

# SEQ SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NEWS – DEC 2024



## Wishing you a joyful Christmas and an outstanding 2025 ahead!

It has certainly been a busy 12 months and looking back over the year that was, it is great to see how much we've achieved together. As we head into the Christmas/New Year period, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

**Please note that our office will be closed from the afternoon of 20 December 2024, and we will be back on deck in the new year on 6 January 2025.**



**What's been happening**



**Grants & Awards**



**Industry News**



**Events**



## What's been happening

### Soil Science Australia – Soil Management Training

Last month, three of our Sustainable Ag Team members had the pleasure of attending the practical part of Soil Science Australia's Soil Management Training in Warwick. This training is aimed at ensuring soil practitioners have improved understanding of soil features and functions to better implement fit-for-purpose soil sampling and interpretation to improve the quality of soil data, and better support land managers to improve soil health and productivity.

Despite the wet weather and some muddy conditions, everyone enjoyed a great learning experience, getting their hands dirty in different types of soil. It was also a great opportunity for networking and catching up with fellow Sustainable Ag staff from neighbouring Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups.



*Pictured: Rachel Cavallo (Burnett Mary Regional Group), Vincent Parisi (SQ Landscapes) with Ren Holz, Lene Knudsen and Bruce Lord (Healthy Land & Water)*

## **QFF Industry Recovery and Resilience Officers Forum – A flood of findings**



Our team also attended Queensland Farmers' Federation's A Flood of Findings Forum, presented by Eloise Cosgrove and Julia Jurgs in Toowoomba last month. The Forum was a wrap-up for the Industry Recovery and Resilience Program that supported agriculture producers impacted by the 2022 floods in developing flood management plans to build resilience and identify strategies to mitigate farm business risk. The program has worked with almost 200 producers across 23 local government areas in Queensland.

As the name indicates, we were presented with a flood of information on the impacts of floods and practices to increase resilience. Amongst the presenters were Jo Sheppard, CEO at QFF, Regional Soil Coordinator, Cameron Leckie from the University of South Queensland (USQ), independent agronomist and soil expert David Hall, Nat Parker from Airborn Insight, Meredith Barry from Tackling Regional Adversity through Connected Communities, Virginia Kelleher and Leesa Kelly from Burnett Mary Regional Group and our very own Agricultural Project Manager Marc Leman.

The event had over 40 participants from an array of sectors, including NRMs, industry groups, government bodies and private consultants.

The forum emphasised the importance of effective land management, highlighting that good management practices build resilience and help farming landscapes recover quicker from flood damage.





*Pictured: Marc Leman, Agricultural Project Manager, Healthy Land & Water, presenting on land management practices.*

## **Meat & Livestock Australia – Carbon EDGE**

Last month, we also attended the MLA Carbon EDGE workshop in Toowoomba, where we met with 20 local landholders, property managers, and NRM staff. The workshop was all about finding practical ways to reduce farm emissions and capture carbon, without hurting the bottom line of grazing businesses. It was a great chance to learn how farmers can be more environmentally friendly while keeping their operations profitable. The new 2-day workshop format saw all



participants learn more about emissions sources and cycling through the environment, international and national drivers of carbon/ sustainability policy and frameworks and working through Carbon Calculators to quantify emissions for their own enterprise. There was significant focus on existing best management practices that can help lower on-farm emissions. This included improving herd fertility, growth rates and feed quality through improved pasture and land condition, establishing and maintaining legumes, effective supplementation and managing fertilisers, energy and fuel usage as well exploring ways to sequester carbon in soils and native vegetation. In addition to receiving the latest practical information and tools, each participant was supported in developing individual Carbon/Emissions Action Plans for their enterprise.

The workshop provided a great opportunity for Drought Innovation Hub Node Managers and Sustainable Agriculture Facilitators (SAFs). Participants learned more about key concepts, capturing

data and using tools to calculate on-farm emissions and other decision support tools available to be able to assist landholders improve understanding of their own emissions. The goal was to equip them with practical skills to support landholders in reducing emissions, exploring carbon sequestration strategies, and making informed decisions about emerging environmental markets.



