

OPEN THE GATE TO A BETTER FUTURE



Australian Landcare Management System

- Australia's only national system for land management
- Recognises and rewards landholders for managing their land responsibly
- Can be used for all enterprises and activities on the farm, and for land that isn't being used for agricultural production
- Based on internationally accepted management standards
- Designed especially for Australian land managers
- Links farm and catchment priorities and strategies



Australian Landcare Management System



Planning a better future the ALMS way



Implement your action plan for a better future



Review your plan



What are the environmental impacts of activities on the farm?



What are the risks of these activities (how much do they occur and how severe are they?)



Certification audit



Develop action plans to increase positive impacts and lessen negative impacts

"The EMS and associated action planning and management review provide a framework for the improvements we are committed to achieving." *Tim and Janet Kelly, "Evercreech" 2006.*

OPEN THE ALMS GATE TO A BETTER FUTURE

Wouldn't it be huge step forward if landholders had a system that allowed them to show everyone that they were managing their properties responsibly and on a whole-of-farm basis?

A system that, at the same time, linked farm and catchment activities?

This is exactly what ALMS does.

ALMS is an environmental management system designed for landholders to certify that they are managing their land responsibly. ALMS landholders are able to show their customers here and overseas, as well as the general community, that they are improving the natural environment on their farms and in the local catchment.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ALMS?

ALMS landholders benefit from on-farm efficiency gains, more secure markets and better access to natural resources and support programs. The fact that they can show through ALMS that they are managing their farm in an environmentally responsible way is a huge plus.

Catchment management authorities and industry organisations can use ALMS to form strong partnerships with progressive land managers and to link on farm and catchment needs and activities.

Suppliers of farm inputs and marketers of farm products can use ALMS to identify and work with innovative land managers to reduce their risks and show they are committed to community values.

No other land management certification system gives government departments, catchment management authorities and agribusiness organisations such a sound basis for forging partners with responsible land managers.

HOW DOES ALMS WORK?

ALMS is based on a cycle of planning, action, monitoring and reviewing.

The key elements of ALMS are:

- developing and implementing action plans
- the ALMS audit
- reviewing achievements and adapting plans as a result.

Action plans. Action plans are the core of the ALMS system. When a landholder joins the ALMS Group the first thing they will do is develop a plan, which will be their guide to improving environmental outcomes. Most landholders develop their ALMS action plan over two to four days, usually in a group and with the help of an ALMS trainer. The plan is then audited.

An ALMS plan is different from plans developed using most other environmental management systems in Australia in that it:

- focuses on the impacts of management rather than the natural resources because it is better to deal with the causes of environmental degradation than with its symptoms.
- covers all the farm, not just a particular activity, such as cropping or wool production, including areas on the farm that aren't used for agriculture
- allows information collected by individual landholders to be linked into catchment plans, subject to the approval of each landholder
- focuses on conserving biodiversity subject to landholders approval and soil health
- is external audited, which contributes to its credibility.

ALMS audits. Independent auditors ensure that the plans comply with ALMS requirements. The initial audit, the certification audit, is done on farm. Subsequent compliance audits might be done remotely. All audits are done by ALMS auditors, who must meet eligibility criteria, including having relevant agricultural and environmental management experience.

Reviewing plans. Plans are reviewed regularly to improve effectiveness and are adapted based on any changes that are necessary. Compliance audits are an important part of this review process.

WHO MANAGES ALMS?

ALMS is managed by the Australian Landcare Management System Group (ALMS Group), an independent not-for-profit landholder group established to improve land management and to reward participating landholders and their support agencies. Because most of the ALMS Group directors are landholders, they know what will work for landholders and what won't. They helped build ALMS for the ground up to ensure that it would suit landholder needs.

FEATURES OF THE ALMS SYSTEM

Features	Why this feature is an improvement on what we do now
Based on a standard system that allows land managers to design a plan of action that suits their situation and needs.	Acknowledges and caters for differences in landholder requirements, motivations and capabilities. Avoids the 'one size fits all' problems inherent in existing systems such as best management practice (BMP) and environmental assurance schemes.
Aims for continuous improvement beyond simply having to comply with rigid regulations.	A much more innovative and proactive approach that directly involves landowners in showing that improved outcomes can be achieved.
Focuses on the impacts of management rather than on the state of the resources themselves.	Because it is better to deal with the causes of environmental damage before it becomes serious rather than with the symptoms and longer term problems once degradation has already taken hold.
Has a whole-of-farm coverage rather than only for particular industries or clusters of industries.	This whole-of-farm approach is better ecologically, suits agribusiness, food processors and retailers, and because it does not restrict change in land use. It also avoids duplication as over 60 % of farms producing over 70% of production already operate two or more industries.
Suited equally to farm and non-farm land.	Because about 40 % of land is not used for agriculture
Complies with internationally accepted management standards.	Because over 60% of agricultural produce by value is exported, because many companies and community organisations operate globally and because it is unnecessary and inefficient to establish new management process standards.
Externally audited.	Ensures the system has credibility with landholders, customers and partners.
Focuses on conserving biodiversity and soil health.	Because they are important for their contribution to farm productivity and to improved conservation values.
Owned and managed by an independent not-for-profit landholder organisation	Because it is better able to reflect the needs of landholders and the broader community.

SUPPORT FOR ALMS LANDHOLDERS

Landholders who commit to ALMS get lots of support to ensure that they achieve practical results and don't get caught up in a process of just filling in forms and filing paper.

ALMS Clinic. It is best to do ALMS as part of a small group of landholders helped by an ALMS Trainer. However, ALMS recognises that it can be hard to get everyone together for more than a few hours and individuals need to proceed at their own pace. This is why we have developed a special approach, the ALMS Clinic, that is the best of group and one-on-one approaches.

Specially designed tools to support landholders. The ALMS Group has developed special tools – a workbook and a software tool called *myEMS* - to help landholders complete their action plans. Most landholders prefer to use *myEMS* because it dramatically reduces the time required to develop and audit an ALMS action plan.

myEMS improves the quality of the EMS and its outcomes, in part because it presents landholders with information directly relevant to their industries and general situation. *myEMS* works equally well as an information management tool at the property, catchment, industry and national levels. The information captured by *myEMS* is critical to showing the general community that land is being managed in an environmentally responsible way.

"I doubt that I would have continued with ALMS had it not been for the introduction of *myEMS* software. This was a real breakthrough, making the data handling so much quicker and easier."

*Darren Koopman, Bottleford,
Tungkillo, SA*

"I was amazed how significant an EMS Program is to my Asian Goat buyers. Talk of ALMS or ISO14001 and they love me even more."

Glenn Telford, exporter of quality goats to SE Asian markets.

RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH ALMS

A primary goal of ALMS is to provide a basis for recognition and reward.

The ALMS Group has been working with agribusinesses, food processors, wholesalers and retailers, the suppliers of natural resource management programs, representatives of environmental, educational and research organisations and landholders to determine what is needed to enable landholders and agencies to be rewarded for improving environmental outcomes.

The ALMS system brings together the key features these organisations want:

- it is voluntary
- it leads to environmental outcomes
- it applies across industries on a whole-of-farm and catchment linked basis
- it can be audited cost effectively.

For more information visit our website www.alms.org.au or contact your local Landcare co-ordinator, Elders representative or the ALMS Group:

ALMS GROUP

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