

SEQ Sustainable Agriculture News

March 2024

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Healthy Land & Water is home to a new Drought Node for SEQ

South East Queensland is home to a new drought preparedness initiative aimed at helping farmers continually adapt and thrive into the future in the face of an ever-changing climate.

Healthy Land & Water is heading up delivery of a suite of drought preparedness activities for Southern Queensland as the local delivery node of a larger drought hub which covers Southern Queensland and Northern NSW.

The Southern Queensland and Northern NSW Drought & Innovation Hub (SQNNNSW Hub) and its regional nodes are promoting activities, information, tools and opportunities to support landholders and rural communities to improve drought preparedness and help build resilience in the region's natural assets, agricultural businesses and landscapes.



It is designed to:

- Share the latest technologies, best practice and innovation for the SEQ agricultural community.
- Help apply proven drought-resilience research on the ground to improve innovation and adoption across agriculture, industry, and the community.
- Empower stakeholders to co-design drought preparedness activities for the region.
- Support landholders, agricultural industries, supply chains and communities in SEQ to manage and adapt to a highly variable climate and respond to ever-increasing environmental, biosecurity, financial, and market challenges.

The aim is to promote innovation to achieve a more resilient, sustainable, and profitable future. It aims to do this by thinking forward and sharing solutions for the future.

Collaboration and ongoing discussion with landholders, industry groups, regional communities, and researchers will contribute to the implementation of adaptive and innovative plans and practices, and opportunities to test the latest techniques identified by the local farming and regional communities.



Landholders interested in being involved in the program are encouraged to contact Healthy Land & Water – Bruce Lord 0427 013 284 or at bruce.l@hlw.org.au.

The SQNSW Innovation Hub project is supported by Healthy Land & Water and the University of Southern Queensland, through received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.



What's been happening?

FDF Drought Resilient Soils & Landscapes project update

Since the region received much-needed rainfall over the summer, there has been a significant improvement in seasonal conditions. As a result, several landholders who are part of the project have been able to make use of the soil moisture and favourable growing conditions. They have successfully trialled and established new pastures based on perennial grasses and legumes on their properties. After challenging conditions for most of the project, it has been wonderful to see spectacular results in terms of establishment and growth on a number of recent site visits.



Before and after photos from demo site at Caboonbah where diverse new legume based perennial pastures have been sown along with rows of leucaena.



Before and after photos from demo site at Ottaba where new diverse new legume based perennial pastures have been sown, following application of composted manure.

These on-ground projects have been supported to demonstrate management practices and techniques which help improve natural capital (soil health and land condition), sustainable production and resilience.

We're running a series of field days at selected local demonstration sites across the region in April and May. These events will demonstrate various strategies and practices aimed at enhancing the condition and resilience of grazing enterprises. **The first field day will take place at Oaky Creek property on 10 April 2024.** Be sure to keep an eye on the Events Calendar for finalised dates of other field days.

This project is supported by Healthy Land & Water with funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.



Industry News

SQNSW Hub Update

National Soils Action Plan to support soil action

The *National Soils Action Plan 2023-2028* was approved on 28 November 2023. It's the initial plan among four to be created under the *National Soil Strategy*. This action plan outlines four main priorities that will steer the direction and structure of support for soil-related actions by governments at all levels and their partners for the next five years.

The focus of the priorities is linked to the broader goals of the *National Soil Strategy*:

- Create a national framework for managing soil data to inform decision-making and investment in soil management.
- Develop policies and strategies to recognise, value and protect soil function.
- Accelerate the adoption of land use and management practices that both protect and improve soil condition trends.
- Develop the soil workforce and capabilities to meet soil challenges.



National Soil Survey set to identify gaps in soil knowledge & capability

The **National Soil Survey** being run by the Hubs' Regional Soil Coordinators **is closing soon!**

The survey seeks to identify gaps in soil knowledge and capability. The results will be provided to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to inform programs under the *National Soil Action Plan*.

If you are a farmer, land manager or someone who works in a soil related field, please complete the survey, and share it with your colleagues.

You can find the survey here: [National Soils Survey](https://qualtrics.com) (qualtrics.com) or https://melbourneuni.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6JSMQiYe7PnF2YK



Queensland Farmers Federation

ABC's Four Corners program

Last week ABC's Four Corners program examined Australia's supermarket duopoly, its market power, the role it plays in the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on farmers. Watch it [here](#).

National Biosecurity Training Hub

The National Biosecurity Training Hub is a resource designed to boost Australia's preparedness and response capability by offering a range of training courses tailored to all industries and skill levels. Learn more [here](#).

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission

The ACCC released an issues paper on 29 February 2024 seeking views on the key topics it will consider in its supermarket's inquiry. Have your say on the issues paper [here](#) – [Issues paper | ACCC](#) by 2 April.

