

REEF WATER QUALITY

Program



Reef protection regulations in the Great Barrier Reef regions Grazing requirements

The Reef protection regulations address land-based sources of water pollution flowing to the Great Barrier Reef. This includes agricultural and [industrial sources](#) of nutrient and sediment pollution from all six [Reef regions](#) – Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary. The regulations are an action under the [Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan](#).

Why are the regulations required?

Over time, unsustainable grazing practices reduce pasture and ground cover which increases the risk of valuable topsoil being lost when it rains. Reduced ground cover also increases overland flow causing gully and streambank erosion and sediment and nutrient run-off to waterways.

The regulations for grazing focus on retaining and improving ground cover and land condition to minimise soil loss. Ground cover is a key indicator of land condition and refers to pasture plants, plant litter, tree leaf litter, twigs and woody debris that can protect the soil surface from erosion.

What are the requirements for grazing?

Graziers in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions need to comply with the standard conditions in the [Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standard for beef cattle grazing](#).

In the Cape York region, the Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standard for beef cattle grazing does not apply as the water quality targets have been met in this region.

There are requirements for agricultural advisers, such as agronomists and fertiliser sellers, when providing tailored advice about matters covered by the Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standards.

For more information, please refer to the [Record keeping requirements for agricultural advisers factsheet](#).

Where can I find more information?

The standard, methodology, guides and other factsheets are available online or by registering to receive an information pack:

Web: www.qld.gov.au/ReefRegulations

Email: ESReef@des.qld.gov.au

Telephone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)



What do I need to do to comply with the Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standard?

To comply with the standard, you must:

- take actions to retain or improve land condition
- make and keep records.

The standard does not mandate any particular action or measure for land management. Instead, graziers are required to determine their own action to improve land condition where land is in poor or degraded condition. Land condition is measured by the amount of ground cover at 30 September each year. On paddocks where ground cover is less than 50%, land is considered to be in poor condition, and less than 20% is considered degraded condition.

It is recognised that:

- for some land types it may not be possible to achieve 50% ground cover at 30 September each year even when taking all reasonable steps
- it may be impractical and cost prohibitive to improve some areas of very degraded land, e.g. severe gullying or scalded areas. If so, measures must be taken to prevent these areas from further degrading or expanding.

For full details of the requirements, refer to the [Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standard for beef cattle grazing](#).

For more guidance on how to apply, please refer to the [Grazing guide](#).

Records

Graziers must make and keep records to demonstrate activities being undertaken on the property are in accordance with the standard conditions.

For full details of the requirements, refer to the [Agricultural Environmentally Relevant Activity standard for beef cattle grazing](#).

Records can be in any format but must be made within three business days and kept for at least six years.

Records need to be made available for inspection when requested by an authorised person such as a compliance officer from the Department of Environment and Science. These records will be assessed to determine compliance with the standard conditions.

Information collected by the Queensland Government must only be collected, stored and used in accordance with the [Information Privacy Act 2009](#).

How does compliance work?

The Department of Environment and Science assesses compliance with the Reef protection regulations.

For more information, please refer to the [Compliance factsheet](#).

Acknowledged practice change projects

The Queensland Government funds the [Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions \(GRASS\) program](#). Graziers under this program can be identified as a lower priority for compliance inspections under the Reef protection regulations.

For information on the benefits of being involved, please refer to the [Recognised accreditation programs and acknowledged practice change projects factsheet](#).

What other support is available?

Other programs and support tools are provided by the Australian and Queensland governments and industry organisations to help graziers identify opportunities to improve farming practices.

For more information, visit the Queensland Government's Business Queensland website at www.business.qld.gov.au and search 'Land management for graziers'.