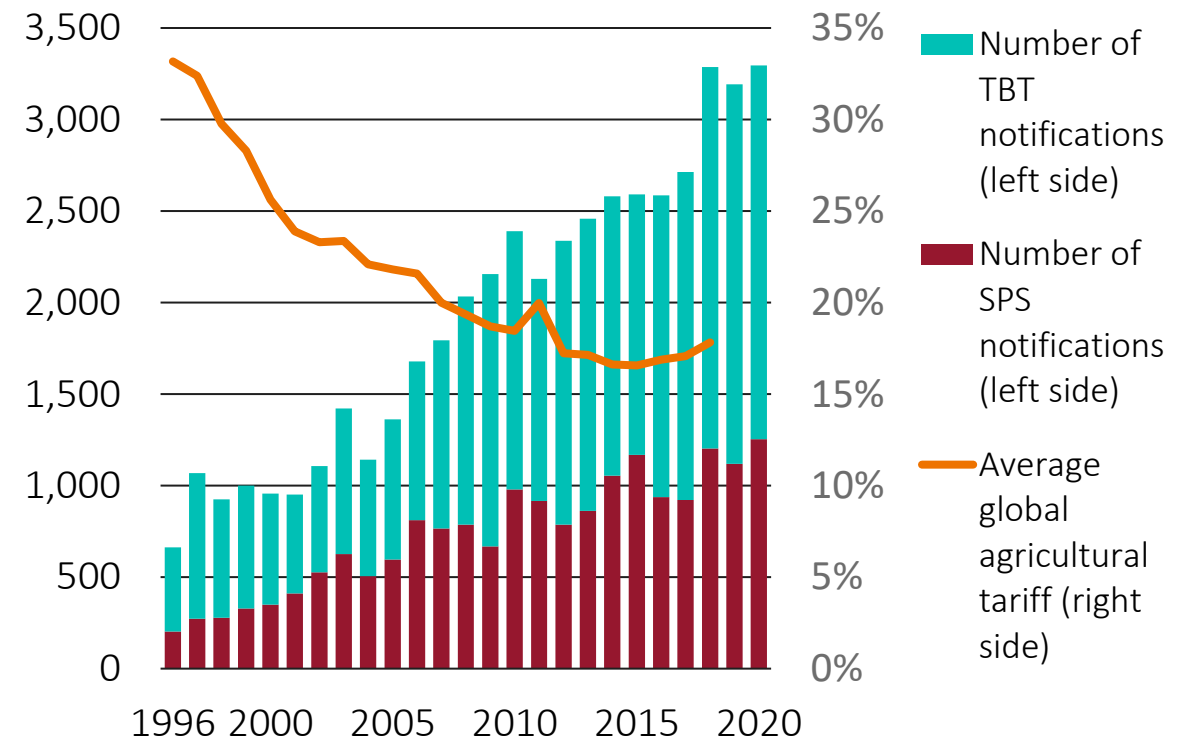
- Social license to operate is a key driver in the EU
 - Powerful NGOs
 - EU legislation
- Ideology rather than underpinned by science and evidence
- Focus on entire supply chain
 - ESG and SDGs
- CAP moving to be environmentally based rather than production.....greenwashing???



Barriers to trade

Regulatory heavy and prescriptive standards and import requirements are acting as non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to our exports

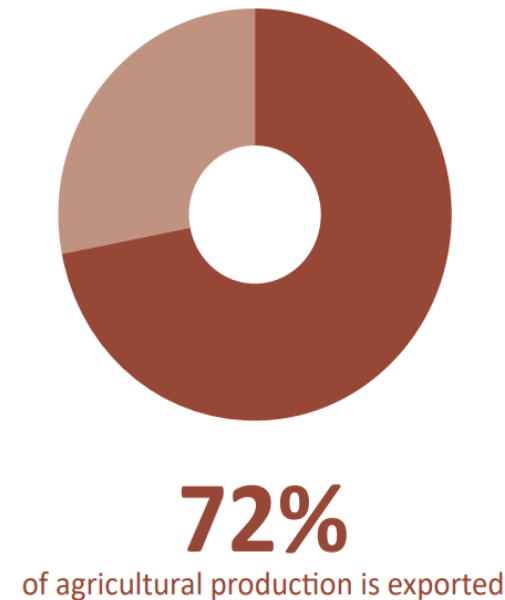
- MLA and AMIC report estimates that removing NTBs will have the same value as a new FTA
- Value of NTBs impacting the Australian red meat industry is estimated at A\$3.4 billion



