



Farmer & Ag-Industry survey of knowledge and extension gaps and opportunities to better manage Australian soils

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project.

Should you agree to participate, the survey should take approximately **20 minutes to complete** and consists of **24 multi-choice questions**, with optional space to add more details if desired.

This Introduction will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about. Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the Victoria Regional Soil Coordinator at: fisher.p@unimelb.edu.au

What is this research about?

This survey is part of a Regional Soil Coordinator project that aims to understand the current gaps in soil: knowledge, management, adoption, and extension practices. The aggregated (anonymous) results from this survey will be published in a report for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Soil is vital to life on earth and provides essential ecosystem services that support and contribute to Australia's economic, environmental, and social wellbeing, including food and fibre production, water storage and filtration, and nutrient cycling and carbon storage. Australia has ancient soils that are suffering from major issues including degradation of soil structure, poor water infiltration and soil water holding properties, declining soil fertility and biological activity, increasing soil chemical toxicity, and the need to de-carbonise agricultural production. However, soil type, usage, and challenges, are highly variable, so management of this national asset requires practical, place-based, planning and understanding of the issues and gaps, and application of solutions.

This survey has been developed to provide evidence-based information on the gaps and priorities for soil knowledge creation and extension from a range of stakeholders. This information will form an important component for developing the conclusions made in a Soil Capacity Gap Analysis for DAFF and the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs.

This survey is for farmers and those working in the agricultural and natural resource management service sector who have an interest in the management and sustainability of soils (e.g. consultants, advisors, grower groups, Catchment Management Authorities, scientists).

What are the possible benefits?

By completing this survey, you will greatly assist with obtaining representative data on your industry and region, which will help DAFF, the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, and other funding or science organisations to understand the current constraints and future opportunities for the adoption of soil management practices that improve production and environmental outcomes.

What are the possible risks?

All responses to this survey will remain anonymous. The only identifying information recorded with this data will be your postcode.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time.

If you do NOT agree to proceed with the survey, simply close the survey window at any time to exit the survey and no information will be recorded.

Once you click on the 'submit' button at the end of the survey your responses will be uploaded, and it will not be possible to withdraw or amend them because we cannot tie responses to you as an individual.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

The results from this survey will be produced as a report for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Following publication approval from DAFF the report will be disseminated through farming system groups and NRM organisations.

What will happen to information about me?

It is not possible to tie responses to you as an individual. The aggregated (anonymous) results may be used for future research, scientific publications, presentations, and to inform other project design and implementation.

Who is funding this project?

This study has been supported with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project (#26416) has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.

YOUR TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.