

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 7/3/2013

GAIN Report Number: AS1326

Australia

Post: Canberra

New Australian Agriculture Minister

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Administrative

Approved By:

Hugh Maginnis, Agricultural Counselor

Prepared By:

Rebecca Gowen, Agricultural Specialist

Report Highlights:

Senator Joe Ludwig has resigned as the Australian Minister for Agriculture and been replaced by Joel Fitzgibbon.

Senator Joe Ludwig has resigned as Minister for Agriculture and been replaced by Joel Fitzgibbon.

The changes come after the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard was defeated in a leadership ballot on June 26th and replaced by Kevin Rudd.

Fitzgibbon will serve as Minister for Agriculture at least until the next Australian Federal election which is due by November 30th, 2013 at the latest. An election date of September 14th had previously been set under Gillard however this may change under Rudd leadership.

Joel Fitzgibbon is the Member for Hunter in New South Wales. He has been a Member of Parliament since 2006. He previously served as Minister for Defense between December 2007 and June 2009 in the first Rudd ministry. He was elected as Chief Government Whip following the 2010 Federal election and held that position until May 2013.

He currently serves on the Economic committee, House Appropriations and Administration Committee and is the chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defense and Trade. He has previously served on the House of Representatives Committees on Primary Industries, Resources and Rural and Regional Affairs, Industry and Resources, and Economics, Finance and Public Administration, the Joint Statutory Committees for Public Accounts and Audit, and the Joint Select Committee for the Retailing Sector.

Prior to entering Parliament Fitzgibbon worked as an automotive electrician, electorate officer and technical education lecturer. His electorate of Hunter is located north of Sydney. Key industries in the electorate are coal mining, wine production, tourism and thoroughbred horse breeding. The area also supports a variety of agriculture industries including broad acre cropping, wool, lamb, beef, dairy, pigs, fruit and vegetables.

As the election date is so close there is unlikely to be significant agricultural policy change before the election. However, Rudd has announced that one of his priorities would be to finalize the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Senator Ludwig will remain a member of the senate. His term extends until 2016.