



QUEENSLAND FARMERS' FEDERATION

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Submission

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Waste Assessment Unit
Waste Operations
Department of Environment and Science
400 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email: RRS.Consultation@des.qld.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Draft End of Waste Code Gyprock (ENEW07618819)

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the united voice of intensive and irrigated agriculture in Queensland. It is a federation that represents the interests of 20 peak state and national agriculture industry organisations and engages in a broad range of economic, social, environmental and regional issues of strategic importance to the productivity, sustainability and growth of the agricultural sector. QFF's mission is to secure a strong and sustainable future for Queensland farmers by representing the common interests of our member organisations:

- CANEGROWERS
- Cotton Australia
- Growcom
- Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ)
- Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation (QDO)
- Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA)
- Queensland United Egg Producers (QUEP)
- Turf Queensland
- Queensland Chicken Meat Council (QCMC)
- Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group (BRIG)
- Burdekin River Irrigation Area Irrigators Ltd (BRIA)
- Central Downs Irrigators Ltd (CDIL)
- Fairbairn Irrigation Network Ltd
- Mallowa Irrigation Ltd
- Pioneer Valley Water Cooperative Ltd (PV Water)
- Theodore Water Pty Ltd
- Eton Irrigation Scheme Ltd
- Pork Queensland Inc
- Tropical Carbon Farming Innovation Hub
- Lockyer Water Users Forum (LWUF)

The united voice of intensive and irrigated agriculture



QFF welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft End of Waste Code Gyprock. We provide this submission without prejudice to any additional submission from our members or individual farmers.

Background

Gyprock, also known as gypsum board, drywall, or plasterboard products are made from gypsum, paper, and a small number of additives. It is a widely used construction material for applications such as forming partitions, lining walls and ceilings. Gyprock waste arises during installation through wasteful design, off-cuts, damaged boards, and over-ordering. Wastage of 10-35 percent often occurs on construction sites¹.

QFF notes that the draft End of Waste Code only applies to 'clean' gyprock sourced from construction surplus, damaged product and installation cut-offs. It does not include gyprock from mixed construction waste sources.

Gypsum is a non-toxic sedimentary rock, comprising of a soft sulfate mineral composed of calcium sulfate dihydrate (hydrated calcium sulfate).

Gypsum is widely mined and used as a fertiliser. Gypsum is mainly used as a soil ameliorant to improve the structure of sodic and magnesian soils. Gypsum may also be used, at lower rates, as²:

- a sulfur fertiliser;
- a calcium fertiliser.

Applying gypsum can improve the structure of sodic soils and make them less prone to waterlogging by replacing the sodium in the soil with calcium. Sodic soils with a high sodium percentage can be corrected by applying calcium, normally as gypsum³. Calcium ions displace the sodium ions attached to soil particles. In acid-sodic soils, lime can be applied, which will increase the soil pH as well as increase the calcium content of the soil. However, in soils with a neutral or high soil pH, gypsum is preferred because it will increase the calcium content of the soil without further increasing soil pH.

For vegetable production in Queensland as an example, application rates of 5–10 t of gypsum per hectare, preferably before the start of the wet season and well before planting is recommended³. This will help leach the sodium beyond the root zone before planting. Noting that it may take several years and several applications of gypsum before there is a noticeable improvement in soil structure and drainage³.

Draft End of Waste Code

QFF notes that the current Condition of Use (see section 7, page 7 of 11) is for inclusion of gypsum (the approved resource) in the manufacture of composts only; and therefore, by an appropriately licenced facility in accordance with the relevant environmental authority (EA) held by the resource user.

QFF requests that the Condition of Use Section is expanded to include:

Approved Resource and Use

(7.1) [The use of gyprock sourced gypsum as a direct soil ameliorant in accordance with the conditions of the End of Waste Code.](#)

¹ WRAP UK. Case Study: Reducing and recycling plasterboard waste on a site where space is a constraint.

² Incitec Pivot Fertilisers Gypsum Agritopic Sheet. See https://www.incitecpivotfertilisers.com.au/~/_media/Files/IPF/Documents/Agritopics/Gypsum.pdf

³ Queensland Government. Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. Soil Health for Vegetable Production in Australia. (2010). See https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/69812/Soil-health-vegetable-production.pdf

Resource Use

(7.2) Use of the resource to manufacture compost must only be carried out by an appropriately licensed facility in accordance with the relevant environmental authority held by the resource user or as an activity under a designated exemption for Organic Material Processing⁴, specifically

- manufacturing mushroom growing substrate; or
- the composting of organic material from agriculture or livestock production if the organic material is either composted at the site where it was produced; or transported to another site, where agriculture or livestock production is carried out, and composted at that site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at georgina@qff.org.au if you have any queries on the submission.

Yours sincerely

Dr Georgina Davis
Chief Executive Officer

⁴ Queensland Government. Environmental Protection Regulation 2019. Part 12 Waste Management. Page 198. See <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/sl-2019-0155>