

+ Prime focus

Far North Queensland citrus growers, Oscar and Dwaine Bugno, used a Sustainability Loan from QRIDA to purchase a new computerised packing machine.



Growers' expansion comes to fruition with new packing machine

Farming is in the blood for Oscar Bugno and his family, who have been farming for more than 50 years on their land 10 kilometres west of Dimbulah in the 'food bowl' region of Far North Queensland.

Together with his wife Giannina and son Dwaine, Oscar runs a thriving citrus operation with over 6,000 lemon, 2,500 grapefruit and 850 lime trees under two brand names – Bug's Citrus and JDL.

"When Dwaine returned to the farm after completing an electrical apprenticeship, we started producing more fruit and it became clear that we needed to expand the business," Oscar said.

Oscar and Dwaine looked into ways they could expand and, having accessed a loan from the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) previously, Oscar contacted their local QRIDA Regional Area Manager, Sam Spina.

"One of our shortfalls was our packing machine, at that time it was over 20 years old. So, we met with Sam about using a Sustainability Loan to put in a new machine," Oscar said.

Sam met with the Bugnos on their farm to talk through the application process and explain the business plan and other documents they needed to submit with their application.

Installation of the new packing machine has greatly improved the business' efficiencies, with Dwaine saying the machine has a computerised grading system which removes the need for the grading process to be manually completed.

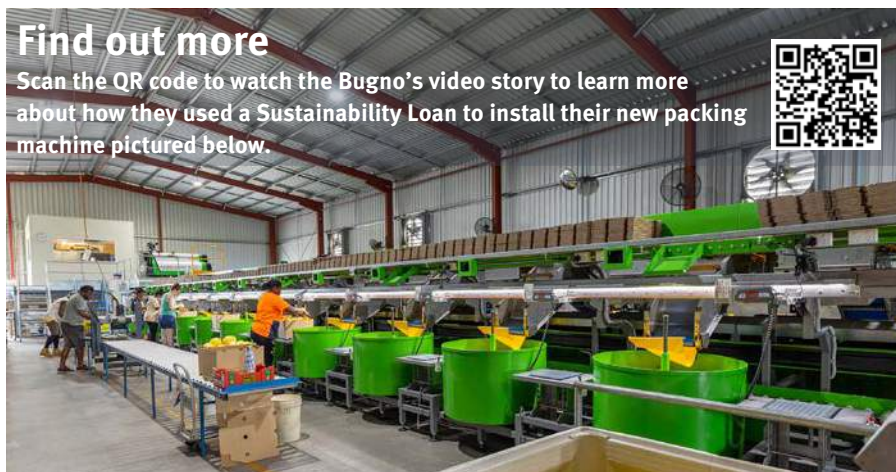
"With electronic weights and an extra eight bins for the fruit, we've made the process more efficient and allowed more fruit to be processed, graded, and packed quicker than before – saving both time and money," Dwaine said.

"The machine's really helped because we've been able to move more produce through to meet our market demands."

QRIDA offers Sustainability Loans up to \$1.3 million for primary producers looking to invest in the latest infrastructure or technology to create a viable future for their farming business.

Find out more

Scan the QR code to watch the Bugno's video story to learn more about how they used a Sustainability Loan to install their new packing machine pictured below.



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To update your details call **1800 623 946** or email contact_us@qrda.qld.gov.au



More than \$276 million administered by QRIDA in 2022-2023

We are proud of the QRIDA team for their dedicated work over the past financial year helping to foster productive and sustainable Queensland regions and rural communities through the delivery of financial assistance.

Over the past 12 months, QRIDA has administered an array of programs supporting different initiatives across the state. From drought mitigation to flood recovery, boosting accessible tourism, to purchasing zero-emission vehicles, QRIDA has approved 9,988 applications for financial assistance totalling more than \$276 million.

Here are some of our financial milestones from the 2022-2023 financial year. We're looking forward to continuing administering financial support for Queenslanders over the next financial year. Make sure you visit our website and socials to find out what we get up to!

2022-2023 Financial Year Milestones*



9,988

total applications approved



\$276.1m

total funding approved



First Start Loans

75 applications approved for \$61.5M



Sustainability Loans

30 applications approved for \$13.2M



Drought support

190 applications approved for \$6.8M



Disaster recovery

6,387 applications approved for \$124.8M



**Statistics current as at 30 June 2023*

RED Grants invest \$3.9 million in QLD ag

The fifth round of the Queensland Government's Rural Economic Development (RED) Grants has given a \$3.9 million boost to 24 Queensland agricultural businesses and created up to 215 direct, long-term jobs.

Each of the successful applicants will receive up to \$200,000 to complete shovel-ready projects that stimulate economic and employment growth in Queensland's agricultural industry.

Activities being funded under this latest round of grants are diverse and range from a meat snacks processing line and livestock supplement manufacturing, to high-tech nursery production and horticultural produce cooling, processing, and packaging facilities.

Funding for a sixth round of RED Grants has been allocated for the 2023-2024 financial year which will include a focus on supporting Indigenous-owned agribusinesses and projects aimed at low-emissions agriculture. Keep an eye on QRIDA's website and social media channels for details about when the next round of grants will open.



Grant gives berries a boost

General Manager of Berry North in the Atherton Tablelands, Martin Inderbitzin (pictured above), says the RED Grant his business received under the fourth round of the program to help fund the capital cost of optical grading equipment will boost their business' efficiencies. "This technology will not only greatly improve the efficiency of the packing facility function but will translate into improved product output and enable Berry North to expand their berry production," he said.

QRIDA administers RED Grants on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Program updates



Queensland Zero Emission Vehicle Rebate Scheme

This rebate scheme was updated from 1 July 2023, with rebates of up to \$6,000 now being available for eligible applicants who have purchased a new Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV). Eligibility criteria applies.



