



Media release

Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and
Minister for Public Works and Procurement
The Honourable Mick de Brenni

Free on-farm audits to help reduce energy costs, boost profitability

- Palaszczuk Government to help agriculture businesses reduce power bills
- QBEST Ag to be delivered in partnership with Queensland Farmers Federation
- Latest Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan program to help Queenslanders reduce cost of living

Agriculture businesses across Queensland are set to have quick and easy access to information on how fellow farmers and graziers are achieving energy-efficiency and keeping a cap on production costs.

The *Queensland Business Energy Saving and Transformation – Agriculture* program – announced at Ekka – is the latest assistance measure to be delivered through the State Government's \$62 billion Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

QBEST Ag strengthens the partnership between the Palaszczuk Government and the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) and involves delivery of onsite farm energy audits to identify opportunities to improve energy-efficiency within the Queensland agricultural sector.

Specifically targeting small-medium agriculture businesses, QBEST Ag takes action to reduce the agriculture sector's carbon emissions, which in 2021 accounted for an estimated 14.8% of Queensland's total emissions.

The energy audit results, together with outcomes from prior energy audit programs will be published on a new *Ag Energy Information Hub* as case studies demonstrating how agricultural businesses are boosting their bottom lines.

The big bonus for farmers is the opportunity to boost their productivity and returns through accessing free, practical advice on efficient energy use.

Energy management measures such as installing variable speed drives, upgrading pumps, changing lights as well as connecting new heating and cooling systems have already been proven to achieve significant savings for farmers.

The QBEST Ag initiative follows the development of a free online QFF toolkit offering advice and key considerations to help landholders co-exist with clean power projects and cash in on the energy transformation.

Quote attributable to Public Works Minister Mick de Brenni:

"Farmers understand the need to address energy efficiency just as well and, in most cases, better than anyone, so this program is about saving farmers real money.

"Agricultural production relies on huge amounts of energy to power pumps, cool storage, and power farm equipment, as well as maintain crops and livestock facilities.

"In some cases, energy represents up to 50 per cent of a farmer's total production costs.

“Improving on-farm practices and systems, changing, or modifying equipment, switching to more efficient energy sources, and purchasing energy more strategically can make a significant difference.

“QBEST Ag will show how this is already being done – and how much of an impact it is making for farmers and the over 360,000 Queenslanders employed right across the State.

“We also know that exports account for about half of Queensland’s total production and that consumers and global markets all want lower emissions products.

“The Palaszczuk Government is working with the QFF to help regional Queensland farmers and graziers to produce and export some of the cleanest, greenest, and most affordable products in the world.”

Quote attributable to Queensland Farmers Federation CEO, Jo Sheppard

“Queensland farmers produce some of the very best food, fibre and foliage which is recognised globally and provides a \$23.44 billion pillar to the Queensland economy.

“Energy remains an important input for farmers with agricultural enterprises relying on being able to access affordable and reliable energy to operate effectively.

“QBEST Ag will build on QFF’s and our member’s previous work delivering energy audits to more than 180 farms across Queensland helping them to identify potential energy savings worth more than \$3 million.

“The learnings achieved through these audits, along with other energy related information, will be made available in a one-stop shop online platform, the Queensland Ag Energy Information Hub, to support farmers to make informed decisions in relation to energy efficiency, infrastructure, and technology investments.

“Through QBEST AG. we will also be able to engage with a targeted, diverse range of small to medium farming businesses across the state to continue understanding and share how farmers can improve energy efficiency on farm.”

Quote attributable to Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Minister, Mark Furner:

“Queensland’s agriculture sector is a \$23.44 billion pillar of our economy because our produce is world-class.

“With rising energy costs globally, we have a chance right now to ensure our farmers and graziers enhance their competitive edge on world markets.

“QBEST Ag recognises the industry’s ongoing commitment to cleaner and greener food and fibre production and supports the State Government’s Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap 2022-2032.

“Together with industry, we’re working hard give producers clarity on how they can actively prepare and implement practice change to manage risks to their business.

“Those who implement plans to lower greenhouse gas emissions now will have fewer transition costs and disruption to their business than those who delay and find themselves urgently responding to market forces.”