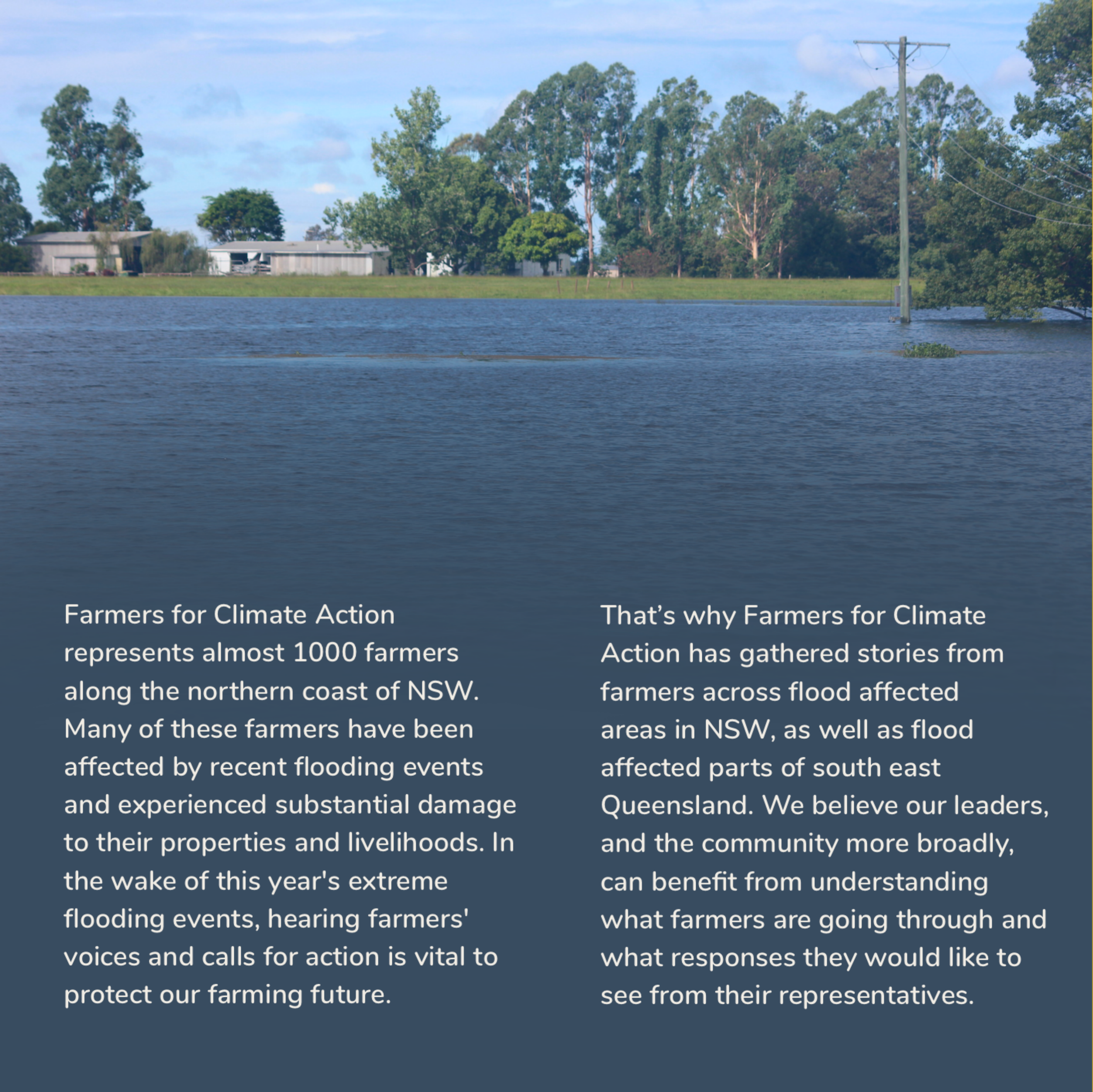




STORIES from the FLOOD FRONTLINE



Farmers for Climate Action represents almost 1000 farmers along the northern coast of NSW. Many of these farmers have been affected by recent flooding events and experienced substantial damage to their properties and livelihoods. In the wake of this year's extreme flooding events, hearing farmers' voices and calls for action is vital to protect our farming future.

That's why Farmers for Climate Action has gathered stories from farmers across flood affected areas in NSW, as well as flood affected parts of south east Queensland. We believe our leaders, and the community more broadly, can benefit from understanding what farmers are going through and what responses they would like to see from their representatives.

THIS IS WHAT FARMERS HAD TO SAY



I'm 77 and supposed to be retired, but I'm looking after the farm and cattle for my daughter and son-in-law who have had to shift all their stock to my place since their property went under. In 2019, we had the worst drought ever and were affected by the fires. During the floods this year I was stranded at home for about a week and a lot of our fencing was washed away. My daughter and son-in-law lost cattle from disease and stress after transporting them to my place.

I'd like to see politicians stick to their promises of support for farmers. We've been made ineligible for assistance for off-farm work that was done several years ago so we could afford to restock after the drought. I'd want to see them be fair-dinkum about it and listen to the scientists on climate change.

- John Redmayne, KYOGLE



I'm a farmer from south east Queensland. We were devastated by the recent floods - our whole property was 3.5 metres underwater. We lost around \$40k in equipment and six months of revenue. I want to see strong climate action to ensure this industry has a future - we can't go on like this.

