

# 2016 State Report Card

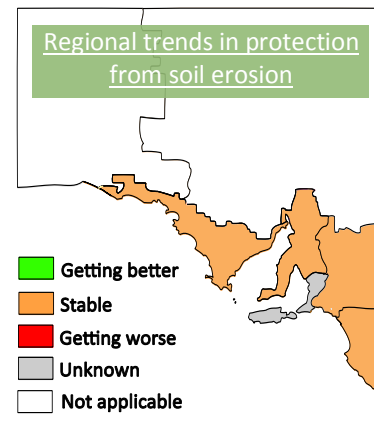
## How much of our agricultural land is protected from erosion?


Healthy soil provides us with food and fibre through our crops and livestock. Healthy soil provides nutrients for crops and pastures, stores and cycles water and carbon, and resists erosion.

South Australian agriculture is worth \$6 billion each year. Our main agricultural regions are the South East, South Australian Murray-Darling Basin, Northern and Yorke, and Eyre Peninsula, where about two-thirds of the land is used for agriculture.

Some agricultural soils are susceptible to erosion by wind or water. Erosion causes a loss of topsoil and a decline in the fertility of agricultural land. It also causes dust storms and increases sediment and nutrients in our waterways.

Sustainable land management practices, such as no-till cropping, reduce the risk of erosion because crops are sown with minimal disturbance of soil. Stubble from previous crops slows the wind at the soil surface and dissipates rain, and the roots bind the soil.



 **State target**  
Improve soil and land condition

**5 year trend (2012–16)** Stable The number of days protected is being maintained at the target level

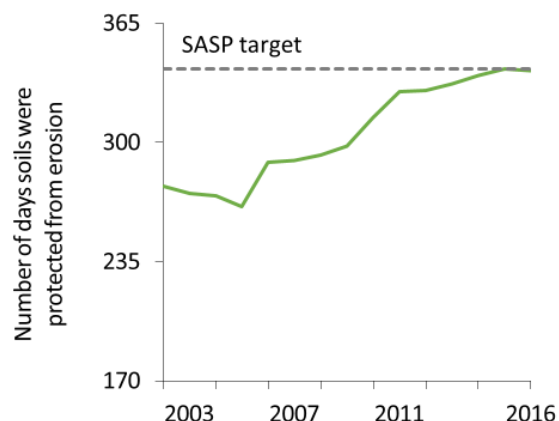
Protection from soil erosion is measured by the number of days each year that vegetation adequately covers the soil to prevent erosion.

Protection of soil from erosion has steadily improved, from 272 days in 2003 to 340 days in 2015 (graph on right and map above).

Information on protection from soil erosion is not available for the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges or Kangaroo Island NRM regions.

Land managers are adopting more sustainable farming practices with support from government agencies, Natural Resources Management boards, agricultural industry groups and private agronomists. About two-thirds of our crops are now sown using no-till cropping methods, but the rate of adoption is levelling off, as is the trend in erosion protection (graph on right).

These efforts lead to reduced sediment and nutrient loss into the atmosphere (e.g. dust storms) and waterways.



**Where we are at (2016)** Good Agricultural soils were protected from erosion for 339 out of 365 days

Soil was protected from erosion for 339 out of 365 days in 2016. Improvements since 2003 closely match the increasing adoption of no-till cropping methods. South Australia's Strategic Plan (SASP) established a target of [340 days](#) protection from soil erosion by 2020 – this target was achieved for the first time in 2015.

Ongoing efforts are needed to maintain or improve erosion protection by land managers through stubble retention, no-till cropping and best practice timing and duration of grazing.

**Reliability of information** ★★★★★ Very good

**Further information:**  
[Technical information for this report card](#)  
[Soil and land condition monitoring trends in South Australia](#)