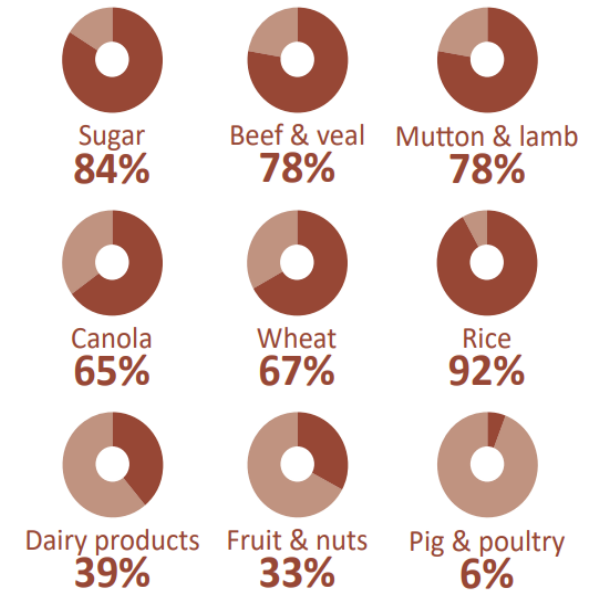
Source: ABARES 2022, Australia's future agricultural trade advantage

International Perceptions of Australian Agriculture

- Reputation as a producer of clean, safe and reliable high-quality products.....but eroding
- Lack of reputation for sustainability
- For trade and market access - need to demonstrate sustainability credentials
- We must evolve and adapt to meet new and emerging ESG credentials



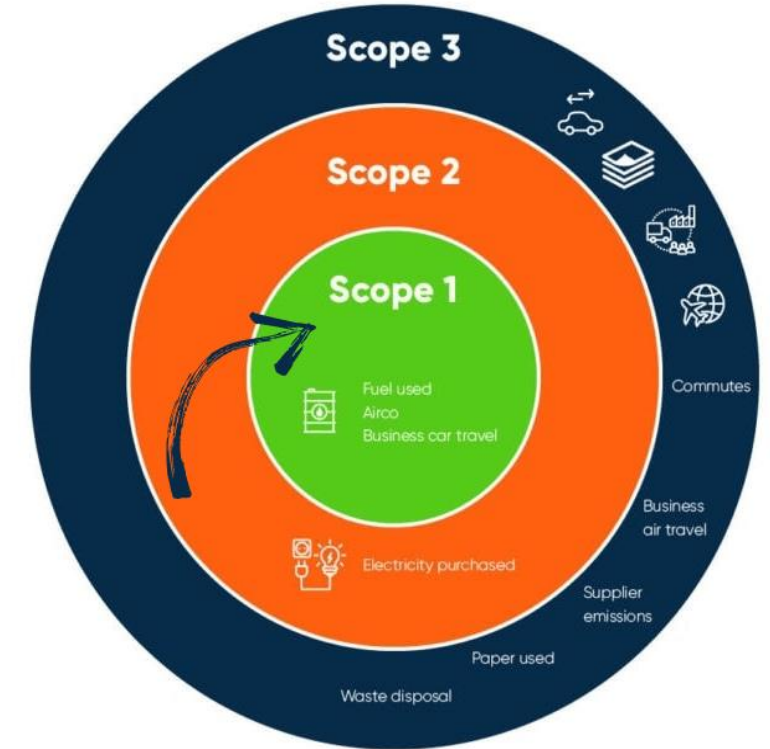
Note: Share of agricultural production exported by sector, 3 year average, 2017–18 to 2019–20. Source: ABARES, following method outlined by Cameron (2017)



