

# + Prime focus



South West Queensland producer, Ed Wade (left) pictured with QRIDA Regional Area Manager for the Maranoa and South West, Terry Pulsford.

## Young producer secures future in farming with a First Start Loan

Goats, a 35,000 cubic metre dam, exclusion fencing, and a hay shed are securing the future of Ed Wade’s family farming enterprise west of Charleville. Secluded among the mulga, Ed, a fifth-generation producer, runs a goat and beef enterprise on his parents’ property, ‘Ravenscourt’.

After being forced out of the sheep industry due to drought and the prevalence of wild dogs, the Wades made the decision to diversify into goats.

“We always believed in having a dual enterprise whether that was cattle and sheep or cattle and something else. In the dry years, we realised our country probably wasn’t always going to be suited to purely cattle, so we looked at what options we had,” Ed said.

“As the goat industry grew and developed, we decided that was the avenue we’d go into.”

Ed used a First Start Loan from QRIDA to complement his family’s succession planning by improving the sustainability of the enterprise through water, fencing, and shed infrastructure.

“The First Start Loan has helped fund on-farm development projects that allow us to run the goats and cattle more efficiently,” he said.

“The exclusion fencing has helped with reducing the impact of wild dogs on the livestock, building a dam has improved our water supply for when we are faced with the next drought and the shed will allow us to stock hay and protect it from the weather.”

Regional Area Manager for the Maranoa and South West, Terry Pulsford, was able to help Ed with his initial enquiry and support him through the application process.

“We approached Terry, our local QRIDA Regional Area Manager, and I found the process extremely simple.

It was refreshing to get someone who understood what we were talking about and was able to support us in the application.”

Looking to the future, Ed hopes to continue with his exclusion fencing plans using the funds from his initial investment.

“Since we’ve done the initial exclusion fencing, we’re looking to expand further with more fencing which we will fund through the initial investment. With how the market is today [November 2022], it has essentially allowed us to plan into the future with a broad income stream,” he said.

First Start Loans provide up to \$2 million for aspiring young producers to buy their first block of land, buy into the family farm or achieve stand alone viability.

For more information on First Start Loans visit [qrda.qld.gov.au](http://qrda.qld.gov.au).

To find out more, watch Ed Wade’s video story on QRIDA’s website by scanning the QR code.



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To update your details email [contact\\_us@qrda.qld.gov.au](mailto:contact_us@qrda.qld.gov.au) or call 1800 623 946.

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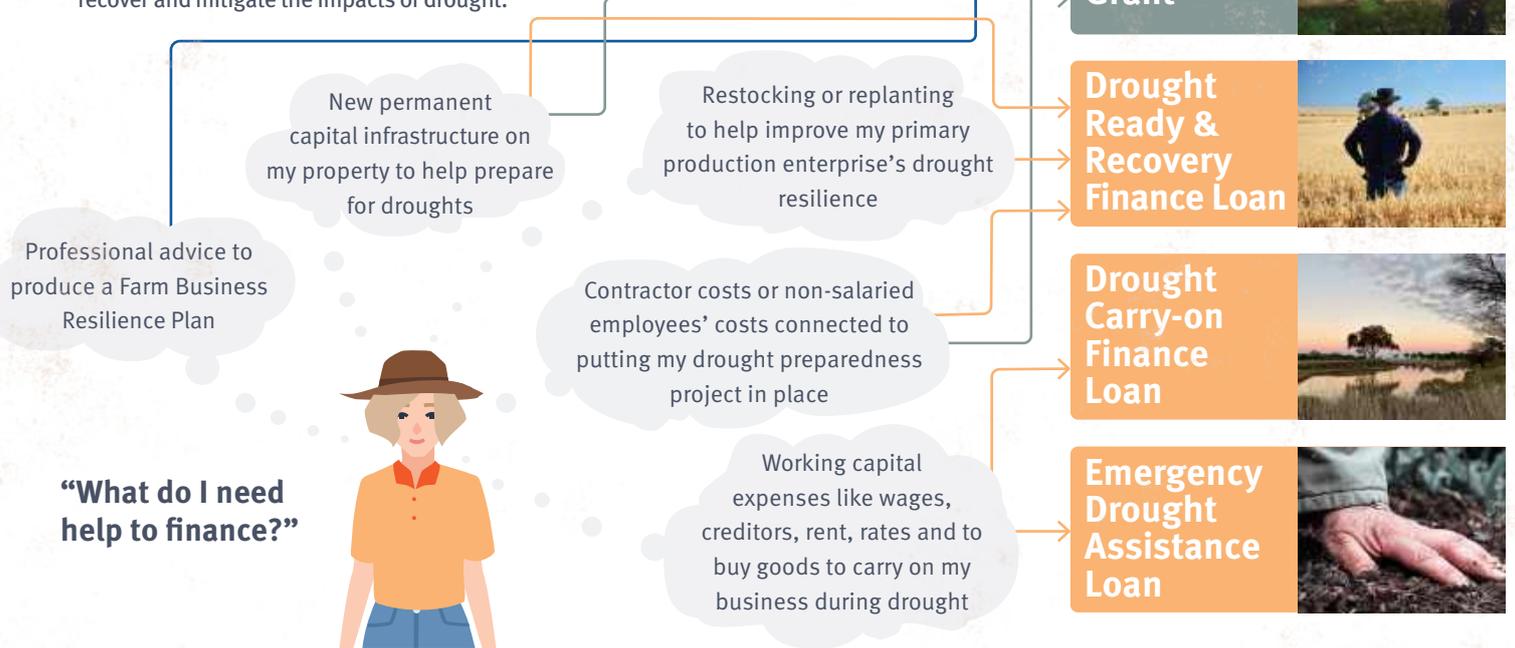
## Which drought assistance is best suited to your needs?

