2016 State Report Card

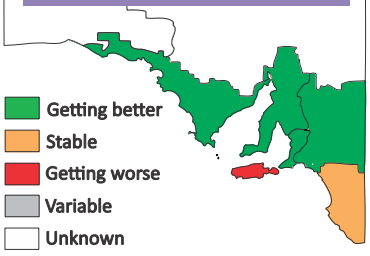
Are sustainable practices that improve agricultural production being adopted?

South Australia's land management practices are designed to protect natural environments and support its primary industries. In South Australia, farmers manage 60 million hectares of land for livestock, 8.4 million hectares for agriculture and 2.2 million hectares of land with remnant vegetation. This land supports a diverse array of native plants, animals and bird life. The regulation and management of our land is critical to ensuring the sustainability of our food system and allowing continued development and competitiveness of primary industries.

Farming practices that help to maintain the productive capacity of our natural resources, include improved grazing management, groundcover assessments, water point management, no-till sowing techniques, stubble retention, claying of sandy soils, use of deep rooted perennials, incorporation of native plants into farming systems, native vegetation protection, and management of pest plants and animals.

For more details on regional programs to improve the adoption of land management practices, please refer to our NRM Board websites.

Regional trends in the adoption of improved management practices



State target

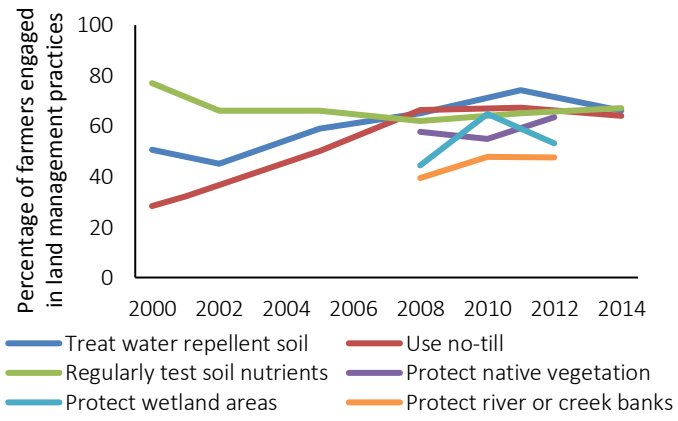
Maintain the productive capacity of our natural resources

Trend (2008-14)	Stable	Sustainable land management practices have remained stable since 2008

Treatment of water repellent soils, no-till sowing techniques and soil testing were stable between 2008–14, according to surveys of agricultural cropping land by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (see graph on right).

The number of businesses that protected native vegetation, wetland areas and river and creek banks on agricultural land increased between 2010–12, according to the Agricultural Resource Management Survey by ABS.

ABS data show an increase in protection of river and creek banks in SA Arid Lands and Alinytjara Wilurara NRM regions; a decrease in protection of native vegetation and stable uptake in protection of wetland areas.



Where we are at (2014)	Good	Land management practices have improved over the long term. Some improvements have plateaued over recent years.

The uptake and relevance of each sustainable farming practices varies based on industry, environment, soil type, climate and productivity, and can be influenced by each farmer's motivation and finances, profitability, market drivers, government incentives, participation in Landcare groups and networks, and the availability of information.

In 2014, 66 per cent of farmers mediated water repellent soils, 64 per cent regularly tested soil nutrients and 67 per cent of cropping land was sown using no-till methods. The latest regional data from ABS show that in 2012, 64 per cent of farmers protected native vegetation, 53 per cent protected wetland areas and 48 per cent protected river or creek banks. The graph above shows that the uptake of some land management practice, for example no-till, has plateau based on its needs and benefits.

Reliability of information	★★★★☆	Very good for some management practices

Further information: Technical information for this report card, Agricultural resource management survey

Government of South Australia