ABARES, 2023, Snapshot of Australian Agriculture 2023

No One Size Fits All

- Sustainability must be outcomes focused, not prescriptive
- Place-based solutions to accommodate diversity of environments
- Food security – distribution issue
- Impact of subsidies on sustainability outcomes – i.e. is there a way to repurpose?
- GHGs - measurement and reporting



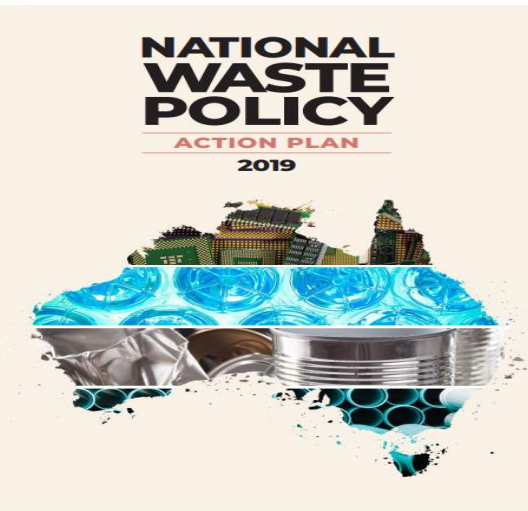
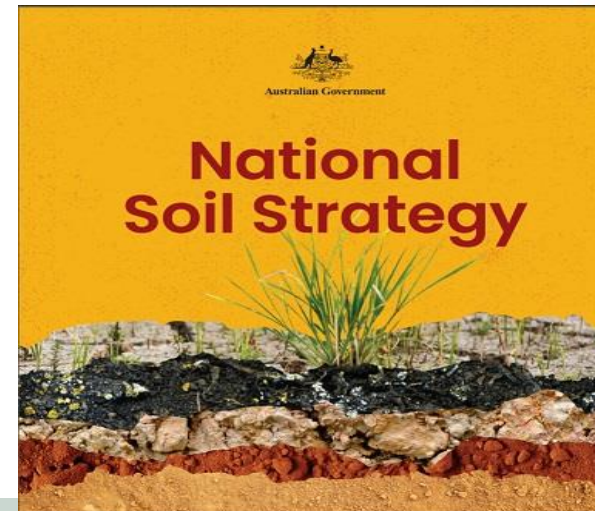
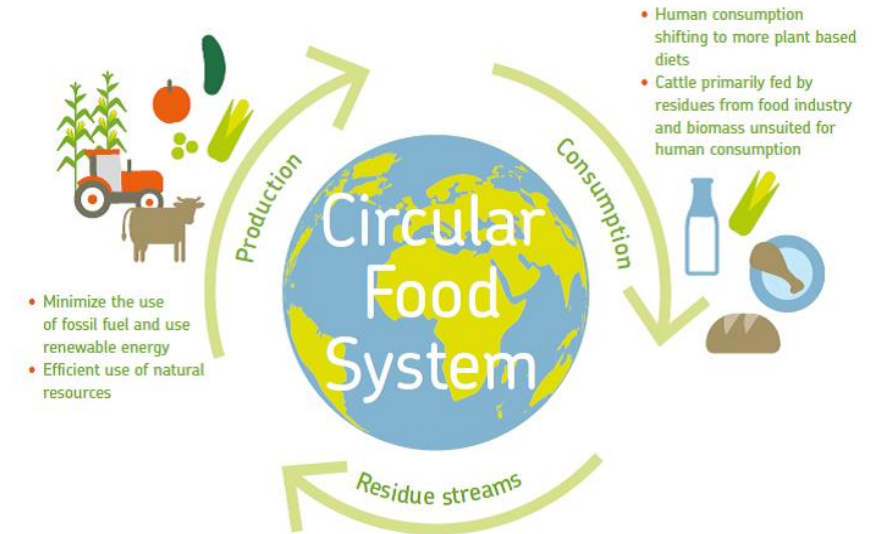
Alternative Proteins