*Picture: Bruce Lord and Lene Knudsen (South East Queensland Drought Innovation Hub Node, based in Kilcoy and managed by Healthy Land & Water) and Lorinda Otto (Roma Drought Innovation Hub Node Manager based at Southern Queensland Landscapes).  
Workshop participants.*

## **Welcome to Ren on the Sustainable Ag Team**



Ren is a Senior Scientist and Extension Officer on the Healthy Land & Water Sustainable Agriculture Team, supporting the delivery of projects working with landholders to improve soil health for productivity and healthy landscape function.

Ren holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science with a strong focus on soil management and is passionate about fostering connectivity and collaboration among land managers, communities, and trusted knowledge specialists.



## Boonah and District Landcare gets a boost to fight threatening weeds

FRIDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2024

### THE FASSIFERN GUARDIAN

SCENIC RIM SPORT CULTURE RURAL REVIEW NOTICES TRADES & SERVICES



Healthy Land and Water project officer Leonard Ainsworth, Dover and Sons' Kent Dover, Boonah and District Landcare management committee member Fiona Hogeveen, Seqwater Senior Project Definition Planner Tim Odgers and Boonah and District Landcare Acting President Richard Johnson met at Dover and Sons in Boonah to discuss the tackling of riparian weeds. Photo: LARA HART

NATURE

### Grant furthers local Landcare's weed-tackling work

Nov 06 2024 | Updated November 6, 2024

Boonah and District Landcare is set to supercharge the riparian weed battle, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Seqwater. The grant comes as part of the [Riparian Weed Control Program](#) delivered through Healthy Land & Water and funded by Seqwater.

With an arsenal of weeds threatening local waterways such as Cat's Claw creeper, and Madeira vine, the grant will arm volunteers with impactful tools to fight these threats. Tools include battery-powered hedge trimmers, electric pruners, and mini chainsaws to knock weed infestations back down to ground level before treatment with herbicide.

To ensure these operations are conducted safely, the grant will also allow the Landcare group to stock up on essential protective gear.

The [Riparian Weed Control Program](#) is about more than clearing weeds. It's a critical effort to protect local ecosystems, preserve native habitats, and maintain the environmental health of South East Queensland's waterways.

## Holistic Management Workshop and Rachel's Farm Screening



*Pictured are Fiona Hogeveen, Major events coordinator (B&DL), Juanita and Randal Breen (Echo Valley Farm), Brian Wehlburg (Inside Outside Management), Richard Johnson, Acting President (B&DL), Vanessa Smolders and Bruce Lord (Healthy Land & Water).*

On Saturday 16 November our Sustainable Agriculture Team Lead Vanessa Smolders and Principal Scientist Bruce Lord joined farmers and agricultural enthusiasts for two great events run by Boonah and District Landcare. The Holistic Management Workshop and Rachel's Farm movie screening brought together knowledge, passion, and information to reshape the approach to land management for a more sustainable future.

Inside Outside Management Brian Wehlburg's workshop dug deep into practical farming wisdom. As a renowned Holistic Management Educator, he explored critical topics like ecosystem cycles, water dynamics, and how to strategically use animals on your property. The workshop offered valuable insights into holistic management principles that can make a real difference to the land.

The screening of "Rachel's Farm" brought a powerful narrative to life. Rachel Ward's journey from uncertain landowner to regenerative agriculture advocate resonated with many, showing how personal transformation can lead to meaningful change in farming practices.

The evening concluded with an engaging Q&A panel featuring experienced farmers and agricultural experts such as Brian Wehlburg (Inside Outside Management) and Randal and Juanita

Breen (Echo Valley Farm), who shared their real-world knowledge. Local, organic food from Scenic Wandering Foods added flavour to conversations about sustainable agriculture.

