

Agriculture in national day spotlight

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Gina Rinehart. Picture: Hancock Prospecting

Farming has taken its rightful place in the national spotlight as industry sectors combine efforts to promote National Agriculture and Related Industries Day, on November 21.

The agricultural industry accounts for about 58 per cent of Australia's land use, covering 385 million hectares, and is worth \$66 billion to the national economy.

This is 34 per cent higher than levels of the late 1990s and has mainly been driven by adoption of new technologies and expansion in the cropping sector, and higher prices and demand for protein in the livestock sector.

Latest ABARES industry reports show agriculture uses 59 per cent of national water extractions, estimated at 9434 gegalitres, exports 14 per cent of total national goods and services and adds about 2.7 per cent value to Australia's gross domestic product.

In WA, just over 40 per cent of the State's land area is used for agriculture and gross value of production in 2016-17 was \$9 billion, or about 15 per cent of the total national value.

WA's highest-value farm sector is the grains industry, with wheat production worth \$2.4 billion, canola at \$1.2 billion and barley at \$860 million.

These combined commodities contribute about 50 per cent of the total worth of agriculture to the WA economy.

A delegation from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association will head to Sydney to attend the National Agriculture and Related Industries Day gala dinner, hosted by the day's patron Gina Rinehart.

Mrs Rinehart was the driving force behind setting up a national day to celebrate agriculture in 2017 and an expected 370 guests will attend her gala dinner next week.

The National Farmers Federation is supporting and celebrating the national day with the theme of #GrowForFood.

This aims to showcase agriculture's role in feeding and clothing more people, caring for the environment and strengthening rural communities.