

Queensland Agricultural Land Audit

Annual Addendum

September 2015

This publication has been compiled by Resources Planning and Skills, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

© State of Queensland, 2015

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.



You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

Note: Some content in this publication may have different licence terms as indicated.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The Queensland Government shall not be liable for technical or other errors or omissions contained herein. The reader/user accepts all risks and responsibility for losses, damages, costs and other consequences resulting directly or indirectly from using this information.

Table of contents

Introduction	2
New Audit Tools and Information.....	2
Web Mapping Intersect Tools	2
Agricultural Climate Assessment	2
Socio-economic constraints to Queensland's agricultural production	3
Statewide Updates	3
Queensland Food and Fibre Policy.....	3
Strategic Cropping Land Trigger Map amendments.....	4
Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan	4
Map Layer Updates.....	4
Regional Updates.....	5
Chapter 4: Cape York	5
Chapter 5: Gulf and North West.....	5
Chapter 6: Far North Queensland.....	5
Chapter 7: Charters Towers.....	6
Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac, Whitsunday	6
Chapter 9: Central West and South West.....	6
Chapter 10: Central Queensland	6
Chapter 11: Wide Bay Burnett	7
Chapter 12: Darling Downs.....	7
Chapter 13: South East Queensland	8

Introduction

Since its release in May 2013, the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit (the Audit) has been used as a key reference tool to guide investment decisions and has been increasingly relied upon to support a range of government policy. As a result of the influence of the Audit, periodic updates to the Audit information were deemed necessary to ensure the Audit accuracy and currency is maintained.

The purpose of the annual addendum is to highlight major information updates at the state and regional scale. The annual addendum will cover major:

- Policy changes;
- Proposed, on-going and completed infrastructure projects and issues;
- Data updates and resource studies;
- Changed or proposed changes to regional plans;
- Changed or proposed changes to water resource plans; and
- Changes to relevant socio-economic data.

It is not intended that any current or potential agricultural land use maps will be generated or updated in this or any future annual addendum. New spatial datasets and analysis will be generated when the Audit is reviewed in 2018.

New Audit Tools and Information

Since the release of the Audit, DAF has continued to deliver tools and projects to assist the dissemination of Audit and land use information.

Web Mapping Intersect Tools

The reporting functionality of the Web-based Agricultural Land Information (WALI) online mapping tool was improved through the introduction of three customised tools. The intersect tools calculate feature areas (hectares) within the identified area of interest. Table 1 details the three customised intersect tools.

Table 1: WALI customised tools.

Customised Tool	Features
Land	Calculates area (ha) of current and potential for the selected land use type in the area of interest
RPIA	Calculates area (ha) of Priority Agricultural Area (PAA), Priority Living Area (PLA), Strategic Cropping Area (SCA) and Strategic Environmental Area (SEA) within the area of interest.
SPP	Calculates area (ha) of Important Agricultural Areas and Class A and B land within the area of interest.

The customised tools can assist with industry development and supply chain analyses, environmental impact assessments, and planning and development activities.

WALI does not require the download of specialised software and can be accessed from [the DAF website](#).

Agricultural Climate Assessment

Designed to complement the Agricultural Values Assessment, an Agricultural Climate Assessment (ACA) collates over 300 agricultural climate datasets into a concise and easy to understand report with maps. An ACA includes:

- temperature and rainfall ranges for the Assessment Area
- specific temperature, rainfall, evaporation, pasture growth, crop yield, natural disaster and extreme weather event information
- weather station locations within the Assessment Area
- information on the major drivers of climate variability in the region of interest.

An ACA can inform investment and diversification opportunities, due diligence assessments, business and property planning, opportunity and constraint analysis and risk assessments.

An ACA can be tailored to anywhere in the state. Requesting an ACA is a simple, one step process which involves entering central coordinates for the area of interest and an email address. A customised ACA will be emailed to the supplied email address within an hour.

An ACA can be obtained by completing the appropriate online form on the [DAF website](#).

Socio-economic constraints to Queensland's agricultural production

When it was released in 2013, the Audit identified a number of areas across Queensland where current land use did not appear to take full advantage of the biophysical resources available, based on potential land use mapping using soil and climate data. The Socio-economic constraints to Queensland's agricultural production project aims to better understand the factors influencing primary producer decisions and land use and production.

A qualitative social analysis was undertaken by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, and a separate economic analysis was conducted by DAF. The reports analyses are based on information gathered from producers during focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

For more information on the socio-economic project go to the [DAF website](#)

Statewide Updates

This section outlines major information updates that apply to the whole of Queensland and can subsequently affect all chapters of the Audit.