Future Beef

Learnings from over 20 years of research at the Wambiana Grazing Trial

Running since 1997, 'The Wambiana Grazing Trial' has provided valuable insights into managing for climate variability.

Dr Peter O'Reagain highlights the key strategies including:

- Stock around your long-term carrying capacity, making sure to adjust stock numbers to match available forage.
- Be risk averse. Act early, with fast decreases and slow increases in stock numbers.
- Use regular wet season spelling.
- Use fire to manage the grass/bush balance.

Watch the short video below to see some key learnings.



Bureau of Meteorology

National Agriculture Climate & Water report

This week's report is now available for download. The report provides a comprehensive range of information including weekly rainfall, rainfall forecast for the week ahead, soil moisture, and current conditions for all agricultural regions of Australia. Click [here](#) to download a copy.

Other sustainable agriculture resources

- **A handy guide to managing livestock on small properties** (Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Healthy Land & Water). Contact us for a hard copy or follow link to download <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/a-guide-to-managing-livestock-on-small-properties>.
- **Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry resources:** <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought>.
- **Drought Assistance Program/Farm Business Resilience Plan (Queensland Government):** Support to help you identify, assess, and manage business risks such as drought and strategies and actions to address them www.daf.qld.gov.au/drought-assist/farm-business-resilience-plan.
- **Drought fact sheets for landholders (Healthy Land & Water):** For a great range of digital agricultural brochures and drought resources: <https://hlw.org.au/resources/agriculture>.
- **Improved forage reports, rainfall posters and Long Paddock new publications** (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries): A number of resources including a YouTube video explaining the forage report are good resources that can help landholders access and manage ground cover and land condition e.g. how forage can help manage stock and pasture to manage herd numbers to match pasture supply.
 - Forage user guide: https://data.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/static/forage_2pager.pdf.
 - YouTube video explainer: https://youtu.be/DagBdn4GuRM?si=P_X_BGkbol1Wfg9.
- **GRDC fall armyworm (FAW) webinar recording available now:** GRDC facilitated an online grains research update last week on fall armyworm. The session was covered the current FAW situation, management considerations and risk assessment. View the recording [here](#). Links to other useful resources referred to in the session: [Darabug2 model](#), [The Beatsheet – fall armyworm](#), [GRDC fall armyworm portal](#).

Free financial counselling

- **Rural Financial Counselling Service Southern Queensland:** Offers free, impartial and confidential financial counselling to primary producers who are experiencing or at risk of financial hardship and located in the South East Queensland and services include: farm business plans, improve cash flow and budgeting, bank and creditor negotiations, farm business debt mediation and accessing financial support <https://www.rfcssq.org.au/>.

Financial assistance

- **Financial assistance** (Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority [QRIDA]): Delivering financial assistance for rural and regional communities including disaster assistance, recovery grants and drought support www.qrida.qld.gov.au.

Grants & Awards

Primary Producer Flood Management Planning Grants

The **Primary Producer Flood Management Planning Grants are closing on 31 March 2024**. Eligible primary producers can access up to \$7,500 via a rebate to offset the cost of eligible technical advice associated with developing a flood management plan.

Primary producers can access the grants by working with an Industry Resilience and Recovery Officer (IRRO) to prepare a plan and identify technical advice aimed at enhancing flood mitigation activities.

Please contact IRROs Eloise Cosgrove on eloise@gff.org.au or 0409 265 427 or Julia Jurgs on julia@gff.org.au or 0416 951 450.

The Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Program is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Disaster Assistance – South East Queensland Severe Storms 24 Dec 2023 - 3 Jan 2024

Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants of up to \$75,000 are available for eligible affected producers following the South Queensland severe storms and rainfall (24 December 2023 - 3 January 2024), to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace fencing and other costs associated with the recovery process.

Find out more here <https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/extraordinary-disaster-assistance-recovery-grants-seq-severe-storms-and-rainfall>

To be eligible for assistance your property must be located in one of the defined disaster areas:
City of Gold Coast Council | Logan City Council | Scenic Rim Regional Council

Small businesses in eligible local government areas may also be able to access:

- [Extraordinary disaster assistance recovery grants](#) of up to \$50,000.
- [Disaster assistance loans](#) of up to \$250,000.
- [Disaster assistance \(essential working capital\) loans](#) of up to \$100,000.

Complete the [natural disaster business survey](#) to advise what assistance you may need.

Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative Guidelines: Small Network Grants - Round 2

Small Network Grants are now available to community organisations in remote, rural and regional Australia to develop and deliver one-off community events or training and learning initiatives to strengthen community networks and capabilities that build drought preparedness [Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative – Small Network Grants | FRRR](#)

Applications of up to \$ 20,000 are sought from locally based, not-for profit organisations in an agriculture-dependent remote, rural and regional locations.

