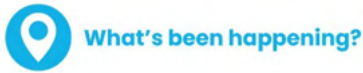
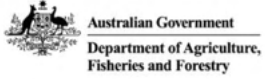


# SEQ SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NEWS – MAR 2026



## What's been happening?



### Team update: Introducing Patrick (Pat) O'Connor

Pat joins the Sustainable Agriculture team as an Agricultural Project Manager. He is a fourth-generation grazier, bringing a background in education as well as hands-on agricultural experience to this role. Pat is looking forward to getting out in the paddock and working with agricultural producers to support their sustainability goals.

### Property Fire Management Planning in South East Queensland (SEQ)



Are you a primary producer in SEQ interested in a Fire Management Plan for your property? Healthy Land & Water is offering fully funded, tailored fire management plans for SEQ primary producers to reduce bushfire risk, improve biodiversity and boost drought resilience. Limited places are available.

**EOIs close 31 March 2026.** Contact Wayne Taylor at [wayne.t@hlw.org.au](mailto:wayne.t@hlw.org.au) to secure your spot.

*These plans are offered under the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs Program, which received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.*



## Industry News

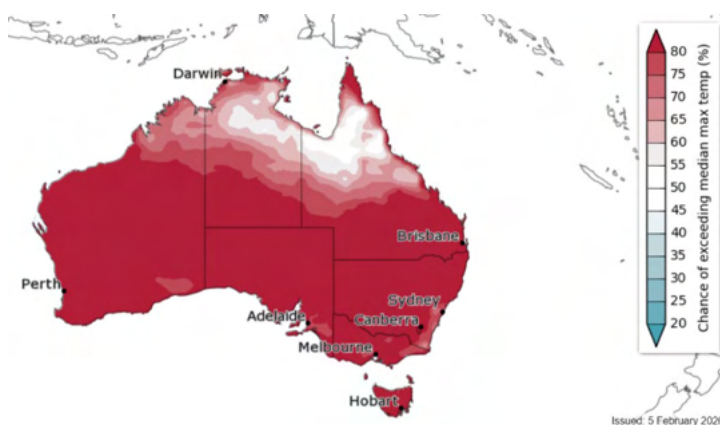
### A timely reminder for landholders

Recent amendments to the **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)** introduce important changes for SEQ producers, particularly around vegetation clearing and the continuation of use exemption under Section 43B.

Landholders can no longer claim a continuation of use exemption to clear vegetation that has not been cleared for at least 15 years (unless it is part of a forestry operation).

Land clearing includes removing native or non-native vegetation (excluding declared weeds) that changes land use, structure or ecological function — including trees, shrubs and groundcover grasses.

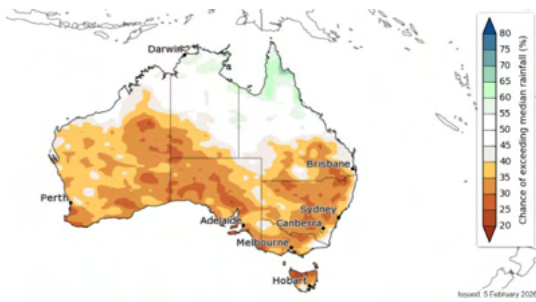
Producers should undertake a self-assessment before commencing works, as some activities may now require referral for assessment under the EPBC Act. While most routine activities on developed agricultural land remain below national assessment thresholds, it's critical to check obligations to avoid compliance risks and delays to planned operations.



### BOM long-range forecast

Producers in SEQ should prepare for **warmer-than-average conditions ahead**. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)'s latest long-range climate outlook indicates that average daytime and overnight temperatures are likely to be above normal across much of Australia in the coming months.

Warm conditions can increase evaporation and soil moisture loss, and elevate heat stress risks for crops and livestock. Producers should regularly check BoM's seasonal outlooks and adjust planting and grazing strategies accordingly to manage the likely warmer and variable moisture conditions, and account for higher water demand and consider strategies like scheduling irrigation earlier in the day.



