

# Enabling Smart Growth (ESG) – Opportunities for Australian Farmers

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## Research Purpose

- Inform farmers of global ESG trends/requirements in market and along the supply chain enabling proactive change and value capture on farm.
- To understand drivers, definitions and measurement techniques in our major trading nations
- To proactively inform researchers and policy makers on future requirements around ESG to ensure effective levy spend and policy (commercial and legislative)

## Key Learnings

- The main drivers of ESG are businesses and politicians, who have short term goals (shareholder reports or getting re-elected) where long term thinking is desperately needed.
- Short-term agenda's have created a bold statement culture, often falling short after realising goals aren't possible
- There is a close relationship between annual ESG data collection and long-term profitability.
- There are limited commodity/FMCG businesses who will pay for ESG related practices
- ESG mandates and expectations remain largely inconsistent and undefined, creating confusion, disengagement, risk and inconsistent application across agriculture.
- Wealth directly impacts which part of ESG is the focus. Wealthy countries are focused on the environment and carbon emissions (E), poorer countries are focused on food insecurity (S) or corruption (G)

## Travel



Countries I travelled for my research are Brazil, the US, Canada, Japan, South Korea, The Netherlands, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Belgium, Georgia, Switzerland, Norway and the UK.

## Case Studies

- Canada has a nationally connected ESG strategy and pathway from on-farm outcomes (CASI) to national performance visibility (NIAP), to standardised accountability (CSSB).
- Brazil is balancing production efficiency through research and extension with environmental protection and outcomes through policy mechanisms.
- The EU's showcases the need for systems thinking in change over time. Their focus on environmental outcomes through mechanisms like the EUDR has stalled, partially because the impact to their own farmers wasn't considered, they rely heavily on Brazilian soy/corn.
- Japan, although a wealthy nation import 66-70% of the food consumed daily. This means despite wanting to put ESG related mandates on imported product, they are not yet in a position to do so as this would drive up the price of food.

## Recommendations for Industry

- Farmers: Use ESG as a management tool to improve efficiency, resilience, and profitability; collect data early.
- Policy Makers: Avoid copy-paste from overseas; design flexible frameworks that align with food security and trade competitiveness, and engage with with farmers at the policy commencement of policy design
- Supply Chains: Partner with farmers to co-design ESG pathways and reward practice change, not just demand data.
- Investors: Recognise that credible ESG outcomes take time, patience is required to achieve meaningful impact.

## Thank you to my sponsor



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