Applications are due by 5pm AEDT 26 March 2024.

Climate-Smart Agriculture Grants

Through the Natural Heritage Trust, the Australian Government has established the **\$302.1 million Climate-Smart Agriculture Program over five years** from 2023-24. This program will drive agricultural sustainability, productivity, and competitiveness.

For more information visit: [Climate-Smart Agriculture Program - DAFF](#)

The Climate-Smart Agriculture Program is comprised of the following investment streams:

Grant Name	Funding Available	Description	Closing Date
Partnership & Innovation Grants	Grants between \$250,000 and \$5 million are available	For medium to large scale projects to drive the development, trialling, adoption and roll-out of climate-smart, sustainable, innovative tools and on-ground farm practices that increase the agriculture sector's productivity and profitability.	8 April 2024
Capacity Building Grants	Grants between \$10,000 and \$1 million are available	This grant focusses on increasing community capacity and capability for climate-smart, sustainable agriculture and natural resource management practices in Australia to drive on-ground adoption.	28 March 2024
Small Grants	Applications for this round of Small Grants will open later this year.	For on-ground focussed projects led by a range of community groups, Landcare groups, First Nations groups and research organisations. These small grants will support the adoption of sustainable agriculture best-practice that improves management of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.	TBA

Please note that applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with regional NRM groups and industry bodies, particularly for the Partnership & Innovation Grants, where a consortia of partners and evidence of partner support is required. Given the relatively short timeframe involved, any organisations considering applying for these grants for supporting activities in South East Queensland are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible to discuss and support your proposal.

Churchill Fellowships

Ever dreamed of travelling to other countries to seek fresh ideas and discover new ways of doing things? Keen to contribute to your industry or community?

Apply for a **Churchill Fellowship** – a non-academic program that sends Australians from all walks of life overseas to investigate a topic or issue they are passionate about. **Applications are open 1 March to 1 May 2024.** Learn more [here](#).

Rural Economic Development Grants Scheme

The objective of the [Rural Economic Development Grants Scheme](#) is to strengthen primary production sectors and bolster rural communities.

Round six expressions of interest (EOI) **close on 28 March 2024**. Grants are available up to \$200,000 as a co-contribution to be matched by applicants. For more info and to apply, click [here](#)

Energy Efficiency Grants for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

The [Energy Efficiency Grants for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises](#) aims to provide funding to eligible small and medium businesses to purchase energy efficient equipment to reduce and manage energy usage and costs. \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Closes 8 April 2024, for more info and to apply, click [here](#)

Nuffield Drought Resilience Scholarship

Applications for the 2025 Nuffield Drought Resilience Scholarship program are now open, farmers and others working in food and fibre industries aged between 28 and 45 can apply. **Applications close 31 May 2024.**

The Future Drought Fund (FDF) is investing \$1.6 million through Nuffield Australia over the next 2 years for scholarships and training. The drought resilience scholarships will help farmers increase their knowledge of new tools and practices for a changing climate. Scholars will travel overseas to study drought resilience topics and learn from international leaders in the field.

Up to 10 drought resilience scholarships will be awarded. Each scholarship is valued at \$40,000. [Learn more here](#) [Drought Resilience Scholarship Program - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](https://agriculture.gov.au)

Grains Research Development Corporation GroundUp program

Applications have opened for the 2024 [GRDC GroundUp](#) program. Sponsored by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), GroundUp drives innovation in agriculture to solve industry problems by focusing on founders who are ready to take their technology to the next level. **EOIs close 15 March.** Please see - [GRDC GroundUp EOI - Agtech Logistics Hub](#) for an info session recording , more details and expression of interest form.



Upcoming events

N-Drip Irrigation Field Day – Dalby

Windco Farm

178 Lyndley Lane
Jimbour East, QLD 4406

Thursday 14 March 2024
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

N-Drip Irrigation Field Day

N-Drip is a new, large scale drip irrigation product that significantly lowers energy costs and increases water savings in cotton and horticulture. This is now mature on the Inner Downs, growing in scale over the last three years and this field day is an opportunity to see one of the larger set ups. Includes presentations on:

- Advancing on Farm-Efficiency by Simon Blyth. Demystifying Government Grants by Brooke Fossey.

To register [Form \(hsforms.com\)](https://hsforms.com) For more info contact: Felicity White on felicity.white@ndrip.com or 0498 509443.

