

Find out more

Updates on the Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative are available at the web site: www.nrm.qld.gov.au/rwue

The participating organisations can provide farmers with further information. Contact details are overleaf.



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RURAL WATER USE EFFICIENCY INITIATIVE

Improving irrigation management
for a profitable and sustainable future

Benefiting from water use efficiency

Water is a vital commodity for all sections of the community. Queensland's water resources are under enormous pressure so securing our future supply is essential.

The Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative (RWUE) is a partnership between industry and government, which aims to improve the use and management of available water, thereby improving the competitiveness, profitability and environmental sustainability of Queensland's irrigation industries.

Since its first stage commenced in 1999, RWUE has involved the cane, cotton, dairy and horticulture industries. Achievements of the initiative include:

- saving up to 180 000 megalitres (ML) of water per year equating to hundreds of millions of dollars in improved productivity
- a high level of farmer involvement and participation in rural water use efficiency activities
- recognition of the benefits of water use efficiency at the farm level
- adoption of best practices for irrigation management and actual changes on farm
- real water use efficiency improvements, water savings and improved productivity
- creation and retention of rural jobs

RWUE2, the second stage of the initiative, built on these achievements and started to address the issues of farm management systems and off-farm impacts of irrigated farming activities such as nutrient control. The initiative is now moving into its third stage, RWUE3.

Industry participation

RWUE3 will involve seven industry groups:

- Queensland Canegrowers Organisation
- Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation
- Cotton Australia
- Growcom
- Queensland Turf Producers Association
- Flower Association of Queensland
- Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland

RWUE3 will focus on the production sectors of the latter three industries.

What is the main aim?

The aim of RWUE3 is to continue to help irrigators in each industry to improve their on-farm natural resource management, particularly through efficient irrigation and nutrient management. This will improve the productivity of irrigation businesses and help irrigators meet the challenges of water reforms and water resource management.

Funding for RWUE3 will provide for on-farm system assessments, adoption and extension activities, on-farm trials and demonstrations and assistance with the purchase of irrigation management equipment.

How will the program be delivered?

Each industry group will run the initiative via their respective industry-based programs.

The sugar industry will concentrate on improved irrigation and water use efficiency and better environmental outcomes through an incentive-based program.

Cotton and grains will focus on education and training and further promotion of the Farm Management Systems (FMS) program encompassing catchment and environmental management.

The dairy and fodder industries will target more effective natural resource management and use outcomes through water, nutrient and effluent management, farm management systems and incentives to implement change.

Horticulture will focus mainly on control and minimisation of nutrient losses and run-off from farms, soil management, farm management systems, farm water balance assessments and improved efficiency of water use in packing sheds.

The Nursery, Turf and Flower Industries intend to promote improved natural resource management and the adoption of best practice water use measures for their production-based sectors.

