



Spend CSG money on science not ads

State farm group AgForce says a new media blitz by Coal Seam Gas companies is proof the gas sector is very worried about a big swing in public opinion against their industry.

AgForce CEO Robert Walker said his organisation and its members aren't anti-CSG, but AgForce is opposed to the 'expansion-at-all-costs' approach taken by gas companies with the encouragement of the Queensland government.

"This campaign is an attempt to deflect attention from the real issue – that there is no scientific evidence to suggest CSG exploration and extraction won't harm water reserves, boost salinity levels or threaten the longer term viability of some of our best food-producing land," Mr Walker said.

"No one is denying CSG companies will make money, some of which may end up in local communities but a lot will end up in state government hands as royalties. Our question remains at what expense to the environment and longer term agricultural production? What shape will our cropping and grazing country be in after the CSG companies are gone in 30-40 years?"

Mr Walker said he is heartened some farmers have struck adequate management agreements with gas companies, but there are just as many who feel threatened and fearful of a future clouded by unwanted daily intrusions into their farming operations, homes and lives.

"There are only 4,000 wells in the ground across the Surat basin at the moment – multiply that by 10 by 2020 and you get a sense of the spaghetti of infrastructure that will face farmers and local communities," Mr Walker said.

"The gas industry's own lobby group, APPEA, has freely admitted that many companies have a poor record of dealing fairly with landowners, so it's going to take a lot more than a few glitzy TV ads to tidy up their image."

AgForce believes the best way by far to build trust with agriculture and community members are to prove CSG operations are safe.

"Gas companies have a right to try to boost their profile, but what a shame they're wasting millions of dollars on an advertising campaign instead of spending it on valuable research to generate some real science on this industry's impacts."

**For comment, contact 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.