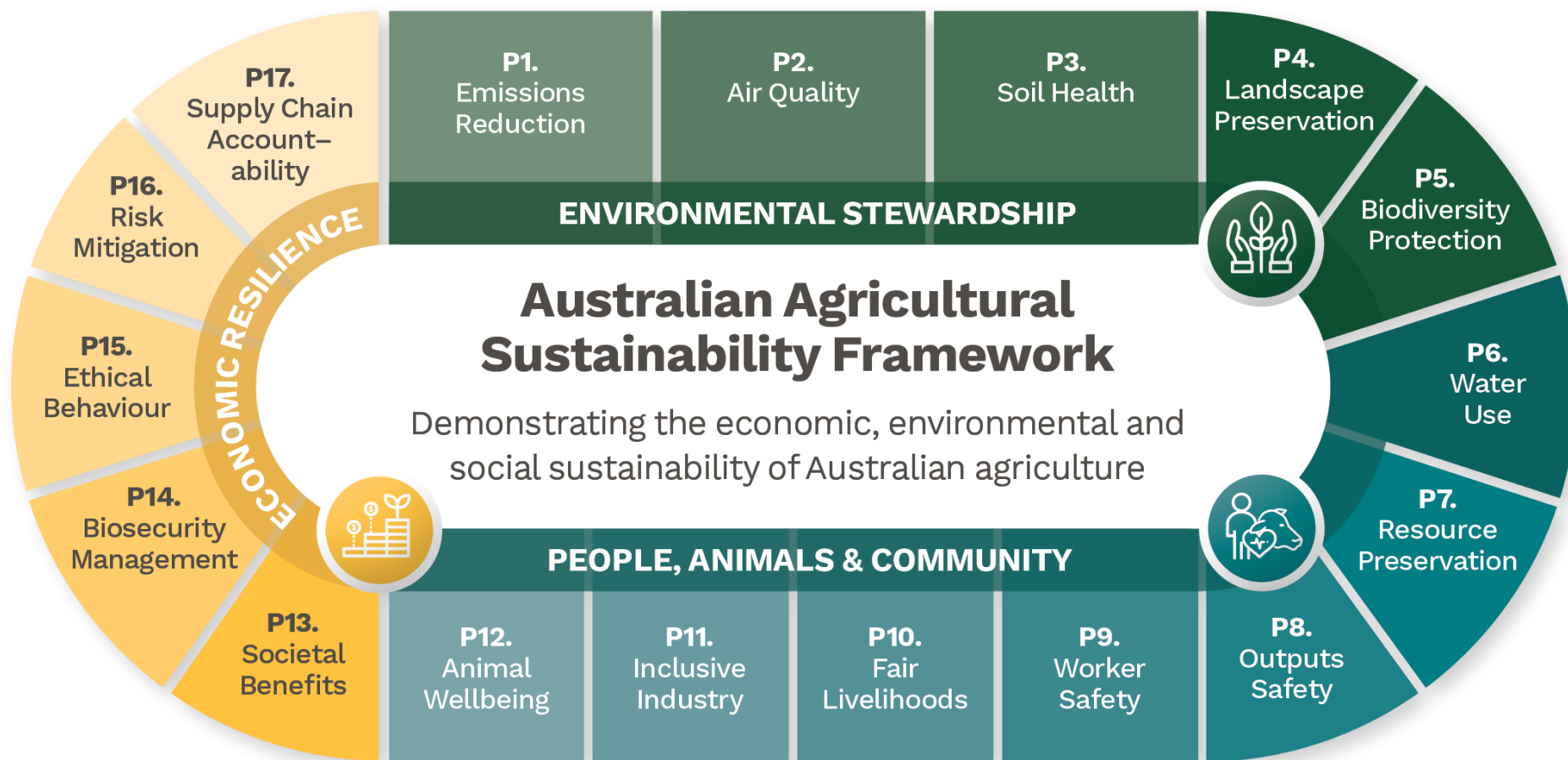
- FAO – debate become more sophisticated and aligned with SDGs
- Plants/plant-based meats/cell-based meats
- Nutrition, environment and safety
- Affordability, choice, access and equity



