



## Reef region graziers to help set industry benchmark

More than 400 reef region graziers will soon be surveyed to gauge how effective their on-farm practices are in protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) will this month begin recording the land management practices used by graziers, and the data collected will be used to develop an annual industry benchmark for the governments' ReefPlan project.

ReefPlan is a joint state and federal government plan that aims to encourage farm management systems that minimise erosion and nutrient runoff into reef waters.

AgForce Reef Rescue principle project officer Marie Vitelli said the information collected in the survey will be strictly confidential and is an important opportunity for graziers to demonstrate to government they are good land stewards.

"The majority of graziers are already adopting best management practices voluntarily so we hope they will welcome the opportunity to share their knowledge on effective grazing practices with the local DEEDI grazing extension staff."

"The information used will go towards evaluating how well the industry is fairing in regards to meeting targets set by ReefPlan, a joint \$375M Australian and Queensland Government initiative which aims to improve the quality of water in the Great Barrier Reef through improved land management practices."

DEEDI Management Practice Adoption manager Kev McCosker said industry is already well on its way to achieving current Reef Plan targets to have 50 per cent of graziers improving their land management practices and at least 50 per cent end of dry season ground cover by 2013.

"These targets are achievable considering the 2009 baseline report card found 50 per cent of Burdekin and Fitzroy graziers were already adopting practices that maintain land in good to very good condition, or improving land in lesser condition."

DEEDI will also be asking general questions about beef cattle production in the region to better target the Departments research and extension activities.

**For more information contact Sue Carstens DEEDI, phone 07 54535813**

**Media contact: AgForce Projects Communication Officer Madeline Cooper (07) 3238 6060 or 0488 002 091.**