

Land to Market



Champion:

Tony Hill

Age of co-op:

Two years

Industry:

Regenerative agriculture

Location:

NSW Southern Tablelands

Region:

Characterised by scenic rural landscapes and coastal scenery, the region is supported by strong tourism and agriculture industries.



Land to Market is the first (farmer-driven market transformation) program in this country to identify and address the need and emerging demand for ecological outcomes verification. Land to Market Australia grew out of the Australian Holistic Management Cooperative Project, made possible by support from the Australian Government's Farming Together program. The Land to Market program is differentiated from others in that it is a grassroots, bottom-up concept driven by Australian farmers and producers themselves.

Success Story

As a farmer owned and run Co-operative (Australian Holistic Management Co-operative), Land to Market offers farmers:

- services for the ecological monitoring and regeneration of agricultural land, and
- an outcomes-based verification that can be used as a brand in the marketplace that gives consumers and businesses the opportunity to make their spending decisions in a way that recognises farmers' efforts to care for their land.

Land to Market has 35 members and was recently awarded the Grand Champion Australian Government Innovation in Agriculture Award by NSW Landcare and Local Land Services.



The Catalyst for Change

With the increasing pressures and implications of climate change on local and global communities, this group looked to develop an innovative way forward for land, soil and food production.

The Opportunity

- Encourage sustainable and regenerative practices across Australia.
- Build a brand for Australia founded under sustainable regenerative practices.
- Be part of a co-operative business where each member as equal share in the business.
- Utilise a credible and transparent sourcing verification program based on actual ecological outcomes.
- Provide an opportunity for restaurants, food producers, etc to convey a valuable story of hope, optimism and proven regeneration to their own patrons.
- Create a supportive network for farmers practicing regenerative agriculture.

The Challenges

- Building a service-based co-op that is entirely dependent on farmer fees, as compared to a co-op that trades in physical product.
- Gaining traction for a completely novel service to gain market recognition for the ways that farmers are caring for their land.
- Building the value proposition around our service of Ecological Outcome Verification.

The Enablers

- Focus on people and value their input into our co-op project, with plenty of opportunity for talking.
- Transparent governance, with effective decision making and careful financial management.
- Commitment to the vision of what our co-op can achieve, among members, our board and management.

Hot Tips!

- Understand the co-op model, and as a different corporate entity, why it is the best approach for your situation.
- Always give members and their interests priority – they are the unique support base for your co-op.
- Carefully consider your strategic choices and ensure that the opportunities don't cause you to lose focus.

"For the first time, there is an opportunity to reward farmers for their provision of ecosystem services, in addition to the produce that they sell."

Tony Hill, *Executive Chair,*
Australian Holistic
Management Co-operative



The Four Steps to Ecological Outcome Verification™ ('EOV') for the Land to Market program.

1. Farmer joins – training is offered.

Farmers join the program! While training is not compulsory, farmers are encouraged to train in ecological monitoring process that underpins EOV.

2. Monitoring site established and baseline assessment conducted.

The long-term monitoring site is set up and a baseline assessment is conducted there. The next assessment at this particular site will be conducted by an accredited verifier in year 5.

3. **Annual monitoring.** To satisfy the requirement for annual ecological monitoring, short term monitoring by trained and accredited EOV monitors is conducted every year, at least once per year.

4. **Five-yearly monitoring.** In addition to the short-term annual monitoring, every 5 years, the farm undergoes a detailed evaluation process of ecological functions at the long-term monitoring site.