Agriculture can and must be part of the solution

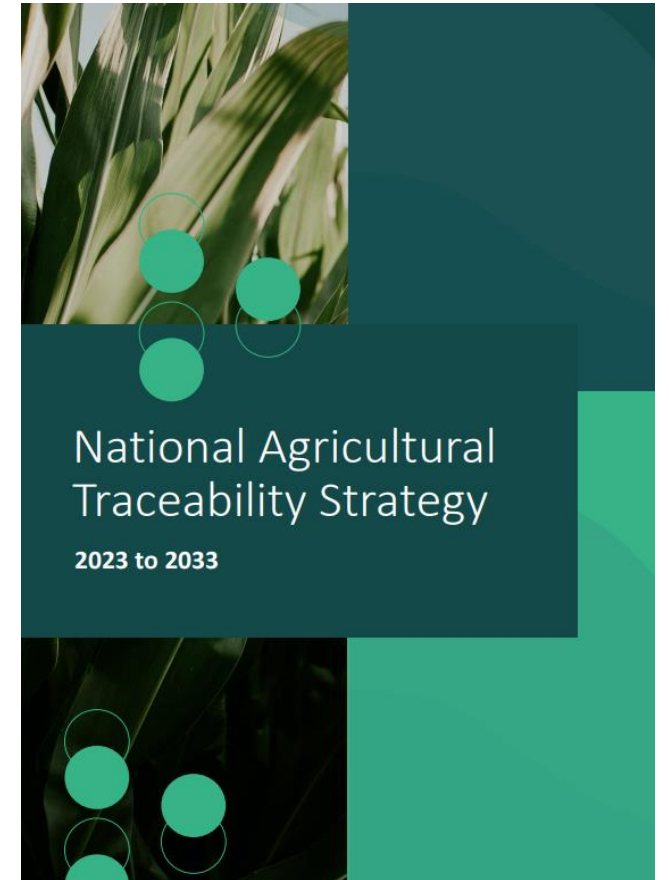
- Sustainable agri-food systems
- What we do well
 - soil health
 - water
 - biodiversity
 - waste management
- Carbon
 - measurement
 - markets
 - sequestration
 - insets vs offsets





Traceability

- Improved traceability systems demonstrate Australia's sustainable production practices
- Traceability provides data and credentials to track production along entire supply chain
- Technology – NLIS uplift
- Demonstrate to consumers and export markets that products are safe, clean and sustainable from paddock to plate



Demonstrating Australian credentials

- Adjusts a range of indicators to account for no one size fits all
 - diversity of environment
 - subsidies
- Shows we have strong sustainability credentials
- Measurement is important
 - Shifting land use into nature conservation
 - No/low till
 - Stubble retention
 - Less nitrogen fertilizer use
 - Less pesticides
 - Lower stocking rates

