



FACT SHEET

March 2009

MID NORTH COAST FARMLAND MAPPING PROJECT

- Agriculture is an important and long-standing activity on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. In 2001, its gross value to the regional economy was \$245 million.
- In recognition of the fact that strong predicted growth in the region is likely to create ongoing pressure on existing farmland, the Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project identifies the most important areas of farmland which are to be protected from urban and rural residential development.
- These areas of regionally significant farmland have been identified and mapped in the local government areas of Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Clarence Valley.
- The mapped farmland covers a range of different agricultural areas including lands as diverse as:
 - cane land on the Clarence Valley floodplain;
 - basaltic country used for growing vegetables at 200 metres elevation at Red Hill near Telegraph Point; and
 - improved pasture land on the Nambucca River.
- Most of the mapped farmland is on floodplains, upstream river valleys and volcanic country.
- Protecting this important farmland will provide greater certainty for farmers' agricultural investments, avert future land use conflicts and aid the region's ability to produce food sustainably.
- As such, councils will not be able to rezone any of the mapped areas for urban or rural residential use and the land will also be protected from rezonings that would allow potentially incompatible uses on neighbouring land.
- The project included consultation with farmers' reference groups in the Clarence, the Coffs-Bellingen-Nambucca area and the Kempsey-Port Macquarie area, who assisted with developing criteria to identify the relevant areas for protection.
- In 2008, rural communities were also asked to comment on draft farmland maps, with subsequent feedback indicating a strong level of support for the principle of protecting agricultural land from urbanisation.
- The project does not propose rules which would affect the ability of farmers to carry out their routine rural activities and does not identify farmland in existing urban, rural residential, industrial or commercial zones.
- In addition to protecting farmland, the Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project also recommends that mapped farmland areas should be a priority for environmental management programs administered by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.
- The project, which will be implemented through the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, is equivalent to a project already completed for the Far North Coast to protect agricultural land in that region.