

STATE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY.

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION.

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SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE.

This submission is made from a narrow perspective because I need to keep within my own area of experience and expertise. (I have been in the Ag Vet Chemical industry for 30 years – since 1988 in Australia.)

The WA situation.

The soil is unbelievably poor and the problems beyond belief. Salinity affects great areas and no head has ever been taken of the warnings. The coastal strip is particularly poor soil and irrigation water is being sucked up and now the salt water is about to come in and make up the loss. The area will become useless as farmland. The soils hold no water and even when poultry manure and compost are used they do not last as there are no soil microbes to form any structure.

I work in the horticulture industry and have seen many changes in the last few years. Farmers are as keen now as any member of the public to reduce the use of chemicals both as sprays and as chemical fertilizer.

The Present Situation.

The Farmers	They would like to produce crops without using chemicals (Organic?)
Industry.	Compost manufacturers are developing
Councils	Are combining to produce compost from Green Waste.
Chemical Companies	the Ag Vet coys are producing softer chemicals.
Small Companies	Are producing Fish Kelp and Probiotic Soil Enhances.
Small Fert Coys	Are producing Rock based fertiliser
Worm Farms	Can supply worms in a compost mix.

They all battle on going down their own narrow path – all going in the same direction but they don't communicate and they even deny that the others exist. They are all too busy making a buck to be concerned with the Big Picture.

They are all looking towards Sustainable Farming perhaps as organic farms

They know its what they want

The consumers want it.

Overseas consumers want it.

The exporters want it.

The technology is available now to stop salinity – improve soil structure – reduce chemical leaching – reduce water leaching reduce water requirements all interrelated.

But in the end when it comes to the farmers they see Organic Farming as too great a risk and uneconomic, they have no idea how to implement it.

The WA Govt has aid they want to help and so has the Federal Govt. (management of AgVet Chemicals A National Strategy 1998)

This strategy is said to canvas how barriers will be overcome – long term sustainability Research and Development required to help solve the problems of sustainability.

They will canvas examples of sustainability. Postponing action is no longer an option.

Wast Action can take place?

1. Research and Development is needed into sustainable profitable Organic Farming. The facilities are available. Medina research Station sits like a great white elephant waiting to be used.
2. Coordination is needed. The Government needs to coordinate a group to pool funds resources and expertise.
3. The group may consist of the following members

The Govt Ag Dept R&D	
The Councils -	Compost manufacture
Vegetable Growers Assc	Extension
Fruit Growers Assc	Extension
The Water Board	
Poultry Producers Assc	Compost
Compost manufacturers	Compost
Primary Ind Training Council	Education
Universities	Education & Research
Bio Chemical Companies	Expertise
Bio Fertiliser Coys	Expertise
TAFE	Education
Major Ag Chem Coys	with Bio Products

They would need to be shown by the governing body that each of their needs would be catered for by this combining of effort.

The Councils would get rid of their Green Waste
The Farmers would make money

The Researchers would become famous
The Chemical Companies would go Green
The Govt would win Voters
A Win Win situation.

I work in horticultural training in IPM on orchards selling Bio chemicals contracting to the Ag Dept
Beg grower chemical reduction and chemical research.

Everywhere I go I hear the same story. The industry wants to move towards Sustainable Farming
having a low environmental impact and catering for the needs of the consumers.

All the elements are there. The Govt. must take a lead and set up a coordination of these elements
and we can look forward to a future of sustainable environmentally acceptable farming.

Guy Izzett