Rainfall and streamflow projections indicate that while some regions may see above-average rain, variability remains. This underscores the value of flexible pasture, planting and grazing plans that can adapt to wetter or drier spells. Find out more:

<https://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks>

## Updated fire ant zones and self-treatment for primary producers

Recent fire ant detections have triggered updates to Queensland's fire ant biosecurity zones. Revised restrictions now apply to parts of the **City of Gold Coast, Lockyer Valley Regional Council** and **Scenic Rim Regional Council**. Producers should check zone maps and comply with movement and reporting requirements.



Producers located in fire ant suppression areas can now **self-manage fire ants on their land with support from the National Fire Ant Eradication Program**.

Report fire ants online or by calling 132 ANT (13 22 68) to receive free treatment products and a fast-acting kit in the mail. Self-management plans help you survey, treat and record fire ant activity as part of your regular pest control routine, protecting livestock, crops and farm operations. Find out more:

<https://ants.daf.qld.gov.au/help-me-report/>



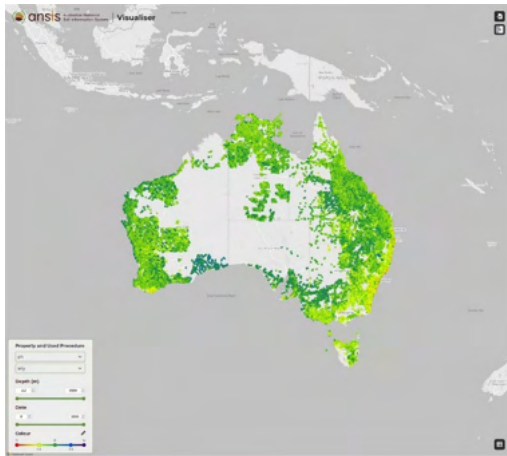
## FarmPrint: New CSIRO tool to help producers measure sustainability

Check your farm's environmental performance with CSIRO's FarmPrint. This farm-level emissions and sustainability assessment tool helps producers estimate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from on-farm activities and embedded inputs such as fertiliser, chemicals and fuel.

With emissions benchmarking and reporting, this tool helps identify opportunities to reduce enterprise-level carbon intensity and make data-driven decisions that support both productivity and climate goals.

FarmPrint uses existing farm data and Australian-specific information to give accurate, regionally relevant results. Use an Application Programming Interface (API) to connect FarmPrint with other farm systems to better quantify your environmental footprint, meet market or investor sustainability expectations. Get access below:

<https://www.csiro.au/en/research/environmental-impacts/sustainability/farmprint>



## ANSIS: New national soil data visualiser tool from CSIRO

This new online tool turns complex soil data into easy-to-understand visual maps and graphs. The Australian National Soil Information System Visualiser displays soil properties like pH and organic carbon across Australia using colour-coded maps and depth profiles, helping producers compare soil conditions between sites and interpret changes with depth.

Access national soil information to support better soil health decisions, sustainable land management, and long-term productivity with this tool launched by CSIRO and partners.

The tool builds on the Australian National Soil Information System (ANSIS) and aligns with the National Soil Action Plan 2023–28 to enhance soil monitoring and best practices. Learn more: <https://ansis.net/>



## Watch out for the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Producers in South East Queensland should be vigilant for the exotic Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) (*Halyomorpha halys*), a high-risk plant pest not yet present in Australia but **frequently intercepted at the border**. BMSB feeds on a wide range of crops including **apple, citrus, beans, grapes, tomatoes, soybeans, corn and ornamental species**, and affects leaves, shoots, stems and fruit.

Nymphs and adults use piercing-sucking mouthparts that cause sunken areas, corky spots, scarring, discolouration and deformation of fruit; premature fruit drop may also occur. In crops like maize and soybean, feeding can result in shrunken seeds or halted seed development, and vegetative damage can weaken plants and reduce vigour.

BMSB can also seek shelter in buildings and transport vehicles in large numbers and produce a foul smell when disturbed.

If you think you have found an exotic stink bug, take a photo or catch it in a sealed container, but do not disturb the bug. Report it below:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/report>

## Have your say on feral pig management

The Queensland Government is seeking feedback on the draft Feral Pig Management Action Plan 2026–31, designed to strengthen regional feral pig control and protect agricultural assets. Consultation **closes at 5:00 pm, Thursday 12 March 2026**.



