



Budget leaves best farm land still hanging in the balance

While it was expected that today's state budget would deliver little for regional Queensland in the face of natural disaster recovery, state farm group AgForce remains disillusioned by the ongoing delay of the Strategic Cropping Land framework.

AgForce CEO Robert Walker said the budget made provisions for the finalisation of Strategic Cropping Land in 2012.

"This is extremely disappointing – finalisation of the planning policy two years after it was initiated is unacceptable," Mr Walker said.

"All it does is again give the resource sector preferential treatment while Queensland's vital food producers face uncertainty and prime farm land is destroyed by mining.

"AgForce is disappointed to see the government has sat on their hands and allowed resource companies to push projects past tipping point, permanently alienating our best farming land. Farmers are still waiting on the detail which will reveal how the Strategic Cropping Land framework will actually preserve farm land."

Mr Walker said although agriculture was identified as one of the contributors to recovery – along with tourism and coal – there were few sweeteners for food and fibre producers in today's budget.

"Most of the funds allocated for projects such as the Spyglass Research Station are pre-existing investments, not new money.

"Infrastructure remains the top priority for regional Queensland, and obviously most of this year's infrastructure allocation will go towards rebuilding after natural disasters.

"AgForce expected a stronger commitment for biosecurity, but this vital area seems to have been overlooked."

Mr Walker said AgForce would continue to urge government to prioritise agriculture through the natural disaster rebuilding phase in recognition of this industry's strong economic, environmental and social contributions.

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