While a significant portion of the state has experienced rainfall in recent months, the prospect of future drought conditions is always something primary producers need to be prepared for.

QRIDA administers a range of Queensland Government drought programs providing varying amounts of financial support to help primary producers prepare, manage, recover and mitigate the impacts of drought.

But which assistance best suits your needs?

Use the graphic below to help determine which product may be best for you and then scan the QR code to go to QRIDA's website or phone **1800 623 946** to find out more about the assistance available, eligibility requirements and how to apply.



## Reflect and review your farm finances

As we look optimistically into 2023, it's an opportune time for producers to reflect and review their financial situation under the changing economic environment. If one of your new year's resolutions is to get back on top of your farm finances, then QRIDA's Farm Business Analysis Assistance (FBAA), could be the ideal program for your business.

QRIDA's Manager for the Farm Debt Restructure Office, Daniel Elder, says the trifecta of good seasons, great prices and phenomenal interest rates has started to give back some of the tremendous gains, reducing the margin for aggressive expansion and development.

"Decisions now require a vastly more measured approach when we start to account for rising input costs and the uncharted waters of global markets post pandemic.

"Many countries are rethinking how and who they do business with, which could present real challenges for producers into the future," he said.

Producers who are experiencing financial distress can be connected with free, independent, and expert advice through the FBAA program to review their business and receive recommendations to improve their financial viability.

As of 31 December 2022, FBAA has assessed over \$224 million in liabilities, allowing producers to reassess their position and have more productive conversations with their current or prospective lenders. Of these liabilities we have seen \$50 million used to restructure or refinance, \$62 million to maintain current lender support and \$25 million to rationalise or exit the industry.



Manager for the Farm Debt Restructure Office, Daniel Elder, encourages producers to contact QRIDA to find out more about FBAA.

Dan encourages producers to start the conversation before it gets too late.

"If you're experiencing financial distress or concerned about the future financials of your enterprise, start the conversation now with your lender or financial advisor. You can also contact QRIDA directly to find out more about the FBAA program," he said.

Scan the QR code to find out more about FBAA on QRIDA's website or phone **1800 623 946**.



## Producers, businesses back on their feet after flooding

*Twelve months on from the devastating South East Queensland rainfall and flooding events, producers like dairy farmer Luke Stock and other businesses in the affected areas are getting back to business with the help of disaster assistance from QRIDA.*

Glenore Grove dairy farmer Luke Stock (pictured below) was 800 kilometres away from his property when the heavy rain started.

"I was on the phone to Dad trying to get as much of our infrastructure back up on the ridge and out of floodwater. We got 600 millimetres of rain in two days, floodwaters inundated three quarters of the farm, and we essentially became an island here," he said.

As the floodwaters receded, the devastating damage was revealed.

"All our fences got washed away, we had to rebuild all of our cow laneways and driveway," he said.

The family's operation usually produces around 600,000 litres of milk annually, but the flooding put a pause on production.

"To get the cows back onto the farm it took us 20 days, but to be honest full production really takes anywhere from four to six months," he said.

Luke knew he would need assistance to recover from the economic blow, so he was relieved when he learnt Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants of up to \$75,000 were available for eligible primary producers from QRIDA.

"We received the initial grant of \$15,000 and straight off the bat, we used that to purchase hay. With the subsequent application, we've totally rebuilt all of our cow laneways and we've done full repairs to all of our driveway and roads so we can have good access to milk tankers daily."

Ten months on, the Stock Farm is back to business as usual.