Producers can complete the online survey, upload written feedback, or email responses to [BQConsultation@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:BQConsultation@dpi.qld.gov.au). Written submissions can also be posted to Invasive Plants and Animals, Biosecurity Queensland, DPI, PO Box 993, Dalby QLD 4405. For printed surveys or more information, contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

Your input will help shape consistent on-ground action across SEQ and beyond. Find out more: <https://dpi.engagementhub.com.au/feral-pig-action-plan>

## Advancing Beef Leaders Program – Grow Your Influence

Applications are now open for the 2026–2027 **Advancing Beef Leaders (ABL)** program, ABL Foundation's tailored leadership and professional development initiative for emerging beef producers, agribusiness professionals and rural community leaders.



It combines online facilitated modules, mentoring and group projects with industry experts to build confidence, networks and skills in business, governance and communication. Cohorts gather twice yearly for an intensive 2.5-day forum and a three-day supply chain tour.

Producers keen to lead and influence industry outcomes are encouraged to submit their expression of interest early.

Visit <https://www.ablfoundation.co/> or email [team@ablfoundation.co](mailto:team@ablfoundation.co) for details on modules, costs and key dates.



## Grants & Awards

### **Rural Landholder Recovery Grant Scheme | Closing 1 April 2026**

Rural landholders affected by Tropical Cyclone Alfred and Associated Severe Weather (1-16 March 2025) can apply for a Rural Landholder Recovery Grant of up to \$10,000 to assist with property clean-up and reinstatement costs. Grants are available to eligible owners or lessees of at least 10 ha within the declared disaster area.

Eligibility includes holding an ABN and demonstrating direct disaster damage.

Applications close 1 April 2026. Visit the QRIDA site for full criteria and application details: <https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/rural-landholder-recovery-grant-scheme-tropical-cyclone-alfred-and-associated-severe>

### **Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants | Closing 2 April 2026**

Queensland rural producers, small businesses and non-profits impacted by Tropical Cyclone Alfred and associated severe weather (1-16 March 2025) can apply for Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants. Grants of up to \$75,000 (producers) and \$25,000 (small businesses and non-profits) support clean-up, debris removal and reinstatement costs.

Eligible applicants must hold an ABN, be in a declared disaster area and provide evidence of direct damage.

Applications close 2 April 2026. Visit the QRIDA site for full criteria and application details: <https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/exceptional-disaster-assistance-recovery-grants-tropical-cyclone-alfred-and-associated>

## **Drought Preparedness Grants for Queensland Primary Producers | Until funds are fully committed**

Queensland primary producers can apply for Drought Preparedness Grants of up to \$50,000 to co-fund new permanent infrastructure that improves drought preparedness, such as water or feed storage projects. Grants cover 25% of eligible costs and require a Farm Business Resilience Plan. Projects must start within 90 days of approval and be completed within six months of the letter of offer.

Drought Preparedness Grants are subject to availability of funds, up to \$5 million allocated per financial year. Visit the QRIDA site for full criteria and application details:

<https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/drought-preparedness-grants>

## **First Start Loan: Finance to launch your agribusiness | Until funds are fully committed**

Queensland primary producers can apply anytime now for a First Start Loan offering up to \$2 million in low-interest concessional finance to buy land, expand operations or support succession planning. Loans have terms up to 20 years with up to 10 years interest-only options and no fees.

Applications are assessed in the order received for the 2025-26 financial year and will be processed up to 30 June 2026 or until funds are fully committed.

Speak to your Regional Area Manager and visit the QRIDA site for full criteria and application details: <https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/first-start-loan>

## **Sustainability Loan: Strengthen your agribusiness | Until funds are fully committed**

Queensland primary producers can apply anytime now for a Sustainability Loan of up to \$1.3 million in low-interest, concessional finance to invest in infrastructure that boosts productivity, drought and disaster preparedness, and environmental outcomes. Loans have terms up to 20 years with up to 10 years interest-only options and no fees.

Applications are assessed in the 2025-26 financial year in the order received and will be processed up to 30 June 2026 or until funds are fully committed.

