



+ Information for Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program Applicants

**Under the Farming in Reef Catchments
Rebate Scheme**

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1. Background

In 2016 the Queensland Government accepted in principle the recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce. The recommendations focused on achieving ambitious reductions in water pollution to meet water quality targets for a healthy Great Barrier Reef.

To support best practice in primary production and reduce polluted run-off to the Reef, funding is being provided under the Farming in Reef Catchments Rebate Scheme (the Scheme) to assist the agricultural industry to transition to improved minimum practice agricultural standards. For more information about the minimum practice agricultural standards go to: www.qld.gov.au/ReefRegulations

The Department of Environment and Science will be providing graziers, sugarcane producers and banana growers rebates of up to \$1,000 to offset the cost of obtaining professional agronomic advice. This advice must be related to nutrient and sediment management to help meet minimum practice agricultural standards and water quality targets established under the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2022 in the Great Barrier Reef regions and contribute to compliance with an agricultural ERA standards.

The rebate will only be available to commercial primary producers who obtain advice from Accredited Agricultural Advisers (AAA) listed on the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) website and approved under the Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program (the Program). These AAAs will be selected by QRIDA in line with recommendations from the Program Steering Committee (Steering Committee).

This document provides information for applicants applying to be AAAs under the Program to deliver advice to primary producers for the Scheme.

2. Objective

The objective of Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program is to provide commercial primary producers access to professional advice regarding nutrient and sediment management on their property for the Scheme.

Advice provided under the Scheme should:

1. assist commercial primary producers to move into compliance with environmentally relevant activity (ERA) standard and any standard conditions for an agricultural ERA created in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, and
2. help primary producers to contribute towards actions and deliverables outlined in Implementation table A1 of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2022.

3. About the Program

To ensure professional advice meets the requirements of the Scheme, AAAs will be accredited by QRIDA.

It is recognised that each commodity has different best practice requirements, and that specific advice may vary for an individual enterprise. Advice provided under the Scheme is required to be commodity specific, tailored advice provided at a property-level for each individual enterprise. AAAs may have sufficient qualifications to provide advice on soil conservation/erosion management and/or nutrient management. Accreditation of an agricultural adviser may be restricted to either soil or nutrient management advice depending on the adviser's relevant experience and qualifications.

Some examples of the type of advice that would be covered under the Scheme are listed below to assist you in understanding the different delivery requirements, you, as an AAA, will be providing.

Please note, the types of advice covered under the Scheme may be expanded and changed throughout the program – QRIDA and the Department of Environment and Science will keep AAAs up to date if this happens. As part of this program, invoices issued are to only be for the service related to the Scheme.

Sugarcane

Advice for sugarcane growers would help growers meet the 'Agricultural ERA standard for sugarcane cultivation - version 1' created under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, and include:

- provision of a Nitrogen and Phosphorous Budget providing balanced crop nutritional and ameliorant recommendations, which would include:
 - a map of blocks or management zones outlining the area, crop class, potential/historical yield and fertiliser application rates
 - identification of physical and chemical constraints to yield e.g. waterlogged/sodic/acidic soils,

compaction, poor yielding areas

- nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) recommendations for each block/management zone that do not exceed the amount calculated using the follow methods prescribed under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* including:
 - the method for calculating the amount of N and P to be applied to for sugarcane properties regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
 - the method for soil sampling and analysis for sugarcane properties regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.
- calculation of the whole of farm amount (for nitrogen and/or phosphorus) for each 12 month period with the application rate of fertiliser applied to the relevant agricultural property does not exceed the whole of farm amount
- the planning format enables record keeping e.g. for fertiliser application rates, soil testing etc.

Banana Growing

Advice for banana growers would help growers meet the 'Agricultural ERA standard for banana cultivation- version 1' created under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, and include:

- provision of a Nutrient Management Plan providing balanced crop nutritional and ameliorant recommendations and the plan must include:
 - leaf sampling, analysis and N and P recommendations in line with leaf analysis results
 - farm maps that clearly outline blocks or management zones to be fertilised, block area, crop class and farm yield, and
 - the planning format enables record keeping e.g. for fertiliser application rates, soil test results etc.
- maintaining inter-row cover of at least 60 per cent
- measures that minimise the release of soil to receiving waters, for example:
 - location and design of diversion banks; contour banks; surface water drainage structures designed to reduce run-off velocity (e.g. wide vegetated spoon drains); sediment traps or similar structures, or
 - design and maintenance of vegetated buffers to trap sediment prior to entering waterways, or
 - any other measure that minimises the release of soil to receiving waters.

Beef Cattle Grazing

Advice for graziers would help graziers meet the 'Agricultural ERA standard for beef cattle grazing- version 1' created under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, and include:

- improving poor or degraded land condition (e.g. implementing improved forage budgeting or soil conservation plans)
- appropriate measures to take to improve land condition and best practice implementation techniques
- property specific advice on:
 - pasture and/or stocking rate management to improve land condition
 - design, construction and maintenance of infrastructure to improve land condition (e.g. fencing, watering points and roads and tracks)
 - land condition management/improvement for areas around severe erosion or scalded areas, and/or
 - land condition management/improvement for degraded areas.

