

Guide to using the fodder code

Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code
Managing Fodder Harvesting

June 2018

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About this guide

This guide has been developed to help landholders operate under the Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing Fodder Harvesting. It refers to the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and the *Planning Act 2016*, which jointly regulate the clearing of native vegetation in Queensland.

The guide is not intended to be exhaustive. It only deals with operating under the fodder code. It provides supplementary information, and is designed to be read in conjunction with the fodder code, and with the *General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes* (which provides information about the notification process, landholder obligations, and technical information that applies to all codes).

Landholders are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the local, state and federal Acts and Regulations that apply to their operations.

Common abbreviations used in this document

- Act = *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- code = accepted development vegetation clearing code
- DNRME = Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- fodder code = Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing Fodder Harvesting
- RE = regional ecosystem

Further information

For more information call **135 VEG (135 834)**
 email vegetation@dnrme.qld.gov.au
 or search 'Vegetation Management' on www.qld.gov.au.

Links to other documents

[Accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#)

[General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#)

Managing fodder harvesting

The current Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing Fodder Harvesting (the fodder code) is dated 14 May 2018.

TIP *Any notification under the previous code (dated 8 March 2018) is still valid, but, if you reach your area limit, you will need to self-audit the area harvested and you must re-notify the department before undertaking further harvesting.*

You can also apply for a development approval to harvest fodder under the *Planning Act 2016*.

Scope

The fodder code applies to most land in the local government areas of Balonne, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall Tambo, Bulloo, Diamantina, Goondiwindi, Longreach, Maranoa, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Western Downs, and Winton. Note that the fodder code does not apply to some land tenures, such as roads. Refer to the fodder code for more information.

What is fodder harvesting?

Fodder harvesting is the clearing of vegetation that predominantly consists of fodder species and is necessary to provide fodder for stock.

TIP *You do not need to notify the department or follow the code if you are only lopping branches off fodder trees in a way that does not kill the trees.*

Fodder species

The Act defines fodder species as comprising *Acacia aneura*; *Acacia cibaria* (*Acacia brachystachya*); *Acacia excelsa*; *Acacia pendula*; *Acacia stowardii*; *Alphitonia excelsa*; *Flindersia maculosa*; and *Geijera parviflora*.

Fodder harvesting practices

The fodder harvesting practices in the code will:

- ensure the vegetation is available for future generations
- conserve the regional ecosystem
- result in vegetation being left where it is cleared.

Section 4 of the fodder code deals with fodder harvesting practices, and refers to specific sections in the code for more information on each requirement:

- limitations (section 4.1)
- selective harvesting (section 4.2)
- strip and block harvesting (section 4.3)
- soil and water quality protection (section 4.4).

Fodder harvesting limitations

Section 4.1 of the fodder code applies a range of fodder harvesting limitations, regardless of the harvesting method. The following information provides **general information only** for some of these limitations. Landholders should refer to the full list of limitations contained in the code.

Fodder harvesting notification area limits

The fodder code limits fodder harvesting in Category B areas to 500 hectares per notification. There is no limit on the number of notifications you may lodge per lot; however, you will need to conduct a self-audit for all subsequent notifications to ensure previous fodder harvesting has been compliant with the code.

TIP *You are not required to submit the self-audit to DNRME but you must retain the audit and make it available to DNRME upon request.*

For the purpose of this limitation, the 500 hectares covers both the actual harvested area and the associated retained area. For example, Figure 1 shows both the harvest area and the retention area for a strip harvesting scenario. While the actual area harvested is about 6.5 hectares, the total area of about 21.1 hectares is the figure used to self-assess against the 500 hectare limit.