Speak to your Regional Area Manager and visit the QRIDA site for full criteria and application details: <https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/sustainability-loan>



## Events

<p><b>Grass ID Made Easy</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Bulimba Creek catchment Coordinating Committee (entrance via 21 Wright Street, Carindale)</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Sunday 8 March 2026 9:00 am - 11:00 am</p>	<p>Join renowned botanist Ann Moran for a hands-on workshop on native grass identification.</p> <p>Native grasses form the foundation of many Australian ecosystems, providing vital food and shelter for wildlife. In this practical session, Ann will guide participants through the key features used to identify local native grasses, helping you build confidence in recognising species in the field.</p> <p>Ann is the co-author of <i>Plant Local to Attract Local</i>, and we are delighted to welcome her to Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee (B4C).</p> <p>Cost: \$15 per person</p> <p>Register here: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/grass-id-made-easy-tickets-1982939927703?aff=ebdssbdestsearch">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/grass-id-made-easy-tickets-1982939927703?aff=ebdssbdestsearch</a></p>
<p><b>Boonah and District Landcare AGM</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Boonah Band Hall</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Tuesday 10 March 2026 6:00 pm</p>	<p>This AGM will include a presentation by Healthy Land &amp; Water's Grace Robertson (Environmental Project Officer) and Emily Hedger (Agricultural Project Officer), covering learnings from several Healthy Land &amp; Water projects in the Scenic Rim, and discuss future opportunities in-store for the community to get involved in.</p> <p>Find out how you can be involved and catch up with other locals over a cuppa. Bring a plate of food to share if you can.</p> <p>For more information, email <a href="mailto:hello@boonahanddistrictlandcare.com.au">hello@boonahanddistrictlandcare.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>West Moreton Landcare AGM</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Marburg Showgrounds Hall</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Saturday 14 March 2026 7:00 pm</p>	<p>This AGM will include a presentation by David Hall, the Healthy Land &amp; Water independent soil consultant, about soil trends and information uncovered in the recent Healthy Soils Program for Bremer Region.</p> <p>BYO supper at the end of this meeting. \$10 to sign up for an annual membership (available on the night).</p>

<p><b>2026 Precision Ag Expo</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Toowoomba</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Wednesday 18 – Thursday 19 March 2026</p>	<p><b>The annual SPAA Precision Ag Expo has delivered quality research, insights, and innovation in precision agriculture to the Australian agriculture industry for more than 20 years.</b></p> <p>In 2026, the team will head to Toowoomba with an exciting program demonstrating how the latest in precision ag, robotics, and machine automation can improve productivity and business operations.</p> <p>As a producer-focused event, the Expo will feature peer-to-peer learning, hands-on demonstrations, and exposure to the latest research, trends, and opportunities in precision agriculture. If you're a grower, agronomist, researcher, advisor, policymaker, ag student, or ag innovator, you don't want to miss this event!</p> <p>Find out more: <a href="https://www.spaa.com.au/events-spaa/spaa-precision-ag-expo-2026/">https://www.spaa.com.au/events-spaa/spaa-precision-ag-expo-2026/</a></p>
<p><b>Weed ID and Control Workshop</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Cedar Grove Environmental Centre, Cedar Grove</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Saturday 28 March 2026 9:30 am – 11:30 am</p>	<p><b>Come along to an informative workshop on weed identification and weed control techniques.</b></p> <p>Join weed management experts from <a href="#">Cedar Grove Landcare</a> and learn various weed control techniques for common weeds found in Logan. You will be shown how to use chemicals safely and effectively and how to determine whether they are necessary. This workshop will provide you with skills that you can take home to your own gardens and properties.</p> <p>Register here: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/weed-id-and-control-workshop-tickets-1637163342629?aff=ebdssbdestsearch">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/weed-id-and-control-workshop-tickets-1637163342629?aff=ebdssbdestsearch</a></p>
<p><b>How to Plan a Burn</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Mount Binga</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Saturday 28 March 2026 9:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Healthy Land &amp; Water's How to Plan a Burn</b> workshops are an interactive, outdoor walk-and-talk where we will demonstrate the concepts and build your understanding while looking at how it all fits together in the bush.</p> <p>Attendees will be taken through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key considerations for planning a safe burn, including preparation, conditions, regulations, fuel assessment, and ignition methods.</li> <li>• Safety requirements and landholder responsibilities, noting the workshop involves assessment only—no burning will occur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Come prepared:</b> Due to the terrain and field component of this workshop, a reasonable level of fitness is required. Please contact us if you have any concerns about your ability to participate.</p>

