

Reef regulation audit checklist -grazing, cane and new or expanded commercial cropping ✓

Reef regulation record keeping requirements can be audited by a Reef compliance officer from the Qld Dept of Environment and Science DES.

All commercial **cane farmers and beef cattle graziers** across five Reef catchments. Excludes eastern Cape York.

Effective from 1 December 2019, general records detailing the date, location and application rate of **any** agricultural chemical, mill mud or fertiliser used on grazing or cane land needs to be made within three days of application. **After 17 March 2022**, ag chemical records are no longer required for Reef regulations.

Records are to be kept for six years and made available for inspection by an authorised compliance officer, if requested. Any fertiliser purchase tax invoices and bag tag, contractor receipts, soil test results and tailored advice (*defined as 'relevant primary documents'*) need to be kept in paper or electronic form. Other business records or documents do not have to be produced during an audit. Ideally keep '*relevant primary documents*' separate from business/farm or personal documents.

General records must include:

- name of the producer (i.e. the person(s) carrying out the activity)
- name of person making the record
- company name (if applicable)
- property address/es
- postal address
- farm identification number/s (if applicable)
- a list of the cadastral lots included in all the farms within the agricultural enterprise
- records of fertiliser or mill mud/mill ash applied to land:
 - location of each application (e.g. farm number with block name or management zone)
 - date of each application
 - fertiliser product name, application rate (kg/ha, L/ha or tonnes/ha for mill mud/mill ash) and the percentage of nitrogen and phosphorus in the product.
- Section 25 of the *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, administered by DES, requires a map or diagram where soil tests are conducted and where fertilisers or soil conditioners were applied and a description of the method used to apply these products <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0155#sec.25>



Location of audits conducted by authorised compliance officers

Negotiate a mutual meeting place, either on-farm or off-farm to produce required records. Records can also be provided by mail or electronically.

An authorised officer can enter the place where the regulated activity takes place, when open for business and at a reasonable time. This does not include access to a residence. Ensure the authorised officer has an identity card and adheres to farm visitor obligations such as biosecurity, vehicle hygiene and farm visitor registers, etc.

A third party, such as an advisor, industry representative or solicitor can attend the audit to assist with understanding the record-keeping requirements of the ERA Standard.

Advise the authorised officer if access to records is not possible because of a 'reasonable excuse' such as priority farm obligations, quarantine, biosecurity, COVID or if required records are currently with the accountant.

If uncertain about certain questions, a person has the right to silence and only needs to provide name and address, until they speak to their lawyer.

Record-keeping for **beef cattle graziers** as per Minimum Practice ERA Standard.

Require evidence of an **annual ground cover report -conducted on 30 September each year**. For example, use Long Paddock FORAGE ground cover and regional comparison ground cover reports.

Beef cattle graziers with poor (less than 50 per cent ground cover) or degraded (less than 20 per cent ground cover) land condition require measures to halt or improve land condition and keep a written record of implemented measures, date and (paddock) location. Measures to minimise runoff include adjusting stocking rates, wet season spelling, managing preferential grazing, managing erosion risk along linear infrastructure, minimising gullies and preventing stock access to erodible areas.

Keep records and any primary documents for six years.

Records can be any format and including on a property map.

Grazing practice standards and associated written records of measures commenced 1 December 2020 – Burdekin; 1 December 2021 – Fitzroy; December 2022 - Wet Tropics, Mackay Whitsunday and Burnett Mary. Not applicable to eastern Cape York.



Record-keeping for **cane farmers** as per Minimum Practice ERA Standard.

- **1 December 2019 – Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday.**
- **1 December 2022 – Fitzroy and Burnett Mary.**

- Use a prescribed **soil test** method (within 12 months prior to fertilising a new plant cane crop or crop cycle) to calculate the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus fertiliser to be applied to each block annually. Record the test date, mapped location and dominant soil type sampled across the block or zone.
- Do not **apply** more than the calculated amount of fertiliser, using the prescribed method. Record application date and a map of block or zone.
- No ground-based, broadcast fertiliser application of nitrogen. Excludes banded application on the stool and incorporated soil conditioners into fallow.
- No broadcast application of phosphorus, unless incorporated into soil within 3 days or preparing for a plant crop.
- Have appropriate sediment control and water runoff measures (eg. recycle pits, spoon drains, constructed wetlands, vegetated buffers, contour banks, diversion banks, etc).
- Fallow blocks must have a cover crop or trash.
- Prepare a **farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget** using the prescribed methodology for cane (e.g. Six Easy Steps). Within the previous 12 months, conduct soil tests and calculate the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus for each block. Record kg/ha for each block.
- Fertiliser application rate to not exceed calculated amount or whole of farm budget.
- Records to be made within three days and kept for six years, including fertiliser invoices, contractor reports and soil tests.

Cane farmers require records for Cane Farm Nitrogen and Phosphorus Budget

Commenced 1 December 2021 – Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday
To commence 1 December 2022 – Fitzroy and Burnett Mary

- A farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget must contain:-
 - Farm map with block boundaries and identifiers.
 - Area of each block and whole farm (ha).
 - Crop class (plant, 1st or 2nd ratoon) and fallow areas.
 - Management zone boundaries, if defined.
 - Any physical or soil chemical constraints to yield per block or zone.
 - Soil tests as per prescribed methodology for cane.
 - Nitrogen application rates per block each harvest period and annual calculation of whole farm nitrogen amount (kg).



- Phosphorus application rates per block and calculation of whole farm phosphorus amount each annual harvest period or whole crop cycle (kg).
- Amount of N and P applied must not exceed the whole farm budget.
- Actual yield achieved previous harvest and historical yields (tonnes/cane/ha).
- Developed and verified by an ‘appropriate person’ or by a person accredited under a recognised program such as Smartcane BMP. Review every five years.
- Requires annual review by recalculating whole N and P amounts and a map update.

Property plan records for ERA13A Regulatory Standard for **new or expanded commercial cropping and horticulture across all six Reef catchments – commenced on 1 June 2021**

Applies to new cultivation areas greater than five hectares and without a cropping history, where a **commercial crop** is grown, harvested and sold off-farm for a fee or reward. Excludes fodder or hay grown for own livestock, forage crops grazed in situ or for pasture improvement, forestry or hydroponics. After 1 June 2021, new or expanded **commercial cropping** and horticulture areas must initially apply for an environmental authority (permit) and **update the property plan annually by 1 November each year**. The plan to be provided to the Department of Science (administering authority) on request and within the timeframe stipulated.

The property plan of the new cropping activity area must include

1. Location
2. Activity area(s) within the location
3. Irrigation features
4. Natural waterway(s)
5. Receiving waterway(s) – any waters into which the activity drains into.
6. Measures and structures to minimise nutrient, sediment and irrigation water being released into receiving waters.
7. New or expanded cane areas require a Farm Nitrogen and Phosphorus Budget.

AgForce Policy on Reef Regulations

- AgForce opposes mandatory Reef regulations.
- AgForce seeks to promote best practice and innovation through voluntary guidelines and an incentives scheme.
- State Government’s Reef regulations impose onerous record-keeping and regulated Standards on commercial Reef farmers, without substantiated evidence that Reef health will benefit at all.
- AgForce continues to strive for evidence-based science for Reef and government policy.
- AgForce is providing this summary of Reef regulation audit requirements as a member service, while AgForce continues the long-term quest for fair laws for farmers.