Carbon Farming Advice Scheme

Applications for this scheme, which provides farmers and other landholders with up to \$10,000 towards the cost of carbon farming advice received from a Land Restoration Fund Approved Adviser, opened on 17 July 2023.

More information

For more details on these programs, including full eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit QRIDA's website and search for the program names in the search bar.

CQ graziers build farm resilience with drought support



As they install poly pipe at their property in Dingo, west of Rockhampton, graziers Kate and Garrett Kirk (pictured above) reflect on the toughest time they've experienced in their 20 years of farming. "The 2019 drought, it was, well the worst drought we'd ever seen," Garrett said. Kate recalled she and Garrett were forced to drastically reduce breeder numbers due to the lack of feed.

"We ended up production-feeding some of our good quality young heifers in a feed lot and we were feeding out a lot of loose licks," Kate said.

As the Kirks recovered from the drought, they knew it would not be long before the next dry would come, so they contacted QRIDA to find out what financial assistance was available to help build the drought resilience of their farm business.

In addition to poly pipe, the Kirks are now installing tanks, troughs, and additional water points with the help of a Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loan and a Drought Preparedness Grant from QRIDA, which will enable them to expand into goats.

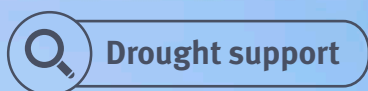
"Primarily we are beef producers, but we see this as a good opportunity to utilise some underused country and it's a good second income stream for us," she said.

The Kirks were glad to get help from their local QRIDA Regional Area Manager, John Metelli (pictured below with Kate), throughout the drought loan and grant application process.

"We've had a long-standing relationship with our QRIDA Regional Area Manager now and we feel that he really understands our business, so that makes it a lot easier," Kate said.

QRIDA has grants of up to \$50,000 and loans of up to \$250,000 that can help primary producers prepare, manage, recover, and mitigate the impacts of drought.

QRIDA is administering the Drought Preparedness Grant Scheme and Drought Ready and Recovery Finance Loans on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.



Find out how QRIDA's range of drought assistance programs could help make your primary production business more drought resilient by searching for 'drought support' on QRIDA's website.

To find out more about the Kirks' story, scan the QR code to watch their video story.



+ 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.



John Metelli
Capricornia

I've been in front of the camera recently, taking part in QRIDA's client story with Central Queensland graziers Kate and Garrett Kirk, as featured on page 3 of this edition. It was inspiring to see how these once drought-affected primary producers are getting on the front-foot to mitigate the impacts of the next dry.

With much of the Capricornia region experiencing a reprieve from drought conditions, now is the perfect time for primary producers to prepare a Farm Business Resilience Plan and use our grants and loans to undertake on-farm improvements to enhance the drought preparedness of their property.

I've also been busy hitting the road and holding pop-up offices around the region to meet one-on-one with primary producers to discuss how QRIDA's First Start Loans, Sustainability Loans, and drought assistance programs could help them take their operation to the next level. Would you like me to hold a pop-up office in your town or visit you on-farm? Give me a call and we can arrange a meeting.

Talk with John

☎ 0417 775 245

✉ john.metelli@qrida.qld.gov.au



Tegan McBride
Central Coast & Whitsundays

I'm pleased to share that the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme is now open for applications on QRIDA's website. This scheme provides primary producers and other landholders with up to \$10,000 towards the costs of carbon farming advice received from a Land Restoration Fund Approved Adviser.

Carbon farming provides an opportunity for farmers to diversify their income through improving their land management practices. In turn, this can improve both productivity and environmental outcomes for producers. Carbon farming can be complex though so it's important to get expert advice on how it could work for you.

Applications for this assistance close on 17 December 2023, unless funds are fully allocated before this date. So if you're interested in learning more about the grant, now's the time contact me or visit QRIDA's website for more information.

If you'd like to arrange a time to meet on-farm about this or other assistance from QRIDA please give me a call.

Talk with Tegan

☎ 0427 770 147

✉ tegan.mcbride@qrida.qld.gov.au



Sam Fryer
North West & Gulf

G'day, I'm your new Regional Area Manager for the North West and Gulf covering Hughenden, Cloncurry, Winton, the Gulf, Mt Isa and everywhere in between.

I bring to QRIDA a wealth of knowledge of Australia's beef industries including experience in the Gulf of Australia, Northern Territory and Southern Queensland. Growing up on a family cattle property in North Queensland I understand the region's adversities, seasons and conditions.

In my new role as Regional Area Manager, I'm looking forward to engaging with producers and helping them develop and improve their primary production business with the range of financial assistance available through QRIDA.

If you'd like to know about any of QRIDA's grants and loans, get in touch with me.

We can chat over the phone or arrange a time for me to visit you on-farm to discuss your business needs.

Talk with Sam

☎ 0427 007 240

✉ sam.fryer@qrida.qld.gov.au

Disclaimer: the information provided by QRIDA is general information only and has been prepared without taking into account your individual objectives, financial situation and needs. Before applying for financial assistance or making any decision, you should obtain and read a copy of the relevant program guidelines and seek advice from your legal, business and financial advisers to determine your eligibility for, and the terms of the relevant financial assistance. You should note that past grants of financial assistance are not a reliable indicator of eligibility for future grants of financial assistance. The information provided by QRIDA has been taken from sources believed to be reliable however QRIDA does not represent that the information is accurate or complete and it should not be relied upon as such. QRIDA does not assume any common law duty of care towards you in providing the information and QRIDA will not be liable for any loss or damage however caused (including by the negligence of QRIDA), suffered or incurred by you in connection with information provided by QRIDA.