

AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC AWARENESS MONTH



Explore how
organic farming
practices help
improve soil health,
biodiversity and
animal welfare.

Week three —
Tread softly.

Organic farming and soil

It's no secret organic farming promotes higher biodiversity and richer ecosystems, and organic farms are more resilient to variations in climate because their methods increase water conservation and stimulate soil health.

Farmers producing certified organic livestock follow strict animal welfare standards, and farmers growing certified organic fresh fruit and vegetables use sustainable farming methods that imitate natural ecological processes.

Soil is one of the earth's most important natural resources. Healthy soils are central to delivering agricultural resilience, mitigating climate change, meeting emission reduction targets, securing human health, food and water security, biodiversity, and economic growth. Soil health is the pinnacle of certified organic agriculture.



Since the dawn of farming, most agricultural soils have lost between 30% to 75% of their original soil organic carbon. Human-induced modernisation of farming practices, such as synthetic nitrogen fertilisation, tillage, monocropping, and yield-based management systems, have accelerated the depletion of soil carbon stocks and atmospheric load of N_2O and CO_2 .



Organic agriculture focuses on building healthy soil, which stores considerable carbon and increases drought resilience by acting as a reservoir of plant nutrients, binding soil particles together, maintaining soil temperature, and providing a food source for microbes.

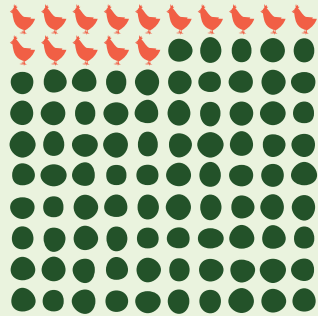




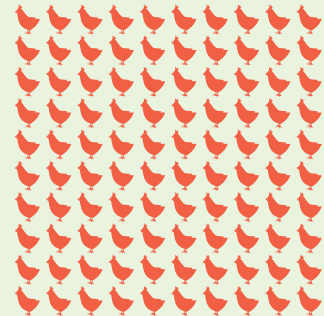
ORGANIC ANIMAL WELFARE

Chickens

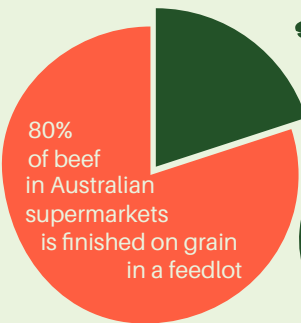
Under organic certification, no more than 1,500 egg-laying birds are permitted per hectare for set stocking.



Non-organic free-range products can have up to 10,000 birds per hectare.



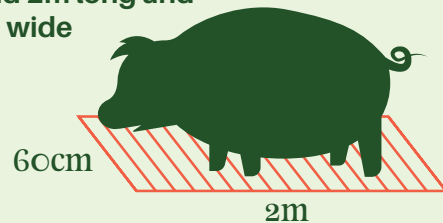
Cattle



Certified organic production does not allow cattle feedlots

Pigs

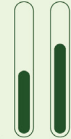
Sow stalls, used to confine pigs on many non-organic farms, are typically around 2m long and 60cm wide





Australia contains
70%
of the world's certified organic farmland,
with 53 million hectares in total.

2020 2022



This is up from
35.7 million hectares
reported in 2020



Certified organic
businesses contributed
\$851 million directly to
the Australian economy
in 2021-22

Sustainable livestock production

Hewitt is one of Australia's leading certified organic producers, with 33,000 head of cattle under management. Its flagship brand, Cleaver's, supplies retailers all over the country with certified organic beef, lamb, chicken and sausages.

From its inception in 1987, Hewitt has been driven by an organic-first ethos of treating animals, people and the land well.

Chief Executive for Agribusiness, Ben Hewitt, said the limited external tools and inputs of organic production meant Hewitt's farm management system was based around what nature could do for itself.

"We look at how we can repair the soils using nature and biology, and ensuring the animals are on a rising plane of nutrition and reducing any setbacks in their life so they're performing and producing as well as they can," Mr Hewitt said.

"We manage livestock over a wide variety of land types, so we use a combination of rotational grazing, set stocking and other methods to ensure we can weather the seasonal changes and get through the dry times."

Our livestock are
free ranging on pasture
their entire life – as close
as nature intended it
to be as possible.

-Ben Hewitt, Chief Executive for Agribusiness