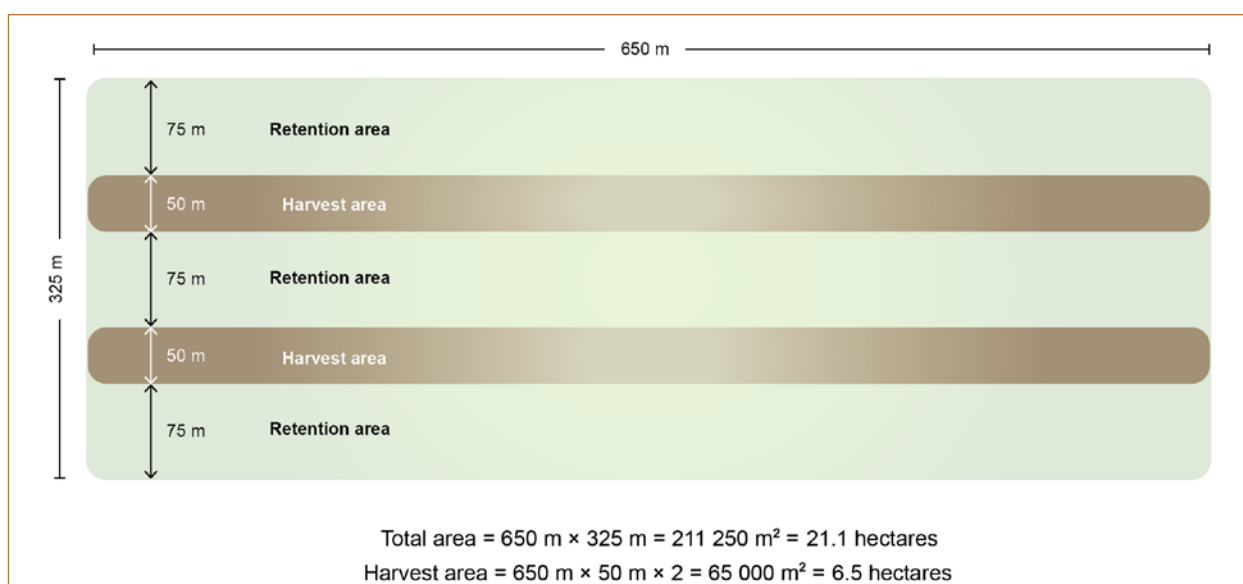


Figure 1: Strip harvesting scenario showing actual harvest area compared to total area considered in the notification

Maintaining regional ecosystems on each lot

Within any 10-year period (from the initial date of harvesting), fodder harvesting must not be undertaken in more than 50 per cent of the area of some regional ecosystems (those listed in the code), on the lot.

TIP *See Table A1–1 and Table A1–2 in Appendix 1 of the fodder code for a list of these regional ecosystems.*

Essential habitat

Fodder harvesting is prohibited in any area mapped as 'essential habitat'. Essential habitat is the habitat of native wildlife prescribed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as endangered, vulnerable or near-threatened (protected wildlife). See [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) for more information on how to identify essential habitat.

Land zone 7

Landholders may not harvest vegetation in a regional ecosystem (RE) that includes land zone 7, unless all other fodder resources have been used. That is, if there are other regional ecosystems on your lot in which you can harvest fodder consistent with the code requirements, you should use that resource before harvesting fodder on land zone 7. The land zone number is the middle number from the three-numbered RE code (e.g. RE 6.7.9). Land zone 7 is described as 'ironstone jump-ups'.

RE numbers can be viewed on the vegetation management supporting map at www.qld.gov.au (search for 'vegetation management map') or on Queensland Globe at www.qld.gov.au (search 'Queensland globe'). For more information on regional ecosystems, see [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#).

Leaving harvested vegetation where it falls

The code prohibits raking or moving harvested vegetation from where it falls, except where removal is required for essential or routine management (such as vehicular tracks or fire management lines up to 10 metres wide).

Leaving harvested vegetation where it falls maintains fauna habitat, helps control erosion and run-off, accumulates seed banks, conserves topsoil and protects young regenerating fodder species.



Figure 2: Keeping harvested fodder where it falls

Retention of tall non-fodder species

The fodder code requires that all non-fodder species taller than 4 metres must be retained.

