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Every nation claims to have a winning agriculture sector, but what is the real score?

Discussions about how competitive Australian agriculture is are a bit like discussions many Australians have about football this time of the year, but with one major difference. No one can agree on the scoring system that should be used for agriculture.

'The concept of national agricultural competitiveness is generating increased discussion both in Australia and internationally, with developed nations starting to recognise that developing nations are now beginning to dominate some markets. These developing nations' agriculture sectors are experiencing considerable agricultural growth, because they are becoming more competitive in international markets. For example, Brazil now dominates global sugar and soybean markets, and India is the world's largest beef exporter.' said Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute.

'Established agricultural exporting nations like Australia are recognising the need to become more competitive in the face of increasing competition (the Australian Government's agricultural competitiveness white paper is a case in point).

'But one of the major challenges for any nation in attempting to enhance agricultural competitiveness is the need to develop a robust system to measure agricultural competitiveness, so that performance over time can be assessed. The papers in this edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* provide some insights into this issue, with a focus on what agricultural competitiveness actually means and how it can be measured' said Mick Keogh.

This Spring 2014 edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* contains papers contributed by a range of industry experts, each of whom provides their take on how to measure competitiveness, or how best to improve it.

- *Optimising Australian agriculture's comparative advantages*, by Mick Keogh, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute
- *Competitiveness in the agricultural sector: measurements and determinants*, by Laure Latruffe, French National Institute for Agricultural Research
- *Australia's competitiveness in contributing to global food security*, by Kym Anderson, The University of Adelaide and the Australian National University
- *Half-a-century competitiveness of the wheat sectors: a comparative analysis of Canada and Australia*, by Rakhal Sarker, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada
- *Measuring agricultural competitiveness*, interview with David Orden, International Food Policy Research Institute

The Spring 2014 quarter *Farm Policy Journal* is available online at the Australian Farm Institute website www.farminstitute.org.au or by phoning (02) 9690 1388.

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