

**The Economic Value
of Australia's
Insect Crop Pollinators
in 2014 – 2015.**

John M Karasiński ¹

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¹ Department of Mineral and Energy Economics, WA School of Mines, Curtin University. Email: John.Karasinski@gsb.curtin.edu.au This paper benefited from presentations made to various WA bee industry groups including The Bee Industry Council of WA, the WABA and WA Farmers Bee 2017 Conference, the Centre for Integrative Bee Research at the University of Western Australia and a seminar presentation made to the Agriculture and Natural Resource Economics Society (W.A. Branch).

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Abstract

This paper reports for the first time the quantification of the economic value of Australia's two major groups of insect pollinators - honey bee pollinators and non-honey bee insect pollinators, see Chart 1. The results unambiguously confirm the significant economic importance of Australia's insect crop pollinators.

This research uncovered two surprising results one at the national level and the other at the regional level where both groups of pollination agents made almost identical economic contributions. In 2014-2015, the overall economic value of Australian insect pollinators has been estimated to be worth \$A 28.4 bn, see Table 2 and Chart 2. At the regional level the total economic value of the Avon Valley strawberry industry has been estimated to be worth \$A 10.5 m, see Table 4.

As expected, the economic values vary between the states and territories. Victoria has the highest economic value of \$ 8.7 bn with \$A 6.0 bn the direct result of the economic activity of honey bee pollinators and \$A 2.7 bn due to the role played by non-honey bee insect pollinators. New South Wales reported the next highest level with an overall economic value with \$A 6.1 bn split between \$A 2.5 bn from honey bee pollinators and \$A 3.6 bn from non-honey bee insect pollinators. Queensland recorded the next highest economic value of \$A 5.6 bn with \$A 2.1 attributed to honey bee pollinators and \$3.5bn to non-honey bee insect pollinators.

The states where honey bee pollinators made the greater economic contribution were Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

1.0 Introduction

This paper presents the results of original research that quantified the economic value of the important role played by all insect pollinators in Australia. This paper is based on two previous papers which reported the economic values of managed and feral honey bee pollinators and Karasiński (2018a) and the economic value of non honey bee insect pollinators Karasiński (2018b).

It is a well-accepted and understood that insect crop pollinators play an important role in enhancing crop yields, but until now the exact economic value of that role was both unquantified and unknown.

2.0 Review of the Australian Literature.

The body of industry and economics literature on the topic of the economic value of insect pollinators has been skewed exclusively favour of research papers and industry reports reporting some form of an “economic” value of honey bee pollinators.

As outlined in Karasiński (2018a) with the exception of the Australian study by Gill (1989) the remainder of the research papers and industry reports published reported a dollar amount that was not calculated using the appropriate economic model. The only paper which correctly measured and reported the economic value of Australian managed and feral honey bee pollinators was Karasiński (2018a).

Similarly, the discreditable lack of information detailing the economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators has been overcome with the paper by Karasiński (2018b) which reported the correct economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators using the same economic model

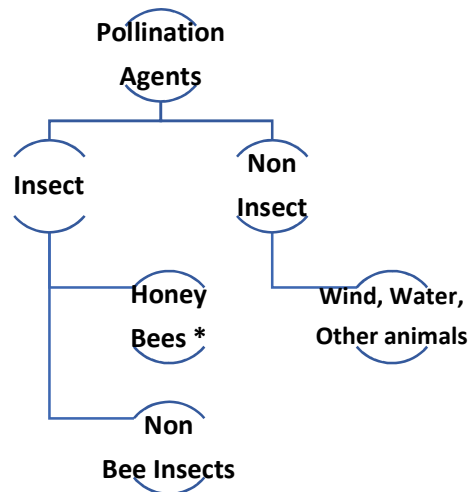
that was used to measure the economic value of Australian managed and feral honey bee pollinators.

Until now industry and economics literature has been devoid of discussion of the economic contribution made by all Australian insect pollinators.

3.0 Pollination Agents

Chart 1 which is reproduced from Karasiński (2018b) shows agriculture and horticulture crop pollination agents classified into insect pollinators and non-insect pollinators. Insect pollinators are classified into either honey bee pollinators (managed and feral) or non-honey bee insect pollinators which are shown in Chart 1 as non-bee insects.

Chart 1: Schematic shows the broad relationship between pollination agents



* Honey Bees include Managed and Feral (native) honey bee pollinators.

Source: Karasiński (2018b) p.7

As reported in Karasiński (2018a and 2018b), pollination agents include: (in alphabetic order):
Ants, Artificial (electronic) wands, Bats, Beetles, Blowflies, Birds, Butterflies, Flies, Hawkmoths,
Hoverflies, Humans (in parts of China and the Himalayan region), Maggots, Moths, Thrips,
Other animals, Water and Wind.