Fodder requirements for stock

Fodder harvesting must not exceed the amount necessary to supply the required fodder for the number of stock on the property. When calculating how much you need to harvest, you should take into account the fodder required per head and the length of time that cut fodder will last on the ground.

Feed value of cut fodder

The feed value of fodder trees can vary significantly, depending on tree species, growing conditions and the availability of supplements. While it's common to cut two to three days' supply ahead so that leaves will have reduced tannin levels, daily cutting may be necessary in summer to avoid leaves withering.

Mechanical clearing

Mechanical clearing refers to clearing of vegetation using a machine such as a tractor and any attachments such as a blade or thinning bar, cutter bar, chopper roller or other implement.

The code prohibits mechanical clearing in a number of situations (described in Table 1).

Table 1: Mechanical clearing limitations for fodder harvesting

Areas where mechanical clearing must not occur	Additional guidance available
On slopes greater than 5%	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further explanation on measuring slope
Within 50 metres of soil erosion and instability	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further explanation of soil erosion and instability
Inside or within specified distances from the defining bank of wetlands, watercourses or drainage features (refer to code for distances)	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for relevant terms and mapping

Fodder harvesting methods


The fodder harvesting methods available under the code are:

- selective harvesting
- strip harvesting
- block harvesting.

The method you choose will depend on factors such as the form and distribution of your fodder species, the amount you need to harvest each week, the labour and equipment available and the slope of the land.


Selective harvesting

Selective harvesting involves the targeted felling of individual fodder trees while avoiding damage to the surrounding vegetation.

 *Section 4.2 of the fodder code describes acceptable selective harvesting practices.*

Selective harvesting regional ecosystems

Selective harvesting can be undertaken in any regional ecosystem listed in the code.

 *See Table A1–1 and Table A1–2 in Appendix 1 of the fodder code for a list of these regional ecosystems.*

Retaining non-fodder species


All non-fodder species (any species not listed as a fodder species) must be retained when selective harvesting, except where damage is an unavoidable consequence of harvesting the targeted fodder species. Non-fodder species more than 4 metres high may not be felled for any reason (refer to [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) for explanation on how to measure tree height).

Retaining fodder species

Fodder tree retention depends on the type of RE and the harvesting equipment used. Retention requirements are based on a felled tree to retained tree ratio, being either 1:1 or 1:2.

The most practical way to achieve this retention ratio is to retain one or two fodder trees nearest to the felled tree. After harvesting a small area (e.g. half a hectare) you should check whether you have retained the correct number of fodder trees in relation to the number of felled fodder trees, and adjust your approach accordingly.

Strip and block harvesting

 *Section 4.3 of the fodder code defines the requirements for strip and block harvesting.*

Strip harvesting involves pushing or pulling stands of fodder species in strips, while retaining undisturbed areas of vegetation on either side—more appropriate where fodder species dominate the RE.


Block harvesting involves harvesting fodder species in blocks or clumps, while retaining undisturbed areas of vegetation on all sides.

Within the strips and blocks, you may not clear non-fodder species that are more than 4 metres high. In circumstances where the distribution of fodder species is patchy, a combination of strip and block harvesting may be used to make the best use of the available fodder. In dense stands, any attempt to selectively push will inevitably result in the clearing of a strip, as you walk the machine from tree to tree. In this case it may be best to strip harvest. In less dense stands, it may be possible to selectively push individual fodder trees without inadvertently knocking over other vegetation.

In both cases, vegetation must be retained around each strip or block (retention areas). Retention areas help maintain connectivity, act as windbreaks and promote revegetation of harvested areas.

Strip and block harvesting regional ecosystems

The fodder code restricts strip and block harvesting to certain regional ecosystems listed in the code.

