

CSG concerns dominate local field days

Local landholders who attended AgForce Projects field days last week were seriously concerned about the expansion of the coal seam gas industry in the region, but praised AgForce for providing useful information about the issues affecting Western Queensland.

Around 70 producers turned out for the multi topic field days in Blackall and Winton, which addressed key rural issues affecting landholders in the region including CSG, a potential carbon tax and leasehold land.

AgForce North West regional manager Tahna Jackson said the most pressing issue for landholders at the field days was the rapid growth of CSG exploration in the region.

“CSG exploration is continuing to expand in this area and landholders are very worried about what this means for them and what the process is in regards to their rights and responsibilities,” Mrs Jackson said.

“Landholders want to get on top of this issue and access all the information they need in order to be best prepared to deal with CSG companies. These field days provided landholders with some useful information and resources which they were very grateful to have finally received.”

Key speakers included AgForce policy director Drew Wagner who outlined AgForce’s policy position on CSG and how the organisation is shaping strategic cropping land policy framework to safeguard productive farming land.

Mr Wagner said that while AgForce continues to call for a moratorium on all CSG activities until comprehensive research into its collective impact on the environment is conducted, it is important that landholders understand their rights and responsibilities in order to guarantee the best outcome when negotiating with CSG companies.

Although AgForce Projects CSG Project, delivered through AgForward with funding from the Queensland Government, is only being rolled out in the Surat Basin, a snapshot was provided at the Blackall and Winton field days by AgForce Projects CSG project manager Kate Dunn.

“We want landholders to understand their rights and obligations under the current legislation and be informed about the actions they can take now to manage the potential risks to their property from CSG activity,” She said.

“By negotiating an effective Conduct and Compensation Agreement, landholders can put in place some checks and balances so that the impacts on their business are minimal.”

The Australian Government’s Carbon Farming Initiative was also a hot topic at the field days, with landholders interested to hear how the policy will affect the agricultural industry.

Field days were delivered free to all landholders through AgForward and the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Carbon on Farm initiative.

AgForce Projects is delivering further free services in the region including property computer mapping workshops at Barcaldine, Winton and Longreach from 16-18 August. To register call (07) 3238 6048 or visit www.agforceprojects.org.au.

For comment call Tahna Jackson on (07) 4658 2244 or 0408 786 057

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