4.0 The Economic Model.

The economic model which is formerly known as a Partial Equilibrium Model (or P.E.M) that was used in this study is the same model used to calculate the economic value of Australian managed and feral honey bee pollinators as detailed by Karasiński (2018). The adoption of the P.E.M. for measuring the economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators provides a uniform approach and methodology to be used to enable meaningful comparisons of economic value to be made between the two major groups of insect pollination agents.

The three components of the Economic Model

The major components of the economic model include: firstly, the Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinator Dependency Factors, secondly, the farm gate agriculture crop values published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which become the data for this study. Thirdly, the integration of both these components into the economic model along with the fourth component which is the relevant price elasticity of demand coefficients that categorise whether insect pollinated agriculture crops are “luxury” or “necessity” crops. Those coefficients give the mathematical value of the slope of the two demand curves.

If the crops are “luxury” crops their empirically derived price elasticity of demand coefficient approximates -1.0. “Necessity” agriculture crops on the other hand, since they lack substitutes their empirically derived own price elasticity of demand coefficient is less than -1.0. The

calculated economic values are then arithmetically averaged to give an average economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators.

The Data set used in this study

This study uses readily available data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Value of Agriculture Commodities Produced*, for 2014 – 2015.² A total of 53 insect pollinated agriculture crops were identified from that publication which in turn became the data base for this study.³

Deriving the Non-Honey Bee Insect Dependency Factors

Using beans as an illustration entomologists credit 10% of bean crops to be insect pollination.⁴

Of that ten percent, 20% is pollinated by honey bee pollinators and the remaining 80% is pollinated by non-honey bee insect pollinators.

Table 2: Deriving Insect Dependency Factors⁵

| Crop | Percent Pollinated by Insects (1) | Percent of Pollinators that are Honey bees (2) | Honey Bee Dependency Factor (3) = (1) *(2) | Percent Pollinated by Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators (4) = 1 - (2) | Non-Honey Bee Insect Dependency Factor (5) = (1) *(4) |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Beans | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.02 | 0.80 | 0.08 |

Note: Column 1 = (Column 3 plus Colum 5) that is, 0.10 = (0.02 + 0.08).

Source: Modified Table 2 Karasiński (2018) p. 20.

Multiplying columns 1 and 4 in Table 2 results in the all-important Non-Honey Bee Insect Dependency Factor shown in the final column in Table 2. This Non-Honey Bee Insect

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015. "Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2013-14 , Cat. No. 7503.0."

³ I am grateful for the assistance provided by entomologist Rob Manning in the development of the dependency factors.

⁴ The remaining 90% of bean crop pollination is the direct result of the activities of non-insect pollinators.

⁵ I am greatly indebted to the assistance provided by entomologist Robert Manning, (2016) who assisted in identifying the honey bee pollinated crops and for updating the estimates of the Honey Bee Dependency Factors for Australian agriculture crops.

Dependency Factor is then incorporated into the economic model to calculate the economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators.

The Price Elasticity of Demand Coefficient

The fourth and final component of the economic model is the price elasticity of demand coefficients for those insect pollinated agriculture crops.

This study used the Australian results published by Ulubasoglu et al (2010 and 2016) ⁶ who note: "Fresh fruit is estimated to have ... an elasticity ... of -1.049 ... the demand for fresh vegetables is (price) inelastic ... -0.053." ⁷ Fruits are considered "luxury" crops and have a higher price elasticity coefficient due to the existence of substitutes (i.e. apples substituted for pears etc). As vegetables typically lack substitutes their price elasticity coefficient is lower. The two coefficients are incorporated into the model results to calculate an upper and a lower economic value as shown in columns 2 and 3 in Table 4 below. An arithmetic average of the two ranges is presented as a mid-point estimate of the economic value.

⁶ While Gill did not state the source of the price elasticity of demand coefficients he used, it can be assumed he used American data published by Houthakker, Hendrik S, and Lester D Taylor (1970) "Consumer Demand in the United States."

⁷ Ulubasoglu, Mehmet, Debdulal Mallick, Mokhtarul Wadud, Phillip Hone, and Henry Haszler. 2010. "Food Demand Elasticities for Australia."p.8.

5.0 Results and Discussion

The contents of column 2 and column 3 in Table 2 below are based on the results contained in two previous papers by Karasiński (2018a)⁸ and Karasiński (2018b)⁹ with the exception that both sets of results have been arithmetically averaged.

When the results in Table 2 are rounded the economic value of honey bee pollinators and non-honey bee insect pollinators are strikingly similar with each recording an economic value of \$A 14.2 bn.

