



**Weekly Times - Who owns Australia**

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IT WAS a small report that caught my eye.

It told of the growing appetite among wealthy German families for agricultural land.

They had established boltholes in Romania and Uruguay and were starting to look elsewhere.

It turns out, they are looking here.

“We find Australia quite exciting,” Dirk Ruettggers, head of Do Investment AG, who handles investments for these wealthy families, told Bloomberg.

“It’s the only developed country in the world that still has agricultural land available at reasonable prices.” At a time of much focus on rising residential property prices (albeit amid a current correction), it was a shock to read that our farmland is considered “cheap”.

But Ruettggers is right on his first point – Australian agriculture is in an exciting phase.

And more and more investors want a piece of the action. The past few years have seen a significant rise in activity at the big end of rural, the large landholdings that stretch across thousands of square kilometres.

Yet, despite a popular view, it is not entirely foreign entities buying our farmland. Australian buyers, led by mining magnate **Gina Rinehart**, has been building holdings, herds and brands, as they position themselves for the growing Asian demand for protein.

In a special report, AgJournal reveals exactly who does own Australia’s 20 largest agricultural property portfolios.

But it is not just beef that is demanding attention.

Wool is riding a wave some think may last a decade, again built on demand from Asian consumers.

Inside we look at wool’s rise and its remarkable effect on rural communities. Welcome to the first edition of AgJournal. We are proud to bring you the great stories of agriculture.

## **1. OUTBACK BEEF — S KIDMAN & CO**

**7.92 million hectares**

S KIDMAN & Co has been synonymous with Australia's pastoral and beef industries for 120 years.



Mining magnate Gina Rinehart's Hancock Prospecting owns two thirds of Outback Beef, which purchased S Kidman & Co in 2016.

Founded by cattle baron Sir Sidney Kidman in 1899, the company is the nation's biggest landholder with 12 stations spread across 7.92 million hectares in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The properties, operated as pastoral leases, are home to 171,000 cattle producing beef for Australian domestic and export markets.

Based in Adelaide, the company was sold by the Kidman family in 2016 to Australian-Chinese consortium Outback Beef for \$386.5 million. Outback Beef is two-thirds owned by Australian mining magnate Gina Rinehart's Hancock Prospecting (see separate listing) with the minority stake held by China's Shanghai CRED.

At 1.36 million hectares, Innamincka Station at Leigh Creek is the largest property in the Kidman portfolio, with the capacity to carry up to 13,000 cattle, followed by Macumba Station at Oodnadatta (1.1 million hectares) and the Ruby Plains-Sturt Creek aggregation at Halls Creek in Western Australia (950,000 hectares). S Kidman & Co recorded a \$6.2 million net profit in 2017-18 and had assets of \$418 million.

## **14. HANCOCK PROSPECTING**

**2.22 million hectares**

MINING magnate Gina Rinehart continues to expand Hancock Prospecting's stake in Australian agriculture, last year adding new holdings to her cattle empire which spans about 2.22 million hectares.



Fossil Downs is part of Hancock Prospecting's cattle-station portfolio.

One of Australia's richest people, with an estimated worth of \$13.12 billion, Rinehart also owns a 66 per cent stake in Outback Beef, which bought the majority of S Kidman & Co in 2016.

Hancock is the country's second-largest producer of beef

Hancock owns more than 14 properties across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and NSW, and is the nation's second-largest producer of beef with a total herd capacity of more than 320,000 head.

Last year it bought the 3234-hectare grazing property Glendon Park in New England, NSW, for \$14 million with a view to expand its Wagyu beef supply chain.

Hancock Prospecting also last year purchased the 17,800-hectare backgrounding and finishing operation Sundown Valley near Armidale in NSW, and the Gunnee feedlot near Inverell, from Sundown Pastoral Co.