



Land access – can agriculture compete?

Queensland farmers supply some of the world's best food and fibre – but can our state's industry hold its own against mining and other land competitors?

This is the question AgForce Queensland will be putting to delegates when the broadacre group hosts the Landscape Competition Forum at the 2011 AgForce state conference – 'What will we eat? ... making food security the global priority' on the Sunshine Coast in September.

AgForce president Brent Finlay said ongoing access to productive agricultural land is one of the biggest challenges facing Queensland agriculture with the mineral and resources boom, spiralling leasehold rent costs and onerous government legislation such as Vegetation Management clouding the future of farming.

"Mining is an important part of Queensland's economic prosperity, but this must be balanced against the need to protect food and fibre supply and ultimately food security," Mr Finlay said.

"The introduction of the state's Strategic Cropping Land legislation has shown the government's acknowledgement of the importance of agriculture, but only recently the government also disappointed producers and small town communities by prohibiting exploration leases and mining within a two-kilometre radius of towns with populations of more than 1000 people.

"This goes to show there is still a long way to go before our industry is recognised as an equal player on this massive playing field of Queensland."

Mr Finlay said AgForce has invited leaders in agriculture and agribusiness to discuss the vital issue of landscape competition. Australian Country Choice's David Foote will share his experiences with coal seam gas exploration on his company's properties and Santos Sustainability General Manager James Purtill will speak about his company's efforts to co-exist successfully with producers.

"AgForce has also secured Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies Hon Tim Mulherin to answer delegate's questions about the Queensland Government's Strategic Cropping Land legislation."

The two-day 'What will we eat? ... making food security the global priority' conference is on 15-16 September, and is preceded by a local industry tour on 14 September. The popular social program includes a welcome function, conference dinner, and a business breakfast that discusses the importance of technology in modern agriculture.

To view a full conference program and to register, visit www.agforceqld.org.au > Events > AgForce State Conference.

For comment, contact Brent Finlay on 0414 415 361 or AgForce events manager Wendy Allen on AgForce media and communications: Jane Paterson 0418 733 102 or patersonj@agforceqld.org.au Grace Reck 0427 626 853 or reckg@agforceqld.org.au

Who is AgForce? AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture's social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.