Table 2: The Average Economic Value of All Insect Pollinators 2014 -2015.

| | Honey Bee Pollinators | Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators | Total Insect Pollinators |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| State and Territory | Average \$ | Average \$ | Average \$ |
| New South Wales | 2,480,580,442 | 3,643,114,453 | 6,123,694,895 |
| Victoria | 6,084,180,105 | 2,631,777,553 | 8,715,957,658 |
| Queensland | 2,120,321,611 | 3,500,352,453 | 5,620,674,064 |
| South Australia | 1,705,444,604 | 1,744,477,416 | 3,449,922,020 |
| Western Australia | 1,111,690,580 | 2,592,965,589 | 3,704,656,168 |
| Tasmania | 267,755,281 | 87,019,027 | 354,774,308 |
| Northern Territory | 388,399,643 | 39,239,890 | 427,639,532 |
| A.C.T. | 1,098,925 | 1,513,581 | 2,612,505 |
| Australia | 14,159,471,189 | 14,240,459,960 | 28,399,931,149 |

Combining the two sets of economic values they present for the first time a clear indication of the overall economic value of Australia's insect pollinators which in 2014 -2015 was \$A 28.4 bn, see Chart 2 below.

⁸ See Karasiński (2018a) Table 4 p.25.

⁹ See Karasiński (2018b) Table 3 p.11.

Chart 2: The Economic Dollar Value of Australian Insect Pollinators in 2014 – 2015

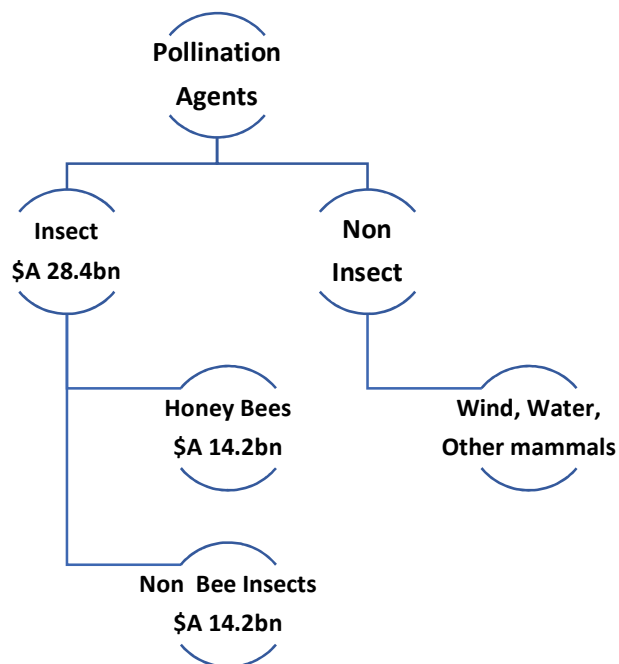
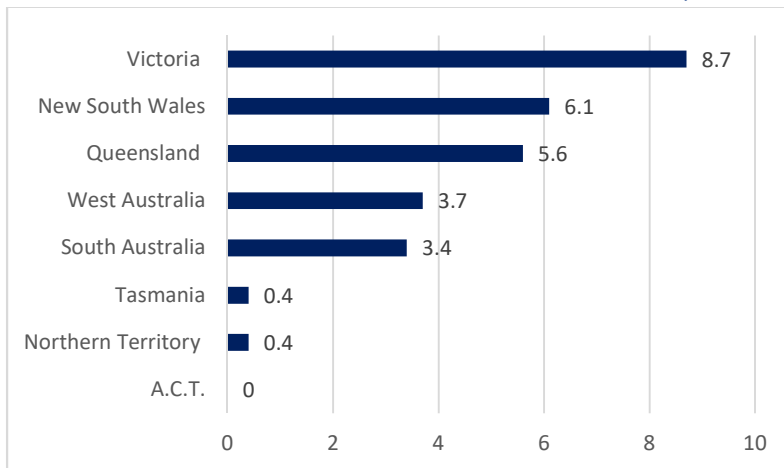


Table 2 also details the economic value of all insect pollinators on a state by state basis. The relative contribution made by honey bee pollinators and non-honey bee insect pollinators as expected vary considerably between the states due to the crop type, volume of the crops grown along with their specific pollination requirements.

In 2014 – 2015, Victoria had the largest overall economic value recording \$A 8.7 bn (with \$A 6.1 bn from honey bee pollinators and \$A 2.6 bn from non-honey bee pollinators). New South Wales recorded the next highest overall economic value with \$A 6.1 bn (\$A 2.5bn from honey bee pollinators and \$A 3.6 bn) followed by Queensland with \$A 6.5 bn (\$A 2.1 bn from honey bee pollinators and \$A 3.5 bn).

Chart 3 displays the economic values of all insect pollinators on a state by state and territory basis.

Chart 3: Economic Value of All Insect Pollinators by State and Territory 2014-2015 - \$A bn



The relatively small economic value for the A.C.T. is not unexpected given the relatively minor role agriculture plays in the nation's capital. Although, the calculated economic value for the Northern Territory necessitates further research.