4. Responsibilities

QRIDA

QRIDA's responsibilities include:

- calling for Expression of Interest of AAAs under the Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program for the Scheme
- advertising the application processes, respond to queries in relation to the process, and resolve any

uncertainties that may arise in relation to the application process

- maintaining a registration of applicants
- maintaining the public register of AAAs on the QRIDA website
- ensuring applicants are notified of the outcomes of their application, and
- undertaking follow-up activities and communicate with AAAs.

Applicants

Applicant's responsibilities include:

- applying to be accredited as an AAA under the program for the Scheme
- providing all required information and ensure it is accurate and aligned with the requirements set out in the application documentation and these guidelines
- disclosing all information required to assess the application
- holding copies of all relevant paperwork, and
- ensuring all details are current.

5. AAA Eligibility

Eligible applicants will need to demonstrate their skill in providing the types of advice outlined in Section 3 of this document. Applicants will be asked to provide details of any of the following that apply to them:

- a) relevant industry qualifications
- b) relevant industry experience, and
- c) membership of a professional body.

Applicants must provide either:

- a) evidence of written advice or plans previously delivered to a client primary producer which relates to nutrient management/planning, sediment/erosion management, or land condition improvement within agricultural systems, or
- b) evidence of current accreditation as a Fertcare Accredited Adviser (i.e. a certificate of accreditation).

6. How to Apply

To be considered for accreditation as an AAA under the Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program for the Scheme an applicant must:

1. lodge a completed Expression of Interest application form available from QRIDA's website, and
2. if your application is successful, accept QRIDA's invitation to be an AAA and listed on a publicly available register.

7. Making an Application

Applicants are welcome to submit an Expression of Interest application form to QRIDA.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for registration on the QRIDA website at any time throughout the duration of the Scheme.

Further call outs for registration will occur if the program expands into other industries.

QRIDA will develop and maintain a database of applicants, based on their indicated industry specialisation/s and location.

There will be no payment between QRIDA and the applicant.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have met the objectives of the program and will be assessed against the Accredited Agricultural Adviser Program Criteria (the Criteria).

The application process for accreditation is summarised below:

1. lodge a completed Expression of Interest application form

2. QRIDA will provide an acknowledgement receipt
3. the Steering Committee will make a recommendation for the decision of the application
4. QRIDA decision maker will determine a successful application
5. QRIDA will advise the applicant of the decision
6. a profile for the applicant as an Accredited Agricultural Adviser will be created
7. QRIDA will update the register and place the profile on the QRIDA website.

If a Fercare Accredited Adviser, upon verification, these will be approved by the Steering Committee for QRIDA decisioning. A profile will be created and added to the website and a register will be kept.

8. Review Process

QRIDA is committed to ensuring access to appropriate avenues of review for applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their Expression of Interest application.

9. Suspending or Cancelling Membership

QRIDA will advise the AAA, in writing, where a decision has been taken to suspend or cancel accreditation. This letter will detail the reasons and justification which informed this decision.

Cancellation or suspension of the accreditation may be based on failure to continue to meet the eligibility (based on Section 5) of an AAA.

The AAA will be provided the opportunity to make written representation as to why their AAA accreditation should not be suspended or cancelled and should seek to discuss the decision in the first instance with QRIDA.

Should the AAA wish to do so, a request for an internal review of the decision can be made.

An application for an internal review is to be in writing and follows the same appeals process as a declined Expression of Interest application.

10. Dispute Resolution

QRIDA will manage complaints in relation to funding and/or administration of the program. Any complaints regarding the process should be lodged using the details outlined below:

Further information can be found at www.qrida.qld.gov.au or by:

Post GPO Box 211, Brisbane Qld 4001 **Email** FiRC@qrida.qld.gov.au **Freecall** 1800 623 946

11. Key Definitions

Fercare Accredited Adviser means an individual whom has completed the requirements as required as a Fercare Accredited Adviser as described on this website www.fertilizer.org.au/Fercare.

Land Condition means the Land Condition ABCD Framework and is a measure of health for grazing land that considers its capacity to produce useful forage, ability to infiltrate water and risk level for soil erosion (Karfs, et al., 2009).

Great Barrier Reef Region means an area shown on a map held by the department called “Great Barrier Reef catchment and river basins, Date: 23/8/2018”. For the purposes of this schedule this means catchments in the following regions:

- Wet Tropics
- Burdekin
- Mackay Whitsundays
- Fitzroy
- Burnett Mary.

Where the area is on a border, the lot on plan is 75 per cent or 20,000ha of land in the lot, within the eligible area.

Relevant professional body or association means a professional body or association that includes a membership related to primary production or specialised industry advice.

Whole of farm amount means the annual total amount of nitrogen and phosphorus fertiliser (sum of each block and management zone) calculated for each block and management zone for the relevant agricultural property. | 5