

Helping make Queensland farming dreams a reality

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Six years ago, Nathan Townsend and Tirtzah Hartvigsen were living on the Gold Coast when they decided they wanted a change of pace. They saw an ad for a Gympie macadamia farm in need of some repair and thought they would try their hand at farming.

“Other than in the odd backyard around the Gold Coast, we hadn’t seen a macadamia tree before. But we said, why not give it a go?” Nathan explains.

After purchasing the farm and spending four months cleaning it up, a visit from an agronomist confirmed that without a sustainable water supply, their farm had minimal hope of survival. “We started looking into what we had to do to really turn the farm around, and that’s where QRIDA came in. We immediately felt like QRIDA was an organisation we could trust,” Tirtzah says.

Nathan and Tirtzah received finance to invest in irrigation across the property’s 2,700 trees.

“If we hadn’t installed that irrigation, we’d be hundreds of thousands of dollars behind. The loan was vital. You only have to step foot on a farm without irrigation to see the difference, it’s like chalk and cheese. It’s an incredible help,” Nathan says.

Soon after the couple settled in Gympie, Nathan’s parents purchased the macadamia property next door. When his parents decided to sell in April 2021, the couple jumped at the opportunity to expand their enterprise and secured a First Start Loan to do so. “It has really helped us... it was about security for the future,” Nathan says. “Other lenders put up barriers as soon as you mention farming, whereas QRIDA welcomed it.”

Now with the two farms, Nathan and Tirtzah have produced an even better yield than they predicted.

Their first harvest produced only 3 tonne – now, they’re harvesting 60 tonnes of top-quality macadamias across 4,500 trees.

Nathan says, “For our way of life and the way that we are at this very minute, which is in a good position, we wouldn’t be there without that loan.”

QRIDA offers First Start Loans of up to \$2 million and Sustainability Loans of up to \$1.3 million. The loan term is for up to 20 years and interest rates can be fixed for 1, 3 and 5 years with interest-only options also available in some circumstances. Interest rates for loans drawn down from 1 February 2022 are 1.77% (1 year), 2.64% (3 year) and 3.03% (5 year).

There are no exit fees or charges and completed loan applications can be decisioned within 20 business days if all the necessary information is provided.

First Start Loans assist producers in the initial years of establishing their primary production business. It may help aspiring producers ready to purchase their first block of land, carry out the family succession plan or achieve standalone viability. Sustainability Loans can help you invest in the latest infrastructure to create a viable future for your farming business including activities that improve farming system sustainability, natural resource sustainability and financial sustainability. QRIDA has approved 68 First Start Loans and 26 Sustainability Loans to date this financial year, totalling more than \$67 million.



Young Macadamia nuts. Photo credit: Steven Giles.

QRIDA has a network of Regional Area Managers across the state who are available to meet producers on-farm to speak about their options. Brian Coe, Regional Area Manager for the South East and Lockyer Valley, says,



It's important not to self-assess. You could be cutting yourself short of a great opportunity. Every farm business is different and it's important we have the conversation together about your individual business needs.

Visit qrda.qld.gov.au or Freecall 1800 623 946 for more information today.



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+ Grow your business with QRIDA

Looking to start or grow your Queensland berry business?

QRIDA has a network of Regional Area Managers located across Queensland who are ready to guide you through our range of low interest loans, including*:

- **Sustainability Loans** of up to \$1.3 million to help you invest in new and emerging on-farm technologies, improve irrigation facilities, establish renewable energy systems, or purchase or upgrade plant and machinery
- **First Start Loans** of up to \$2 million to help you establish your first primary production enterprise.



Low interest rates | Flexible repayment terms



Our team is ready to talk when you are.

Contact us on **1800 623 946** to speak with your local Regional Area Manager or visit qrda.qld.gov.au

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