*The workshop was supported by Healthy Land & Water and the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust, under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.*

*The evening event was made possible thanks to sponsorship by Kalfresh and Aborgreen and support from Scenic Rim Regional Council and Healthy Land & Water.*



## Industry News

### Future Drought Fund - Darren Fisher

A number of drought resilience videos have been developed under the Future Drought Fund Program, funded by the Australian Government. The videos feature SEQ local graziers who have implemented new practices to improve their drought resilience and overall sustainability.

Darren Fisher has sown perennial pastures with a high legume base and the use of recycled organics in the form of manures to improve soil health and land condition on their Brisbane Valley property. Check out the video here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQEoHbqc0\\_4&t=4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQEoHbqc0_4&t=4s)

### The rains are here...and so are the fire ants!

As summer kicks in with heat, humidity, downpours, and severe storms, fire ants are proving their resilience. Unable to regulate their body temperature, fire ants adapt their nests to survive harsh conditions.

In warmer or dry weather, nests often appear as small, loose soil patches. After rain or in cooler weather, they form larger, more visible mounds.

During heavy rains or floods, fire ants can even create rafts to protect their colony. Worker ants link together, forming air pockets to keep the queen and her eggs afloat. However, fast-moving water or prolonged submersion can destroy these rafts and the ants will die.

If your area experiences significant rain or flooding, we encourage you to [look for](#) and [report](#) any suspect ants or nests within 24 hours of sighting them.



## Grants & Awards

### EnergySQ

The Energy Southern Queensland (EnergySQ) program will help you understand and manage your on-farm energy consumption and identify ways to reduce your energy spend and carbon footprint. Any farms in the Southern Downs, Western Downs, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, Lockyer Valley and



Scenic Rim Regional Council areas can participate. You can either participate individually or in a 'cluster' of farms in your local area.

Expression of interest can be submitted here <https://www.qff.org.au/projects/energy-sq/#:~:text=%EE%80%80The%20EnergySQ%20program%EE%80%81>

## **On Farm Connectivity Program**

The Australian Government's On-Farm Connectivity Program (OFCP) is here to help farmers improve on-farm connectivity and access technology-driven products to improve productivity, performance and profit on farms.

<https://am.gallagher.com/en-AU/Promotions/OFCP-eShepherd>

## **The 2025 Bob Hawke Landcare Award**

Nominations for the 2025 Bob Hawke Award closes on Saturday 31 December 2024. The Bob Hawke Landcare Award accepts nominations from individuals, groups or organisations who have demonstrated leadership and a commitment to natural resource management and sustainable land management practices. Find out more about the eligibility criteria and nominate here

<https://bobhawkelandcareaward.com.au/>

## **General Jeffery Soil Health Award – nominations are open**

Nominations for the General Jeffery Soil Health Award are now open! Check eligibility criteria and nominate here <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/soilhealthaward/>

The General Jeffery Soil Health Award is all about celebrating the people who really know how to look after our land. Named after Major General Michael Jeffery, who was Australia's first National Soils Advocate, this award recognises farmers, landcare groups and land managers who are making a real difference in soil health.

If you've been working hard to improve your soil, protect the landscape, and show others how sustainable farming works, this award is for you. It's about more than just growing crops - it's about understanding that healthy soil is the foundation of productive farming, food security, and our entire agricultural system. The award is looking for people who are leading the way in smart, sustainable land management.





## Upcoming events

**Burnett Mary Regional Group regenerative agriculture forums I Amazing host speakers confirmed**

**Various locations and dates – check description**

### **Burnett Mary Regional Group regenerative agriculture forums**

#### **North Burnett**

Wednesday **5 February 2025** - Brian Pastures Research Facility, Gayndah, North Burnett.

#### **Fraser Coast**

Thursday **6 February 2025** - Brolga Theatre, Maryborough, Fraser Coast.