 *See Table A1–1 in Appendix 1 of the fodder code for a list of these regional ecosystems.*

Strip and block harvesting limitations

Strip and block harvesting:

- **must not** occur in REs that are less than 10 hectares in area or less than 500 metres wide
- **must** be aligned to the contour where practical
- **must not** remove non-fodder species that are more than 4 metres high (refer to [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) for explanation on how to measure tree height).

Strip and block harvesting tree maturity and retention areas

Strip and block harvesting has specific requirements associated with tree heights and retention areas to help ensure the RE is not adversely affected by fodder harvesting:

- Fodder harvesting **must not** occur in vegetation that has been harvested in the last 10 years. The vegetation referred to includes strip-harvest areas, block-harvest areas and retained areas. This means you can't undertake any type of harvesting in an area if it is still functioning as a retained area for an adjacent area harvested in the last 10 years.
- Retention areas **must** contain fodder species with an average height of at least 4 metres (refer to [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) for further explanation on how to measure tree height). In other words, if the average height of the fodder species in that part of the RE is less than 4 metres, then that part of the RE does not qualify as a retention area.
- If fodder harvesting has previously occurred within the RE, strip or block harvesting may only occur if the previously harvested fodder trees have attained an average height of at least 4 metres and the average height of the fodder trees is at least 70% of the height of the tallest stands of that fodder species in the RE.

Figure 3 shows how some of these requirements would apply.

- A: The tallest stands of trees in the RE **cannot be harvested** because there is no retained area on the left, and the adjacent area on the right is too short to be a retention area.
- B: Trees harvested within the last few years **cannot be harvested** because they are less than 4 metres high and were harvested within the last 10 years.
- C: Trees harvested more than 10 years ago and greater than 4 metres high **cannot be harvested** because adjacent area B is too short and young to be a retained area.
- D: These trees were harvested more than 10 years ago, are greater than 4 metres high, the average height of the fodder trees is at least 70% of the height of the tallest stands of that species in the regional ecosystem, and have adjacent areas on both sides that qualify as retained areas. Therefore, this area **can be harvested** from a tree height and maturity perspective, assuming other requirements are also met.
- E: Trees harvested more than 10 years ago and greater than 4 metres high **cannot be harvested** because there is no retained area on the right.

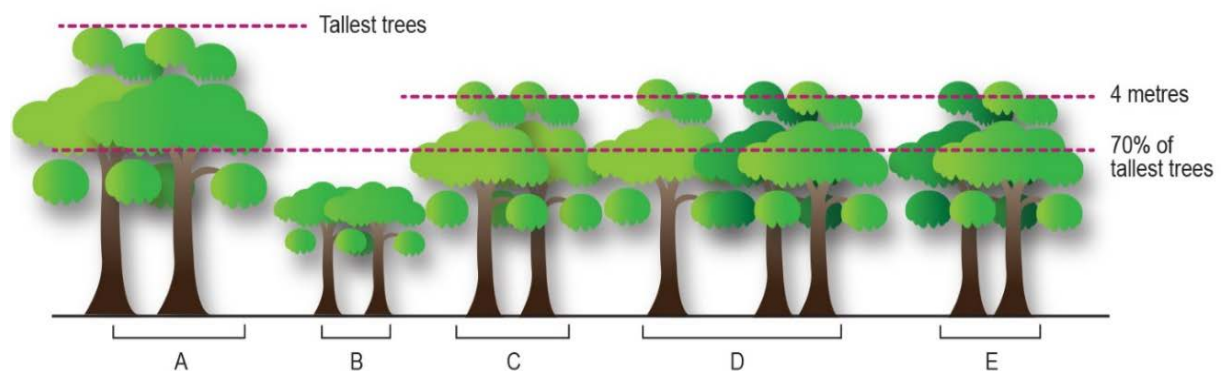


Figure 3: Example of tree heights and maturity that can and cannot be harvested for fodder

Soil and water quality protections

Soil and water quality protections are covered in section 4.4 of the fodder code. Please see [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) for further information on protections for soil and water quality.