

Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015

Explanatory Notes for SL 2015 No. 8

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015

Authorising law

Sections 10, 11 and 44 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994*.

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The objective of the amendment regulation is to extend the timeframe for eligible producers to apply for financial assistance under the Bovine Johne's Disease Assistance Scheme (the Scheme) and to increase the limit of assistance available under the Scheme to \$200,000.

In 2012 there was an outbreak of bovine Johne's disease (BJD) near Rockhampton and the Queensland Government sought to eradicate the disease through quarantine and movement restrictions on affected cattle. To support producers recovering from the financial impact of these restrictions, the Scheme was established to allow QRAA to provide financial assistance to eligible producers. The due date for applications will soon be reached with applications for assistance to be received by no later than 27 March 2015. To allow affected producers sufficient time to apply for assistance, it is proposed that this date be amended to 30 June 2015.

Many eligible producers have incurred extensive financial impacts as a result of the disease. For many, the \$100,000 cap under the Scheme has been insufficient to mitigate against consequential financial loss. The amendment increases the cap to an upper limit of \$200,000, which will continue to be allocated from the existing Scheme funding package. Applicants who have previously received assistance under the Scheme will be eligible for this additional assistance.

Achievement of policy objectives

The amendment regulation achieves the objective of the Scheme of increasing support for affected Queensland cattle owners and restoring Queensland's BJD free status. It achieves this by providing for an increase in the maximum amount of assistance available to eligible applicants under the Scheme from \$100,000 to \$200,000, and by extending the timeframe for applications to 30 June 2015. These changes will support cattle owners recovering from the financial impact of BJD.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The amendment regulation is consistent with the objects as outlined in section 3 of the Act, which in part, enable QRAA to support the State's economy by providing assistance to primary producers, small business and other elements of the economy in periods when they are experiencing temporary difficulty.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

The amendment regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of other legislation.

Benefits and costs of implementation

The amendment regulation will benefit producers affected by BJD that have been quarantined as part of the Queensland disease response. Producers with infected cattle or suspected of infection will now have recourse to make applications for assistance up until the end of the financial year and access greater assistance amounts up to \$200,000.

The amendments to the Scheme benefit the State as they support the objective of eradicating BJD to maintain a protected status that may provide potential market access opportunities. The costs to Government are minimal as this amendment will be funded through the existing Bovine Johne's Disease Assistance package funding allocation.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The amendment regulation is consistent with fundamental legislative principles.

Consultation

QRAA has been consulted as the administrator of the Scheme. Consultation with industry on the proposed changes to the funding program has been undertaken with the Queensland Cattle Industry Biosecurity Fund Implementation Committee. Membership of this Committee includes: Animal Health Australia, QRAA, AgForce, Brahman Breeders Association, Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation, Australian Livestock and Property Agents and the Australian Meat Industry Council. QRAA and the Queensland Cattle Industry Biosecurity Fund Implementation Committee support the proposed amendments to the Scheme.

The Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) within the Queensland Competition Authority was consulted with regard to regulatory impact statement (RIS) requirements. The OBPR has advised that this proposal is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts and on this basis no further analysis is required.

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