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More farmland being set aside for conservation

Australian farmers set aside more than 8.4 million hectares of farmland for conservation in 2011-12, according to figures just released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).



Credit: IC Tommerup/scienceimage

'This was an impressive amount of about 10 per cent, or 794,000 hectares, more than two years ago,' said ABS Director of the Rural Environment and Agricultural Statistics Branch, Helen Baird.

'Of those businesses that have natural environments on their property, over half protected these areas for conservation purposes.'

Around 53 per cent of Australia's total land area is agricultural land. Of that total area of agricultural land, around 88 per cent – more than 355 million hectares – is mainly used for grazing, and around 8 per cent – or just under 32 million hectares – is mainly used for crops.

The ABS report provides a snapshot of the different farm management practices being used in Australia, such as cropping and pasture management, fertiliser use and conservation farming practices.

Nearly 24 million hectares of crop stubble was managed in Australia by over 51 700 agricultural businesses, according to the ABS report, and more than 55 per cent of agricultural businesses applied fertiliser in 2011-12.

Although this proportion is less than two years ago, the tonnage of fertiliser applied increased by around 6 per cent or 405 000 tonnes to just under seven million tonnes.

More information can be found in the report, [Land Management and Farming in Australia 2011-12](#).

Source: ABS

