



High dollar impact

COMMENTS by Premier Anna Bligh that the high Australian dollar is good for agriculture have angered farmers who claim the state leader has a poor understanding of one of Queensland's top three industries.

State farming group, AgForce president Brent Finlay said it was disappointing to hear Premier Bligh has no idea of the crippling impact the near-parity dollar is having on Queensland primary producers, who contribute \$13 billion to the state's economy every year.

"AgForce is happy to sit down with Premier Bligh and build her understanding of economics and the impact on food and fibre production," Mr Finlay said.

"She clearly does not realise the impact of the dollar on our exports. Australian farmers export more than 60 per cent of what we produce and for every one per cent the Australian dollar goes up, it wipes \$210 million off Australia's net farm incomes.

"Queensland is effectively losing millions in revenue due to the high dollar and yet our Premier has openly said that it is good for primary production.

"Our state has one of Australia's largest economies, but it is being run by a government that does not seem to grasp one of the most basic economic rules, let alone comprehend how the dollar impacts the most vital industry of agriculture, which joins tourism and mining as Queensland's biggest industries," he said.

Mr Finlay said primary industries remain Queensland's second most important export earner and a significant employer, both on-farm and through the processing, transport and other supply chain sectors.

"Queensland agriculture is well-positioned to meet the global food demand — it is innovative, creative, sustainable and underpins regional development as an essential employer with one

in eight Queensland jobs associated with agriculture.

"Agribusiness is also a sound investment and career choice, but to remain so, the sector — from paddock to plate — requires a monetary and fiscal framework which offers long-term security.

"Both the state and federal governments continue to spout the line that there is 'nothing they can do' about inflation, ignoring the reality that inflation will continue to rise as long as Australian interest rates are significantly higher than other developed economies," Mr Finlay said.

"The Bligh government is forging ahead with Queensland's asset sale to raise capital, when their energies are better directed towards more effective lobbying for fiscal policy at a federal level," he claimed.

Farmers are angry at the Premier's claim that the high Australian dollar is good for agriculture.

Local growers benefit from initiative in carbon farming

SOIL improvement and innovative farm practices have received a major boost this month with the announcement of the Carbon Farming Initiative by the Federal Government.

In a move, which is certain to give strong support to Australian farmers, the Federal Government has announced plans to legislate to provide a real incentive for farmers to improve carbon levels in their soils, along with a range of other measures, which all target improved resilience of farmland.

Ken Bellamy, of Townsville-based Prime Carbon, was privileged to host a session at the recent Carbon Expo held in Melbourne, at which Maya Stuart-Fox of the Department of Climate Change discussed aspects of the Carbon Farming Initiative.

These included a recognition that improving carbon reserves in Australian soils had important co-benefits for farmers, which go beyond the financial benefits which will be achieved.

Additionally, it was made clear the government intends to ensure units generated out of carbon-building and other activities on farms, would be internationally saleable as a result of plans by the government to legislate standard provisions for the units created from these activities.

Following these announcements, the government signalled its strong support

for the process by announcing the names of a committee set up to evaluate methodologies used to generate carbon units under the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Ms Stuart-Fox also gave a presentation detailing various aspects of the proposed initiative in Dubbo, at the Carbon Farmers Conference in mid-October.

At the same presentation, Prime Carbon and Carbon Farmers of Australia presented the committee with the first set of methodologies for configuration of a carbon offset unit under the Carbon Farming Initiative.

While there is still some way to go in determining exactly what shape a carbon unit generated from soil carbon improvement will take, it is clear the government is intent on ensuring that there is a reward for farmers who improve the carbon stocks in their soil and undertake other sustainable activities.

This is good news for farmers in the Burdekin, who have already undertaken these sort of activities.

Prime Carbon is very pleased to be part of this process and looks forward to the accreditation of its methodologies in line with the Carbon Farming Initiative.

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