

Question on Notice
No. 1713
Asked on 22 October 2019

Mr R Katter asked Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to recent statements by the Premier to Alan Jones that any options would be considered for drought mitigation, triggering interest from desperate cattle producers in the Mulga Lands—

Will the Premier take immediate action to provide a cost effective means of assistance to producers and eliminate any requirement for permits or notifications and code compliance for ‘Fodder Harvesting’ in drought declared areas, effective immediately and to remain until this drought officially breaks?

ANSWER:

In accordance with our public commitments the amendments my government made to the vegetation management framework in 2018 allow landholders to harvest mulga and other species as stock feed.

The Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing Fodder Harvesting (the code) provides a streamlined, self-assessable pathway to harvest fodder. Landholders are only required to notify the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) of their intention to harvest fodder, and then comply with the code.

Notifications can be completed online in about 15 minutes, free of charge, at any time. Since the revised fodder harvesting code came into effect in March 2018, I am advised that there have been 646 notifications made covering 279,051 hectares. Of these, there are 112 lots that have multiple notifications, including one lot with 20 notifications.

If a landholder wants to go beyond the scope of this code, they can lodge a development application. To date, one such application has been approved. None have been refused.

The independent drought program review by Ruth Wade and Charles Burke identified community misunderstanding about what is allowed under the code. In response, the government is providing simplified messaging and information to clarify the management of vegetation to provide fodder for stock.

DNRME, together with the Quilpie, Bulloo and Murweh shire councils, ran three pilot fodder harvesting workshops in Quilpie on Tuesday, 22 October 2019; Thargomindah on Wednesday, 30 October 2019; and Charleville on Thursday, 7 November 2019. There has also been interest from the Paroo, Blackall-Tambo and Balonne councils to collaborate with DNRME in delivering future workshops in early 2020.

If landholders require assistance in understanding how vegetation management laws apply to their property, they are encouraged to call 135VEG (135 834).