



National Farmers' FEDERATION

NFF Emissions Intensity Policy

November 2014

Introduction

The world's population expected to exceed 9 billion people and demand for food and fibre is set to increase by 60% by 2050. International negotiations on post Kyoto commitments are shaping up to include specific commitments for the agriculture sector.

A key challenge in the negotiations for agriculture is to reconcile the competing objectives of food and fibre security for a growing global population and while also reducing the emissions from the sector. Research has shown that even if mitigation technologies are adopted, there will be at least a 23% increase in net emissions from agriculture by 2050 over 2000 levels (Eckard et al (2010).

An “absolute” or “net” definition is consistent with the approach adopted by the Kyoto Protocol. An “absolute” approach to defining agriculture emissions reduction (i.e. net emissions from the sector are reduced) is at odds with the need to expand total production to meet global demand for agricultural produce.

Many experts are suggesting that negotiations should adopt an “emissions intensity” approach for agriculture. This is essentially an efficiency approach – with a focus on reducing the “emissions footprint” of each unit of production.

An emissions intensity metric allows total production to increase to meet global food and fibre demand, but this would be produced more efficiently, with a less emissions per unit of production than would otherwise have been.

NFF Policy Position

NFF supports the adoption of an emissions intensity approach to measure agricultural emissions. This form of metric supports growth in global agricultural production to meet global food and fibre demand and supports sustainable farm businesses while still contributing to international emissions reduction efforts.

NFF supports continued and sustained investment in research and development to improve the carbon efficiency of our farming systems and the cost effectiveness of mitigation options. Research and development that delivers a reduction in emissions intensity while also resulting in improvements in productivity and the efficient use of inputs should be prioritised.