

MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study released

The Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study will be launched at tomorrow's meeting of the Growing Greater Whitsunday Agrifood Steering Committee.

The final study reveals the capacity and growth for existing and new agricultural commodities in the region.

Greater Whitsunday Alliance Chief Executive Officer Ms Kylie Porter said GW3 collaborated with the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA), North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP), Regional Development Australia Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (RDAMIW) and Bowen Gumlu Growers Association to commission the study.

"The findings of the study show that the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region strengths were diverse resulting from a stable climate and good natural resources, which makes the region capable of producing a variety of different products. This can be strengthened by existing and underutilized assets, including improving road infrastructure, rail and port access," Ms Porter said.

"Importantly, the study also highlighted the MIW location and how we are placed between North and Southern Queensland, which makes it a key node in the broader supply chain, due to many products travelling through the region. This makes an opportunity to collaborate across neighbouring regions as a possibility that can lead to increased export opportunities."

The study conducted by consultant firm ACIL Allen, found the region produces a diverse range of agricultural commodities however 78% of the Gross Value of Production of our region's total agricultural production is in cattle, sugarcane and tomatoes. Other key commodities by value and volume include other fruit and vegetables, broadacre cropping and fish and seafood either wild caught or in aquaculture farms.

Ms Porter said ongoing collaboration with other regions in Northern Australia is the key to developing continuity of supply and scale, which are the two pillars for export and opportunity.

"The region is currently well placed to focus on growing its existing and mature markets of beef cattle and sugar, while the report highlights that developing market access in new product areas such as better waste streams as well as growing high- value opportunities in other horticultural products, fish and seafood needs further attention.

"GW3 along with our stakeholders and the Greater Growing Whitsunday Agrifood committee are excited to use this report as the fundamental base for more activity in the region's agriculture sector."

CRCNA CEO Mr Jed Matz said while the study focused on the opportunities for local MIW producers, it also highlighted the need for ongoing collaboration with other regions across north and far north Queensland as a way to develop scale and persistence in market to better capture and enhance current and future export and domestic markets.

“The CRCNA has commissioned similar regional supply chain studies in far north Queensland and for the Townsville, Ingham and Burdekin regions, which have identified similar barriers and opportunities across the sugar, cropping, horticulture and beef cattle sectors.

“As such, we’re starting to work with these regions to develop a coordinated, regional approach to improving regional agricultural supply chains,” he said.

Federal Member for Dawson Mr George Christensen said the findings of the Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study were of interest given his role as the Chair of the Federal Government’s Trade and Investment Growth Committee.

“Having a tool that allows our region to explore further export opportunities will be of significant benefit to our primary industries, and I thank the various groups who have co-operated in producing this report,” Mr Christensen said.

A full copy of the Agribusiness Export Supply Chain Mapping Study is available to download by visiting:

<http://www.greaterwhitsundayalliance.com.au/Publications/MIW%20Agribusiness%20Export%20Supply%20Chain%20Mapping%20Study%20Report%20-%20Jan%202020.pdf>

Greater Whitsunday Alliance is the region’s peak, independent economic development body committed to making the Mackay, Isaac, Whitsunday region strong for generations.

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The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) mission is to grow the economy, investment, employment, markets, skilled population and wellbeing of the communities of Northern Australia.