More details about time and registrations will be available soon at <https://www.bmrg.org.au/events>

Some amazing host speakers have been confirmed for the forums:

- Australia's very own [Charlie Arnott](#) as host and speaker for Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management regenerative agriculture forums in February 2025.  
Charlie, an award-winning grazier and passionate advocate for regenerative farming practices, has transformed his family's 5,000-acre property in Boorowa, New South Wales, from a conventional high-input farm into a biodynamically principled, holistically managed farm in harmony with nature. Over the past 20 years, Charlie has embraced regenerative agriculture principles that align with his innate connection to the land and his commitment to producing quality food. Charlie is also the founder of the popular podcast The Regenerative Journey.
- Dr [Terry McCosker](#) OAM, a visionary in Australian agriculture, will be presenting at the regenerative agriculture forums in February 2025. As the co-founder of [RCS Australia](#), a leader in rural capacity building, and founder of CarbonLink, a pioneer in soil carbon and carbon farming, Terry's work has been pivotal in promoting ecosystem health and sustainable farming.
- Internationally acclaimed expert speaker, [Nicole Masters](#), landing on Aussie soil all the way from Montana, USA. Founder of Integrity Soils and author of 'For the Love of Soil', Nicole has been a pioneer in regenerative food systems since 1999.

<p><b>Healthy Pastures and Grazing Management workshop   Dayboro</b></p> <p><b>Dayboro Community Hall</b> 6 Bradley Street, Dayboro QLD 4521</p> <p><b>Friday 14 February 2025</b></p> <p><b>9:00 am – 2:00 pm</b></p>	<p>Learn how to manage your pasture for both productivity and ecosystem health through good grazing management principles and an understanding of your local soils and land types.</p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasture identification and indicator species.</li> <li>• Improving pasture quality and quantity.</li> <li>• Grazing management strategies including pasture rest and recovery.</li> <li>• Property planning and sustainable land management principles.</li> </ul> <p>Presenters: Bruce Lord and Vanessa Smolders.</p> <p>Morning tea and lunch will be provided.</p> <p>Register here <a href="https://hlw.org.au/events">https://hlw.org.au/events</a></p> <p>For questions contact Vanessa Smolders on <a href="mailto:vanessa.s@hlw.org.au">vanessa.s@hlw.org.au</a> or 0432 561 610.</p>
<p><b>evoke AG 2025   Brisbane</b></p> <p><b>Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre</b> Merivale Street, South Brisbane QLD 4101</p> <p><b>18-19 February 2025</b></p> <p><b>8:00 am - 5:00 pm</b></p>	<p>evokeAG 2025 will be held in Brisbane on 18-19 February.</p> <p>Bringing together thought leaders and change-makers in agriculture, food manufacturing, research, innovation, investment and policy to build connections for a more resilient, productive and profitable agricultural sector and value chain.</p> <p>Find out more and register here <a href="https://www.evokeag.com/evokeag-2025/2025-program/">https://www.evokeag.com/evokeag-2025/2025-program/</a></p>
<p><b>Healthy Pastures and Grazing Management workshop   Kureelpa</b></p> <p><b>Kureelpa Dulong Community Hall, crn.</b> Jewett Rd and Nambour-Mapleton Rd, 4560</p> <p><b>Friday 21 February 2025</b></p> <p><b>9:00 am – 2:00 pm</b></p>	<p>Learn how to manage your pasture for both productivity and ecosystem health through good grazing management principles and an understanding of your local soils and land types.</p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasture identification and indicator species.</li> <li>• Improving pasture quality and quantity.</li> <li>• Grazing management strategies including pasture rest and recovery.</li> <li>• Property planning and sustainable land management principles.</li> </ul> <p>Presenters: Bruce Lord and Vanessa Smolders.</p> <p>Morning tea and lunch will be provided.</p> <p>Register here <a href="https://hlw.org.au/events">https://hlw.org.au/events</a></p>

	For questions contact Vanessa Smolders on <a href="mailto:vanessa.s@hlw.org.au">vanessa.s@hlw.org.au</a> or 0432 561 610.
<b>Carbon Farming Workshop</b>  Boonah  <b>Tuesday 4 March 2025</b>	Date claimer, more details to follow
<b>Carbon Farming Workshop</b>  Toogoolawah  <b>Wednesday 5 March</b>	Date claimer, more details to follow

**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:

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