-Matt Bakker, SE QLD

We've farmed beef cattle for 11 years here. The floods inundated two-thirds of our property.

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The waters were so strong that they tore up a 120-year-old dairy and its concrete foundation slab.

The waters were so strong that they tore up a 120-year-old dairy and its concrete foundation slab. It destroyed about \$100k worth of assets. A friend generously allowed us to move our cattle to his farm, because our grass is soaked and the river water is now contaminated with sewage.

We have a gigantic amount of debris, including caravans and water tanks, strewn across our property from upstream. The clean-up task ahead of us is enormous. We live day to day. It is amazing how traumatising the disaster has been. Big floods are becoming more and more frequent in the time we've been here - climate change is visible. Because of this we would very much like to see more climate action by government.

- Tony Margan, MONALTRIE

I've lived in Bex Hill, near Lismore, all my life. I own farmland used for beef cattle. The recent floods covered about 90% of our land. Luckily our house was unaffected, but we lost a car and several fences. Internet and power were down for a week, but we were able to use our generator.

These disasters will keep getting worse with climate change. The recent flood was two metres higher than we've ever had before. You can't plan for something like that. The government needs to start taking serious action on climate change to stop catastrophes like this getting worse in the future.

- Neil Mcanelly, BEX HILL

I grew up farming, moved away, got a degree in land management and have since come back to my family farm.

70% of the pasture was flooded in the first flood. It is now all still waterlogged, as well as the 30% of flood free land which is so boggy I can't get a ute to the floodplain to fix fences. The cows are hungry, and therefore more difficult to manage. I'll sell some next week. I have bought winter pasture seed, but will probably have to spread it by hand because of bogginess. I'm sick of farming today. I'm tired. My community is tired.

- Vicki Johnson, CLARENCE VALLEY

I want the government to make it clear to our population that investing in sustainable energy sources is not only good but makes strong economic sense.

- Ed Larson, KEMPSEY

We've lived in Whian Whian for 46 years and produce beef cattle and macadamias. We also do a lot of reforestation. In the recent floods, we lost a lot of fences, many planted trees and we've had many landslips on our property. Our macadamias are unharvestable, and we have lost income.

I would like to see politicians taking action to reach net zero as quickly as possible. It's pretty obvious climate change is accelerating.

On a local level, floods such as these can be mitigated through more reforestation, particularly in catchments, and by stopping land-clearing.

Why enter a profession that is largely unsupported, is at the mercy of conventional markets who underpay their producers and bares the brunt of government inaction on climate?

- Janet Petroff, WHIAN WHIAN



A significant concern for us is attracting the next generation of farmers into the profession. As it stands however, any young person looking at what we do would probably shy away from agriculture. **Why enter a profession that is largely unsupported, is at the mercy of conventional markets who underpay their producers, and bare the brunt of government inaction on climate?**

- Tom Macindoe, UPPER NAMBUCCA VALLEY



We've been flooded in on our property for about 36 days since the start of the year. We have lost fences, trees and have had to repair many laneways and the main driveway due to the excessive rain and floods. Our cattleyard is now unusable due to sodden conditions from the flood. We now have new weeds we've not dealt with before that have been washed down from neighbouring properties.

I want to see the government admit and plan for a climate emergency. We have no planet B. **We need to cut emissions now - stop all fossil fuel use, stop logging of native forests and replant trees and shrubs to replenish biodiversity.**

- Emilie Lapointe, HANNAM VALE



My husband and I have farmed beef cattle in Toonumbar for 42 years. During the recent floods, we lost about 400 metres of fence, five creek blocks, and some cuttings as well. We need recognition of climate change from the government. The rains that brought these historic floods were completely unprecedented - things are changing now, and we really need to start planning ahead and acting now.

- Susan Somerville, TOONUMBAR



I'm a grazier in Clarenza and I've been in the valley since 1975.

The floods have caused serious gully erosion on my property and it's still too wet to fix anything. We've lost fencing and half the pasture is out of action. It's impossible to get anything done without getting bogged. I'm worried it will be worse for the cattle as we get into winter.

I'd like to see Australia making better use of renewable energy. We need to be more serious about equipping the country for electric vehicles.

-Ken Woodward, CLARENZA

I'm a grazier, and a farmer. We've had **no crops this summer, and there'll be no crops this winter**, hence no fodder could be saved. We've been forced to sell most of our cattle. There's mud everywhere so we're unable to get onto our paddocks and with nowhere dry to stand or lie the cattle are getting footsore and disease.

We'd like to see a genuine commitment from our government to a clean energy future and a roadmap of how we get there. We'd also like a recognition that the vast majority of genuine farmers have off-farm income. The availability of grants and subsidies to only those enterprises where the bulk of their income comes from the farm is a flawed "validity test".

- Peter Lake, GILLETTES RIDGE

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WE WANT TO SEE:



- 1 Deep emissions reductions this decade led by the energy and transport sectors, relying on offsets only where options for reducing emissions are not available.
- 2 Support for farmers to prepare for and recover from extreme weather through policy, programs and investment, taking into account the expected increases in severity and frequency of extreme weather as a result of climate change.
- 3 A comprehensive National Climate and Agriculture Policy, evidence-based and backed by significant resources to deliver both adaptation and mitigation from the farm gate up through the value chain.
- 4 High integrity carbon and biodiversity markets, backed by public investment to leverage private investment.

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to influence Australia to adopt strong climate policies by growing the number of farmers, farming communities and elected representatives championing strong climate actions.