"We've been 30 per cent down month-on-month in production, and it's really only probably the last six to eight weeks we've started to get back to where we were prior to the floods," he said.

Now Luke is focussing on building greater flood resilience on his farm.

In the event of another disaster, Luke recommends all primary producers be on the front foot.

"I would encourage farmers to be on the lookout for whatever assistance is available from QRIDA and if you look at our situation, it's been nothing but positive," he said.

*QRIDA administers financial assistance to disaster affected primary producers, businesses and non-profit organisations under the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).*



### Be prepared for future disasters

QRIDA Natural Disasters and Drought Manager Sheree Finney (pictured above) encourages primary producers, business owners and non-profit organisations to get prepared for the next disaster now.

"Keep your eye on the weather and take photos of your property and infrastructure before and after damage," she said.

"After things calm down a little bit, keep an eye on [qrda.qld.gov.au](http://qrda.qld.gov.au) because anything we have available will be there. You can also call us on **1800 623 946** to receive answers to any questions you have."

### Disaster recovery

Find out more about the disaster assistance currently available from QRIDA and the relevant application closing dates by selecting the disaster recovery link on QRIDA's website.

Watch Luke Stock's video story on QRIDA's website by scanning the QR code.



# + Regional update

## Our team in regional Queensland, helping yours...

QRIDA has a network of 11 Regional Area Managers (RAMs) based throughout Queensland who can provide you with the latest local knowledge and expertise on our programs and services.

With offices based in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cloncurry, Emerald (with an office in Longreach), Innisfail, Kingaroy, Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma, Toowoomba and Townsville, we've got Queensland covered.

In each newsletter we feature an update from three of our RAMs. To find details of your local RAM, contact us on **1800 623 946** or visit the 'your region' page on our website where you can search by region or postcode.



**Cynthia Godden Burnett**

For many producers in my region, last year's flooding events are still impacting their operations. QRIDA has grants of up to \$75,000 to assist with eligible clean-up and reinstatement activities. All application closing dates for this assistance are detailed on our website.

With a reprieve from heavy rainfall lately, it's been great to talk to more producers about how they can prepare for the next drought. QRIDA has a range of drought loans and grants available to help producers implement drought resilience activities like a new dam or fodder storage facility.

With rural land prices currently at a high, it is difficult for budding producers to work in agriculture. QRIDA's First Start Loans can give aspiring primary producers concessional finance of up to \$2 million to help them start their farming careers. Planning early and reviewing eligibility for financial assistance could make all the difference in purchasing your first block of land or carrying out succession plans.

Give me a call and we can meet on-farm to discuss how QRIDA can help you.

### Talk with Cynthia

☎ 0417 778 317

✉ [cynthia.godden@qrida.qld.gov.au](mailto:cynthia.godden@qrida.qld.gov.au)



**Mark Barrett**  
Wide Bay & Fraser Coast

As a result of the disaster declared events of early 2022, the last 12 months have been largely spent helping clients with disaster applications. Due to ongoing rain across the region and the high demand on contractors, some producers are still feeling the impacts of the disaster event and haven't fully recovered. For more information on the assistance available, including closing dates, visit QRIDA's website.

Outside of disaster recovery, producers have been taking advantage of the drought grants and loans administered by QRIDA to improve their on-farm infrastructure. Many producers have been investing in water infrastructure upgrades to boost the sustainability of their enterprise.

I can meet with you to discuss your individual situation to see how we can help you. Don't self-assess. I can answer your questions about eligibility and walk you through the application process. Give me a call and let's see how we can help you.

### Talk with Mark

☎ 0417 775 547

✉ [mark.barrett@qrida.qld.gov.au](mailto:mark.barrett@qrida.qld.gov.au)



**Sam Spina**  
Far North

Now we're back into the swing of things for the new year, many producers in my region are thinking about their expansion plans.

I've met with a number of growers lately who're looking to use QRIDA's Sustainability Loans to buy more land to expand their existing property or take the next step in buying the family farm outright from family members after an initial First Start Loan with QRIDA.

Sustainability Loans are a good option to use to achieve these expansion goals – with loan amounts of up to \$1.3 million, they help producers invest in activities that aim to increase the viability and profitability of their farming business.

In light of recent heavy rainfall in parts of Queensland, I remind producers that should disaster events occur in coming weeks or months, QRIDA loan and grant assistance may become available. All details of assistance will be included on QRIDA's website so it's a good idea to look there for more information at the time.

Give me a call if you want to find out more.

### Talk with Sam

☎ 0429 497 757

✉ [sam.spina@qrida.qld.gov.au](mailto:sam.spina@qrida.qld.gov.au)

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