

Preface

The purpose of this book is to inform the debate on food security in Australia by providing information on a range of relevant issues. This debate is needed because although Australia is a net exporter of agricultural products some Australians are food insecure and many suffer diet-related health problems. The current problems are complex due to a host of future uncertainties including those associated with climate change, globalization and increasing competition for resources both in Australia and internationally.

The process of bringing information together on food security started in mid-2010 with a call for papers on food security in Australia as a special theme for the Australian and New Zealand Agri-Food Research Network Conference held at the Gippsland campus of Monash University in December 2010. The authors of these papers and a number of other people were asked to develop their ideas into book chapters. We also asked a number of people to write ‘case studies’ about specific items of interest for food security in Australia. Five case studies on food equity and access are set out in chapter 11 and three case studies on food production, policy and trade are set out in Chapter 24.

Most books on food security tackle the global issue of food security in developing nations. However, we focused our work on Australia because of the concern about the future ability of our land, water and human resources to continue to provide food and maintain the unique ecology in this island continent. We hope that the information in this book will boost the food security debate in Australia, encourage people to become more *food literate* and stimulate debates about food in other countries.

This book is divided into three parts:

1. *Food equity and access* comprising eleven chapters
2. *Food production, policy and trade* has thirteen chapters
3. *Land use planning* has five chapters followed by a concluding chapter for the whole book

Summaries of the papers are available at: <http://www.afm.org.au/category/conference-papers/>.

We start with *Food equity and access* because this is the main issue in Australia regarding food security. There is not a lack of food but rather an inability of disadvantaged households to afford nutritious food. The influence of rising food prices, remoteness and institutional capacity are discussed. Programs for food relief, community supported agriculture and local food distribution are presented as solutions to a growing issue.

The second part of the book *Food production and trade* covers challenges and opportunities for Australian food production such as climate change, water use, environment and food standards, global food chains, labour deployment, rural subdivision, local and native foods.

The third part *Land use planning* deals with concerns about urban development into farming areas, including the lack of long-term planning regarding food security or opportunities for urban agriculture.

Quentin Farmar-Bowers
Vaughan Higgins
Joanne Millar



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