Economic Value Ratio Analysis – Another Insight

Another way to view the content of Table 2 is to use ratio analysis which measures the percentage contribution made by both major pollination groups to the total economic value for Australia, the states and territories.

The economic value ratio (EVR) for honey bee pollinators is given by equation (1) below:

$$\text{Economic Value Ratio} = \frac{\text{Honey Bee Pollinators Economic Value}}{\text{Total Insect Pollinators Economic Value}} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

And the economic value ratio (EVR) for non-honey bee insect pollinators is given by equation (2) below:

$$\text{Economic Value Ratio} = \frac{\text{Non – Honey Bee Insect Pollinators Economic Value}}{\text{Total Insect Pollinators Economic Value}} \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

The calculated EVR's are detailed in Table 3 below. For Australia the EVR shows an identical contribution made by both pollinator groups with a 50% - 50% (rounded) EVR contribution.

The EVR also highlights differences in the role played by both pollinator groups across Australia where Victoria (69.8%), Tasmania (75.5%) and the Northern Territory (90.8%) report a higher EVR attributed to honey bee pollinators. The opposite is the case for the other four states and the A.C.T.

Table 3: Ratio of Economic Value of Honey Bee Pollinators to Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators

| | EVR* of Honey Bee Pollinators Equation 1 % | EVR* of Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators Equation 2 % |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| State and Territory | | |
| New South Wales | 40.5 | 59.5 |
| Victoria | 69.8 | 30.2 |
| Queensland | 37.7 | 62.3 |
| South Australia | 49.4 | 50.6 |
| Western Australia | 30.0 | 70.1 |
| Tasmania | 75.5 | 24.5 |
| Northern Territory | 90.8 | 9.2 |
| A.C.T. | 42.1 | 57.9 |
| Australia | 49.9 | 50.1 |
| EVR * = Economic Value Ratio | | |

Economic Value of the Strawberry industry in the Avon region.

The economic value of the contribution made by all insect crop pollinators to the Avon Valley strawberry industry is shown in Table 4 below.

In both the Avon Valley and in Western Australia, the economic value of honey bee pollinators is 6.0% less than the economic value of non-honey bee insect pollinators.

Table 4: The Average Economic Value of All Insect Pollinators - Avon Valley Strawberries 2014 -2015.

| | Honey Bee Pollinators Average \$ | Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators Average \$ | Total Insect Pollinators Average \$ |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Avon Valley, WA. | 5,110,868 | 5,441,772 | 10,552,640 |
| Western Australia | 20,346,655 | 21,664,004 | 42,010,659 |
| Australia | 136,659,852 | 226,661,603 | 363,321,455 |

The EVR tool developed earlier has been applied to gain an insight into the role played by insect pollinators in the Avon Valley strawberry industry. Table 5 shows the EVR contribution made by honey bee pollinators to total economic value is identical in both the Avon Valley and in Western Australia.

Table 5: Ratio of Economic Value of Honey Bee Pollinators to Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators

| | EVR of Honey Bee Pollinators Equation 1 % | EVR of Non-Honey Bee Insect Pollinators Equation 2 % |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Avon Valley | 48.4 | 51.6 |
| Western Australia | 48.4 | 51.6 |
| Australia | 37.6 | 62.4 |

There is a noticeable difference between EVR's at a national level which shows non-honey bee insect pollinators making a far greater contribution to the total economic value with an EVR of 62% compared with an EVR of 38% for honey bee pollinators.

As this is the first time EVR's for this industry at this level of detail has been reported, it is not known whether these results are anomalous. The difference may reflect different methods of strawberry farming across Australia including the industry's willingness to adopt glass-house, greenhouse or hot-house strawberry farming methods in preference to broadacre farming.

6.0 Conclusion

This paper presents the results of an economic study which quantified the total economic value of Australian insect pollinators spanning 53 insect pollinated agriculture crops. The results confirm widely held industry and stakeholder belief of the economic importance of both groups of insect pollinators in Australia.

In 2014 – 2015, both major groups of pollination agents made an identical contribution to the total economic value. To gain further insight into the contribution made by both pollinator groups an economic value ratio (EVR) was calculated. The EVR confirms the contribution made to the overall economic value in Australian in 2014-2015 were identical.

On a state by state basis the results vary with Victoria reporting the highest overall economic value of \$A 8.7 bn followed by New South Wales with \$A 6.1 bn and Queensland with \$A 5.6 bn.

This study also quantified the total economic value of the Avon Valley strawberry industry. The contribution made by both major pollinators while similar was not identical. On an EVR basis honey bee insect pollinators contributed 38% of the overall economic value and non-honey bee insect pollinators contributed 62%.

The results contained in this paper confirm the need to regularly measure the total economic value of Australia's insect pollinators.

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