



Our Australian Rice Industry

Growing Rice to Feed the World

MEDIA RELEASE

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Rice growers asked to burn stubble responsibly

With a large rice harvest due to take place this year, the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia (RGA) has asked farmers intending to burn stubble at the end of the season to do so responsibly.

RGA Policy Officer Andrew Bomm said it was important that growers take all possible steps to minimise the effects of smoke on neighbouring properties and townships.

“During the rice harvest growers will be preparing for planting winter crops and many rice growers will be burning stubble to ready their land. We are calling on all rice growers to reduce the effects on nearby properties and townships.”

“It is totally unacceptable to inflict smoke from stubble burning on nearby residents. We need to be a responsible industry that cares about the communities in which we live.”

Mr Bomm said that farmers need to understand how local wind and air conditions disperse smoke, and make responsible decisions when burning.

“Growers should plan their burning strategy to avoid inappropriate conditions for burning that will adversely affect neighbours. This means avoiding burning wet stubble or burning when winds will blow smoke across roads or towards towns.”

“Understanding how to avoid inversion layers is also critical to prevent smoke settling over residents. Growers should monitor prevailing weather conditions, and avoid burning late in the day or where there is no wind when inversion layers are most likely to be present.”

Mr Bomm indicated that the industry is working hard to improve the stubble management practices of rice growers.

“Through the RGA's Environmental Champions Program we are running a Stubble Management Awareness Program this season, with the assistance of government funding under the Caring for our Country program. This will educate growers about alternatives to stubble burning and best practice when burning is considered unavoidable.”

Due to the bush fire danger period having passed in the rice growing areas, an RFS permit is not required this year. However, growers are still required to do the following:

- 1) provide suitable firebreaks;
- 2) notify neighbours;
- 3) have firefighting equipment available on-site;
- 4) have a responsible person in attendance while the fire is alight.

A brochure providing more information on safe and responsible stubble burning is available from your local ECP Coordinator or the RGA's Leeton office on (02) 6953 0433.

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A Commodity Council of the National Farmers Federation