NEW REEF PROTECTION REGULATIONS PROPOSED TO COMMENCE 1 DECEMBER 2019

The Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 was passed by Parliament on 19 September 2019 with the new Reef protection regulations proposed to start on 1 December 2019.

The new Reef protection regulations (regulations) address land-based sources of water pollution to the Great Barrier Reef. This includes industrial and agricultural sources of nutrient and sediment pollution from all six Reef regions - Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions.

The new regulations will be rolled out over the next three years with regions regulated at different stages based on improved water quality management priorities.

DROP IN SESSIONS IN 2019 AND 2020

Producers are invited to attend drop-in sessions which are being held in the coming months across the Reef regions. These informal sessions are an opportunity for producers to talk with Queensland Government staff about the new requirements. Further information will be provided in due course.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BURDEKIN SUGARCANE PRODUCERS

All sugarcane producers in the Burdekin region will be required to:

# keep general records from 1 December 2019, for example fertilisers applied to land, as is currently the practice.

# comply with minimum practice agricultural standards, a copy of which is attached/included as these are applied over the next three years.

# implement a farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget as this requirement is applied over the next three years. Burdekin region must implement a farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget from 2021.

# obtain an environmental authority (permit) if commencing new or expanded cropping on more than five hectares without a cropping history from 1 June 2020.

For sugarcane producers in the Burdekin region already operating under the existing Reef protection regulations, you can find out more about what’s changed for you by reading the attached/included factsheet.

View the full description of the requirements for sugarcane

Records need to be kept to demonstrate activities are being undertaken on the property in accordance with the minimum agricultural practice standards. The government has committed to not commencing the regulation to acquire specific agricultural data such as data about fertiliser and chemical use, soil testing and crop yield.


SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR SUGAR CANE PRODUCERS
The Queensland Reef Water Quality Program funds the sugarcane Best Management Practice program and a number of other projects and initiatives to support agriculture and improve the quality of water entering waterways.

The **Farming in Reef Catchments Rebate Scheme** provides a one-off rebate of up to $1,000 to eligible commercial agricultural producers in Reef regions. The rebate is to help offset the costs of obtaining professional and agronomic advice for nutrient and sediment management to meet the new Reef protection regulations.

BPS members are eligible to access free app, “Agtrix Farming”, to keep records electronically to meet reef protection regulations.

Les Elphinstone
Manager KCGO