<p>Grow National – Seed to Sprout workshop</p> <p>University of Sunshine Coast 90 Sippy Downs Drive Sippy Downs, QLD 4556</p> <p>Tuesday 19 March 2024 8:30 am – 5:00 pm</p>	<p>Grow National – Seed to Sprout workshop Hosted by Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN), this comprehensive one-day event held at UniSC is designed for both emerging and established food entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Dive into the essentials of running a successful food business without compromising on safety or profitability and discover how to effectively sell your products and charm your customers.</p> <p><i>Price \$55 FAN members - \$165 non-members.</i></p> <p>Bookings is essential – GROW NATIONAL PROGRAM: Seed to Sprout (One day workshop) Humanitix</p>
<p>QFF ‘Just a Farmer’ VIP Movie Screening - Toowoomba</p> <p>The Strand - Event Cinemas 163 Margaret St, Toowoomba City QLD 4350, Australia</p> <p>Thursday 21 March 2024 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm</p>	<p>Join QFF and key agricultural stakeholders on Thursday 21 March in Toowoomba for an exclusive VIP screening of the much-anticipated film 'Just a Farmer', proudly supported by the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise.</p> <p>This feature film provides a profound insight into what it means to be an Australian farmer and shines a spotlight on mental health in rural Australia.</p> <p>Book tickets here.</p>
<p>QFF Farming with Floods workshop - Boonah</p> <p>The Bowl Boonah 42 Coronation Drive Boonah, QLD 4310</p> <p>Tuesday 26 March 2024 8:30 am – 1:00 pm</p>	<p>QFF Farming with Floods – workshop for primary producers - Boonah Topics will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Farm Business Resilience/Flood Management Plans. • Current QRIDA funding availability. • Farm Business Planning. • QRIDA Q&A. • Flood management planning, why it's important, how to prepare and response, and technical rebate information. <p>RSVP by Friday 22 March 2024 https://events.humanitix.com/farming-in-floods.</p> <p>For more information see the event flyer.</p> <p><i>This workshop is a joint initiative of the Industry Recovery and Resilience Officer Program (funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements) and the Farm Business Resilience Program (funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program).</i></p>

Building Grazing Resilience field day – Oaky Creek

278 Oaky Creek Road
Oaky Creek, QLD 4285

Wednesday 10 April 2024
Time TBC

Building Grazing Resilience field day – Oaky Creek

Come along to see and hear from landholders and presenters on strategies and practices being implemented to demonstrate improved resilience including the following topics:

- Holistic property management planning.
- Landscape re-hydration principles.
- Implementing planned rotational grazing and spelling to improve land condition and protect riparian areas.
- Growing multi-species cover crops.

For more details & to register please contact Bruce Lord on 0427013284 or email – bruce.l@hlw.org.au

This event is supported by Healthy Land & Water through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Building Resilience through establishing Leucaena & legume-based pastures

Location TBC

Thursday 18 April 2024
Time TBC

Building Resilience through establishing Leucaena & legume-based pastures – Mt Beppo

Come along to see and hear from landholders on management strategies and practices being implemented to demonstrate improved resilience including the following topics:

- Establishing and managing leucaena
- Establishing legume based sown pastures
- Planned rotational grazing and spelling to improve pasture and land condition.

For more details & to register please contact Bruce Lord on 0427013284 or email – bruce.l@hlw.org.au

This event is supported by Healthy Land & Water through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Repairing Gravelly Streams Field Day - Warrill Creek Tarome

Hinrichsen Rd
Tarome, QLD 4309

First Right, look for the Healthy Land & Water Banner

Saturday 20 April 2024
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Repairing Gravelly Streams Field Day - Warrill Creek Tarome

We organised a FREE Repairing Gravelly Streams field day to assist local landholders most impacted by these conditions. Come for a FREE lunch and learn about how to protect and repair stream banks on your property.

We will visit two properties on Warrill Creek. These properties have used a range of techniques to repair erosion and stabilise banks. The works range from 5 years old to 10+ years old. The field day covers a range of practical advice on following topics:

- Learn techniques for repairing bank erosion using earthworks, engineered structures and vegetation.
- Long-term strategies for protecting creek banks.
- Explore and observe restored areas to see the progression of works overtime.
- See methods you can implement to "put your stream back".

Get your tickets [here](#).

For more information, contact Margie Dickson on margie.d@hlw.org.au or on 0498 803 092.

This event is supported by Healthy Land & Water through funding from the Queensland Government's Healthy Catchments Program.

Please contact us if you would like us to help promote an upcoming event or sustainable agriculture initiative you are involved in. For any other queries or further information please contact the SEQ Sustainable Agriculture team:

- **Bruce Lord** | 0427 013284 | bruce.l@hlw.org.au
- **Vanessa Smolders** | 0432 561 610 | vanessa.s@hlw.org.au
- **Renee Ould** | 0455 341 682 | renee.o@hlw.org.au