Queensland Food and Fibre Policy

Queensland's food and fibre policy was released on 11 August 2015 to support the growth of a productive and prosperous food and fibre sector in Queensland. The policy details Government's commitment to continue delivery of key services across the sector, and refocusing these services in five priority areas:

- Drive growth, efficiency and sustainability
- Support a modern and skilled workforce
- Advance research and development
- Improve Queensland's biosecurity capability
- Deliver service innovation

To meet challenges, enable the food and fibre sector to increase productivity and prosperity, and drive long-term job creation in regional and rural Queensland, Government will work in partnership with industry and stakeholders across the entire supply chain.

For more information on the Queensland Food and Fibre policy go to the [DAF website](#)

Strategic Cropping Land Trigger Map amendments

The Strategic Cropping Land (SCL) Trigger Map was amended on 19 December 2014. The amended map uses improved data from the Audit, updated Queensland Land Use Mapping Program (QLUMP) data and digital elevation modelling.

The Strategic Cropping Area (SCA) is an area of regional interest under the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014. All new resource activities proposed within the SCA must comply with the provisions of the Act. The size of the SCA has increased from approximately 7.23 million hectares to 10.17 million hectares.

Information about the amendment of the SCL Trigger Map can be found at the [DNRM website](#)

Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan

Developed in response to recommendations from the World Heritage Committee, the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (the Plan) is a coordinated and comprehensive long-term plan to ensure the Great Barrier Reef continues to improve on its outstanding universal value every decade between now and 2050. The Plan will ensure the Reef remains a natural wonder for each successive generation to come.

The Plan reaffirms the agricultural actions and priorities of the ongoing Reef Water Quality Protection Plan through the adoption of improved practices and implementation of best management practice (BMP) programs. The subordinate Extension and Education Strategy, updated in February 2015, includes direction and coordination of extension methodologies to achieve management practice adoption targets.

For more information on the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan go to the [Department of Environment website](#)

Map Layer Updates

Table 2 outlines the map layers that have been updated since the release of the Audit.

Table 2: Updated map layers

Updated map layer	Further information
Current land based aquaculture	Land based aquaculture locations were updated using information provided by Queensland Fisheries. This dataset includes all properties with a current Development Approval for aquaculture operations, and may include land where production is no longer active.
Saw mills – native and plantation timber	This updated saw mill dataset includes updated locational data and information on the resource type processed at the mill facility (ie. native or plantation timber). This dataset was updated using information gathered under action 7.4 of the Queensland Forest and Timber Industry Plan. This dataset includes only mills that are currently operational.
NRM region boundaries	Inclusion of regional natural resource management boundaries.
State development areas	Inclusion of current declared State Development Areas.
Queensland Land Use Mapping Program	QLUMP mapping data for the Condamine region has been updated to 2012, and mapping for the Border Rivers and Cape York regions have been updated to 2013. These datasets are used in the Audit to show current cropping, sugar cane, and annual and perennial horticulture.

Updated versions of the map layers are available to download from the Queensland Spatial Catalogue ([QSpatial](#)) and the Queensland Government Open Data portal ([Open data](#)). The updated map layers are also displayed on the Web-based Agricultural Land Information ([WALI](#)) mapping tool.

Regional Updates

This section outlines major information updates that apply to a specific region and will subsequently affect a specific chapter of the Audit.

Chapter 4: Cape York

There are no major updates for the Cape York region.

Chapter 5: Gulf and North West

Water resources

Gulf Water Resource Plan

The amended Gulf water resource plan and Gulf resource operations plan were released on 21 August 2015. The amendments focus on providing new irrigated agricultural development opportunities in the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments through new reserves of unallocated water. Management strategies are also in place to ensure the water requirements of Gulf fisheries and existing water users continue to be supported.

For more information on the Gulf Water Resource Plan, go to the [DNRM website](#).

Chapter 6: Far North Queensland

Water resources

Barron Water Resource Plan

Amendments to the Barron water resource plan and Barron resource operations plan were released for public consultation on 21 November 2014. The proposed amendments focus on:

- improving groundwater allocation and management arrangements in the Atherton tablelands
- enhancing water trading arrangements for both surface and ground water
- general red tape reduction.

The proposed amendments will better support the growth of irrigated agriculture by providing water users with the confidence and flexibility needed to manage and grow their businesses.

For more information on the Barron water resource plan, go to the [DNRM website](#)

Infrastructure

Mareeba Airport Upgrade

A \$13 million upgrade to the Mareeba Airport was announced in April 2015. The *Royalties for Regions* grant will facilitate the development of Mareeba Airport into a significant aviation precinct in Far North Queensland, second only to Cairns Airport.

The potential addition of airfreight services and the ability to accommodate larger planes may allow additional or faster market access, both domestic or export, for high value products such as beef, dairy and high value horticulture.

Chapter 7: Charters Towers

There are no major updates for the Charters Towers region.

Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac, Whitsunday

Infrastructure

Eton Range, Peak Downs Highway upgrade

Design works are currently underway for the realignment of the Peak Downs Highway at Eton Range. The project is part of a \$167.67 million commitment by the Federal Government to improve safety on the Peak Downs Highway. It involves widening to four lanes and partial realignment of the existing Eton Range crossing. Over 4,000 vehicles, including around 800 heavy vehicles, travel through the range each day.

The Peak Downs Highway is the primary access for the agricultural and Bowen Basin coal mining industries. The highway is no longer adequate for the current transport needs and it constrains expansion of agricultural industries in the region. This upgrade will enable faster more efficient transport of agricultural produce and exports to the Port of Mackay. It will also allow road trains, which are the most efficient road transport for the movement of cattle, to take cattle from feedlots west of Mackay to the Baker's Creek abattoir.

The total cost of the project is \$189 million and completion is expected in late 2017.

For more information on the Peak Downs Highway upgrade go to the [DTMR website](#)

Chapter 9: Central West and South West

Infrastructure

Outback Way Highway upgrade

Under the Federal Government's *Road and Rail Investment Programme* sections of the Outback Way through Boulia Shire will be paved, sealed and upgraded to improve safety and access to remote areas.

The project is designed to unlock potential economic benefits, particularly through tourism, mining and freight and will be a benefit to agricultural landholders in the region.

The estimated project cost is \$13.75 million and will run from mid-2015 to mid-2017.

More information on the Outback Way Highway upgrade can be found [here](#)

Chapter 10: Central Queensland

Water resources

Fitzroy Basin Water Resource Plan

Amendments to the Fitzroy Basin water resource plan and Fitzroy Basin resource operations plan were released for public comment on 24 November 2014. The draft amendments include:

- the conversion of water licences to water allocations in the Lower Callide groundwater sub-area with entitlement volumes reduced to a more sustainable take, and the introduction of associated water sharing and trading rules
- extending access to the existing unallocated water reserve (32,000 ML) to landholders in the Don and Dee rivers and Alma Creek area

- providing existing surface water licensees in the Don and Dee rivers and Alma Creek area to submit a case for additional entitlement where there is a demonstrated long term use of water
- providing a small volume of additional water (total volume capped at 145 ML) to groundwater allocation holders in the Callide Valley Water Supply Scheme provided they meet certain criteria

For more information on the Fitzroy Basin water resource plan go to the [DNRM website](#)

Infrastructure

Mobile blackspots programme

Four key sites in Capricornia have been awarded funding of \$3.14 million for new Telstra base stations to vastly improve mobile and internet coverage under the Federal Government's mobile black spots program.

The communities include; Clarke Creek, Marlborough, Mt Chalmers Road (between Rockhampton and Yeppoon), and Gargett in the Pioneer Valley area of Capricornia, west of Mackay. Major mobile black spots on the Bruce Highway between Marlborough and Sarina and on the main road between Rockhampton and Yeppoon will also be upgraded.

Schooling of country children, agricultural business communication and safety in these rural areas will be greatly improved through the construction of the mobile towers.

Chapter 11: Wide Bay Burnett

Infrastructure

D'Aguilar Highway upgrade

The South Burnett Council has completed construction of a new 1.2km overtaking lane near the Lucas Road intersection between Yarraman and Kingaroy in September 2014. The new lane is reducing traffic pressure and has improved road safety for the nearly 5,000 vehicles that travel this stretch of the highway each day. The project was funded through a grant from the State Government *Royalties to Regions* program.

Improving road transport on this stretch of the D'Aguilar Highway has also improved the efficiency of agricultural product and material movements within the Wide Bay Burnett region.

For more information on the D'Aguilar Highway upgrade go to the [DSD website](#)

Chapter 12: Darling Downs

Infrastructure

Dalby Saleyards upgrade

A \$12 million upgrade at the Dalby Regional Saleyards was officially opened on 29 April 2015. The redevelopment has improved cattle handling and animal welfare, as well as delivered improved site safety for livestock buyers and selling agents. The facility now boasts new drafting facilities with better lighting, new loading and unloading ramps, new sales pens, new roofing and an effluent collection pond.

The Dalby saleyards are the second largest in the state behind Roma, selling over 200,000 head of cattle yearly. The modern, upgraded facilities will ensure Dalby remains an important link in the Queensland beef supply chain.

More information on the Dalby saleyards upgrade can be found [here](#)

Chapter 13: South East Queensland

Infrastructure

Brisbane Valley Highway upgrade

The Somerset Regional Council is constructing 13.99km of new passing lanes between Harlin and Toogoolawah on the Brisbane Valley Highway. The project will improve road safety for the almost 3,000 vehicles that travel this stretch of the highway each day. The project was funded through a grant from the State Government *Royalties for Regions* program.

Improving road transport on this stretch of the Brisbane Valley Highway will see improved efficiencies for the transport of agricultural product and materials in the South East Queensland region.

For more information on the Brisbane Valley Highway upgrade go to the [DSD website](#)