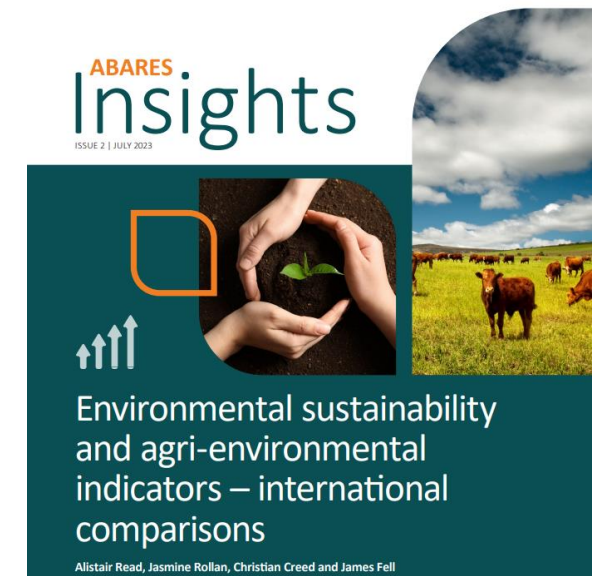
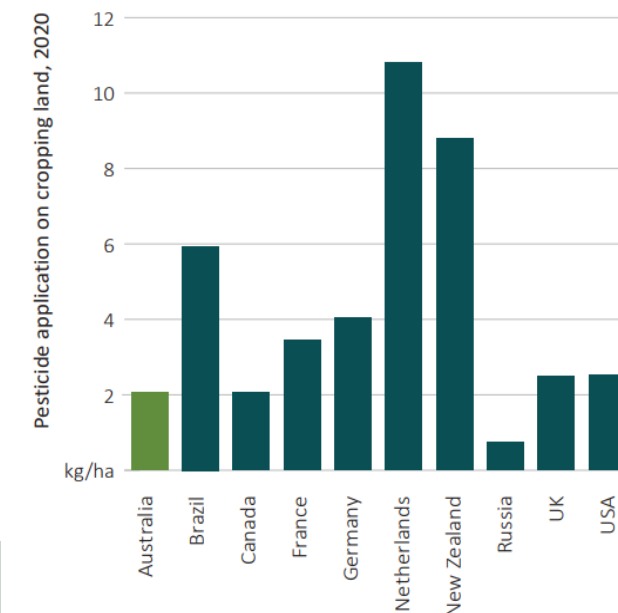
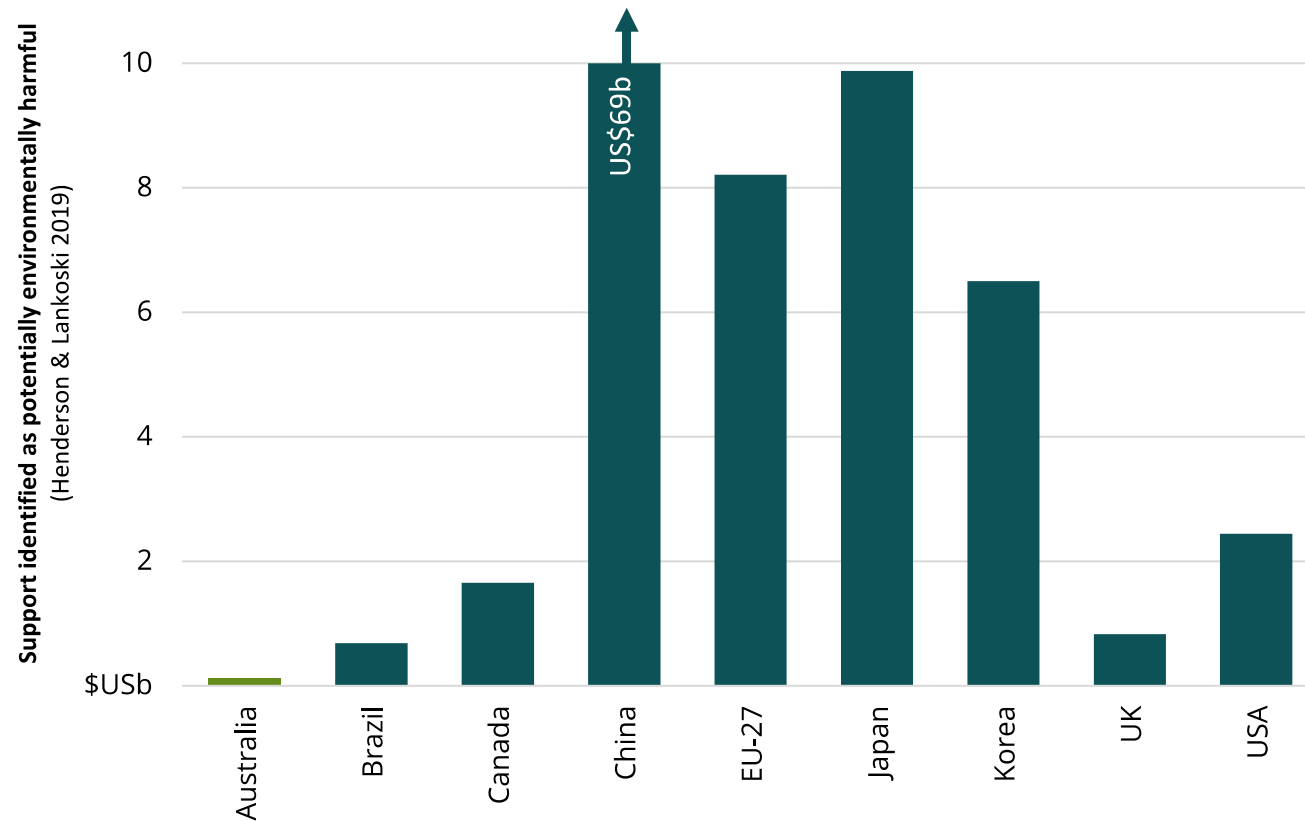


