

Industry Stewardship



Industry
STEWARDSHIP

Where land meets sea Stewardship for a "Great" Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) stands as a testament to the delicate balance between land and sea. It is home to the world's largest coral reef ecosystem and supports some of Australia's most important agricultural food production areas for grazing, horticulture, cropping and dairy. Its a prime example of how best-practice farming, empowered by the plant science industry has supported a harmonious co-existence of agriculture and the environment.

The 2022 Reef Report Card revealed encouraging trends and shows improving adoption of best management practices. The misconception that the production of food, feed and fibre is inherently at odds with environmental conservation is increasingly challenged by emerging evidence and the adoption of innovation in the agricultural sector.

Take the Burdekin region in QLD, a hub of sugarcane production, for example. Since the introduction of industry-led stewardship initiatives in 2018, pesticide detections in flowing water have been reduced by up to 45 per cent.

CropLife Australia's StewardshipFirst® initiative is a real-world example of how industry-led stewardship has been instrumental in sustainable farming and productivity in regions like Burdekin. The adoption of on-farm best-practice management practices like increased buffer zones, filter strips and reducing soil erosion through no-till practices have curbed pesticide run-off and led to tangible improvements in water quality in the Reef catchment area.

Climate change looms as the greatest threat to the Reef and exacerbates coral bleaching events. However, it is possible to safeguard this natural wonder through collective guardianship by government, industries, communities and individuals while sustaining a thriving agricultural sector.

By acknowledging industry stewardship efforts and supporting its adoption by farmers in the region, we can ensure a legacy of coexistence and conservation for generations to come.



