



AgForce and Queensland Conservation Council media release: 30 May, 2011

Farmers, conservationists say ‘take foot off the gas’

Queensland’s peak farm organisation and conservation group have joined forces on the eve of a coal seam gas (CSG) summit in Brisbane to call on the state government to take the foot off the gas and protect the environment and future food production.

AgForce and the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) are united in their concerns about the rapid expansion of the CSG industry across the state, labelling it the single biggest threat to Queensland’s environment, community health and farming.

AgForce policy director Drew Wagner and QCC executive director Toby Hutcheon continue to demand a moratorium on further CSG development until a framework is developed to eliminate negative environmental, social and agricultural impacts.

“There are already 4000 CSG wells in production across the landscape in Queensland, but this is just the tip of the iceberg with a staggering 36,000 additional wells proposed,” Mr Wagner said.

“There is a growing awareness in the community about the negative impacts of CSG extraction, but the recent CSG well explosions and contamination of waterways has been caused by just 10 percent of this industry’s potential. What will the consequences be when the CSG industry reaches full capacity?”

Mr Hutcheon said a moratorium was critical until the real costs of CSG extraction are known.

“It is time the Queensland Government takes its foot off the gas pedal as the pace of the industry’s development is outstripping the legislation that is needed to properly regulate it,” Mr Hutcheon said.

“The CSG industry must not come at the cost of the agricultural industry, local communities, water quality or other precious ecological assets.”

Queensland Conservation Council and AgForce are calling for the government and resource industry to make a commitment to ensure CSG extraction activities:

- are prohibited on good quality agricultural land
- are prohibited from occurring on nature refuges and other areas of high ecological value
- are carried out with fairness and equity to the land owners
- comply with the same legislation (e.g. vegetation management) as other industries
- do not adversely impact groundwater

AgForce and QCC believe the CSG summit, beginning tomorrow in Brisbane, will not address the key issues of this industry, the expansion of which is outstripping the development of legislation to regulate exploration and extraction activities.

For comment:

- **AgForce policy director Drew Wagner on 3236 3100 or 0488 084 007**
- **Queensland Conservation Council executive director Toby Hutcheon on 0419664503**
- **AgForce media manager: Rebecca Jennings 0418 733 102 or jenningsr@agforceqld.org.au**
- **AgForce communications officer: Grace Reck 0427 626 853 or reckg@agforceqld.org.au**