	<p>Catering and supporting material will be provided for all participants. This is a FREE workshop.</p> <p>For more information, contact Jaime from Healthy Land &amp; Water's Fire Ecology &amp; Preparedness team on <a href="mailto:jaime.k@hlw.org.au">jaime.k@hlw.org.au</a>.</p> <p>Register here: <a href="https://events.humanitix.com/how-to-plan-a-burn-mount-binga-march">https://events.humanitix.com/how-to-plan-a-burn-mount-binga-march</a></p>
<p><b>Regional Biosecurity &amp; Response Readiness Workshop</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Toowoomba</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Monday 30 – Tuesday 31 March 2026</p>	<p><b>Date Claimer</b> – contact John Alawneh, QDPI <a href="mailto:John.Alawneh@dpi.qld.gov.au">John.Alawneh@dpi.qld.gov.au</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>Pasture Demo Site – Field Walk</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Killarney</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Tuesday 31 March 2026</p>	<p><b>Date Claimer</b> – contact Ted Callanan, QDPI <a href="mailto:ted.callanan@dpi.qld.gov.au">ted.callanan@dpi.qld.gov.au</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>Backing Onto Bush</b></p> <p><b>Location</b> Noosaville</p> <p><b>Day, Date</b> Saturday 18 April 2026 9:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Healthy Land &amp; Water's Backing Onto Bush</b> workshops are a half-day session for peri-urban and rural residential landholders to learn about fire ecology and what keeps the bush healthy. This half-day session includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An in-classroom general bushfire safety and preparedness discussion.</li> <li>• An interactive bushwalk and talk.</li> </ul> <p>Walk away from the workshop with the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe the health of your local environment.</li> <li>• Identify vegetation types and key habitat.</li> <li>• Understand fuel loads.</li> <li>• Recognise fire history.</li> <li>• Monitor vegetation and wildlife.</li> <li>• Follow regulations for your area.</li> </ul> <p>Catering and supporting material will be provided for all participants. This is a free workshop.</p>

For more information, contact Nick from Healthy Land & Water's Queensland Fire Ecology & Preparedness Team on [nicholas.c@hlw.org.au](mailto:nicholas.c@hlw.org.au)

Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/backing-onto-bush-or-tewantin>

**Please contact us if you would like help promoting an upcoming event or sustainable agriculture initiative you are involved in.**

**Sustainable Agriculture team:**

**Bruce Lord | Principal Scientist | 0427 0132 284 | [bruce.l@hlw.org.au](mailto:bruce.l@hlw.org.au)**

**Vanessa Smolders | Team Lead | 0438 169 452 | [vanessa.s@hlw.org.au](mailto:vanessa.s@hlw.org.au)**

**Lene Knudsen | Project Manager | 0429 000 179 | [lene.k@hlw.org.au](mailto:lene.k@hlw.org.au)**

**Renee Ould | Project Manager | 0455 341 682 | [renee.o@hlw.org.au](mailto:renee.o@hlw.org.au)**

**Patrick O'Connor | Project Manager | 0484 657 098 | [patrick.o@hlw.org.au](mailto:patrick.o@hlw.org.au)**

**Grant Pringle | Drought Hub Officer | 0455 399 949 | [grant.p@hlw.org.au](mailto:grant.p@hlw.org.au)**

**Emily Hedger | Project Officer | 0497 935 488 | [emily.h@hlw.org.au](mailto:emily.h@hlw.org.au)**

**Jessamy Zerner | Project Officer | 0428 887 933 | [jessamy.z@hlw.org.au](mailto:jessamy.z@hlw.org.au)**

*The Sustainable Agriculture Newsletter is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture program and through funding from the Future Drought Fund for the SQNNSW Innovation Hub.*