Figure 9 Low use of pesticides could support favourable biodiversity outcomes



Agricultural support harms the environment

Support identified as potentially environmentally harmful



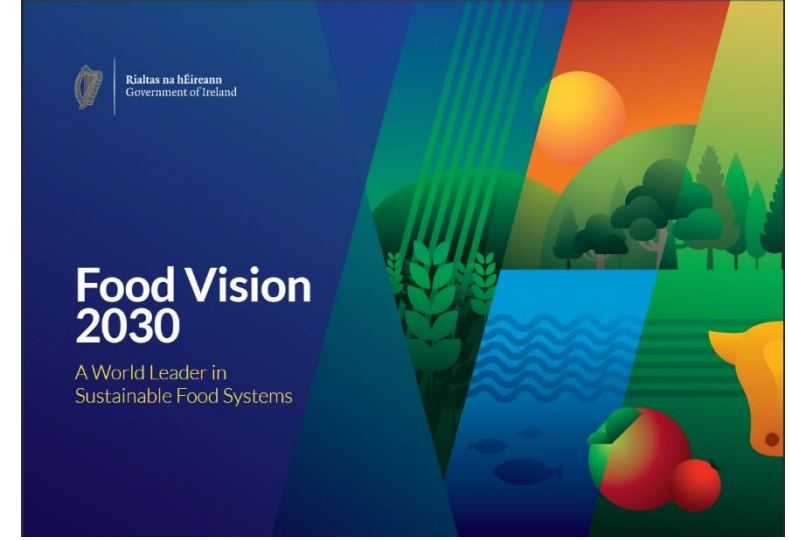
Notes: Annual averages, across period 2019 to 2021.

Source: OECD (2023); choice of producer support categories informed by Henderson & Lankoski (2019)

Agricultural support can encourage excessive use of pollutant inputs, from chemicals to livestock

Lessons from others

- Ireland
 - Leader in sustainable food systems
 - Quantifiable measures to reduce emissions
 - Branding - Team Ireland
- Canada
 - National index
- Others
 - Netherlands - benchmarking
 - New Zealand - know your number
 - Latins - R&D



**National Index
on Agri-Food
Performance**



Where to now

- More work on sustainability credentials
- Greater collaboration
- Global lens – RDC model and ACIAR
- Promote
 - climate-smart agriculture
 - traceability and food safety
 - healthy soils
- Externally need a Team Australia approach



THANK YOU

specialrepresentative@agriculture.gov.au

[@AusAgSpecialRep](#)

