

# FACT SHEET

## Savanna fire management

An abatement method under the Emissions Reduction Fund



The Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) allows farmers and other landholders to generate extra income by storing carbon in vegetation and soils, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their operations.

Participants can earn carbon credits by setting up a project using an approved ERF abatement method, which specifies the rules for the activity.

This fact sheet provides an outline of the ERF method [Emissions Abatement through Savanna Fire Management](#).

### What is the method about?

Fires release methane and nitrous dioxide, both powerful greenhouse gases, into the atmosphere. The hotter and more intense the fire the greater the amount of greenhouse gas released.

The current fire regime across the northern Australian savannas is dominated by large wildfires that mostly occur late in the dry season when vegetation is at its driest. These fires are hot and intense and tend to burn most of the fuel available, which results in large emissions of greenhouse gas. By contrast, fires in the early part of the dry season burn cooler because the fuel is not as dry, and release fewer emissions.

This method is about rewarding farmers and other landholders for reducing emissions from savanna fires by shifting burning from the late dry season (August - December) towards the early dry season (January - July) with the intent to reduce the area that is burnt each year.

Careful early dry season burning can have additional advantages such as reducing fuel loads and creating fire breaks in the landscape, which lower the risk of hot fires spreading in the late dry season. It can also help maintain the productive potential of the land, for example by stimulating 'green pick' and controlling weeds.

### How does it work?

In order to determine the extent of emission reductions as a result of savanna fire management activities, producers must determine the historical average of baseline emissions from fire for their project area over a 10-year or 15-year period.

The baseline is established by consulting vegetation maps and satellite fire maps for the project area. This involves the use of a Geographic Information System and will require some technical expertise. Details about how to determine baseline emissions are outlined in the method, and maps are available on the Department of Environment website (see link below).

Once the baseline has been determined, producers can undertake new fire management in their project area. They then use the vegetation maps and satellite fire maps to determine emissions under the new regime.

Emissions abatement is calculated as the difference between the baseline and project emissions. The carbon dioxide released by fire does not count towards the abatement as it is reabsorbed by the landscape in the next growing season.

## Who is eligible?

This method can be used in the savanna areas in the tropical north of Australia.

To be eligible the project must:

- manage fire in the early dry season within a project area larger than 1km<sup>2</sup>
- be located in an area that falls within the high rainfall zone or low rainfall zone, and
- contain one or more of these types of vegetation: eucalypt open forest, eucalypt woodland, sandstone woodland or sandstone heath.

Activities to manage fires must not include the increase in cattle grazing beyond that which occurs under business as usual whereby this activity acts to minimise the occurrence of fires in the late dry season.

Maps showing the eligible project areas (rainfall zones) can be found here:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction-fund/methods/savanna-burning>

Producers who decide to implement a project under this method must first register their project with the Clean Energy Regulator:

<http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Want-to-participate-in-the-Emissions-Reduction-Fund>

## For more information:

Visit the Department of Environment website for more information about the method:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction-fund/methods/savanna-burning>

Visit the Clean Energy Regulator website for more information about how to participate in the Emissions Reduction Fund:

<http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/About-the-Emissions-Reduction-Fund>



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture**



**This fact sheet was developed by the National Livestock Methane Program (NLMP). The NLMP aims to provide Australian livestock producers with practical strategies and tools to help them increase productivity and profitability and at the same time lower methane emissions. It is managed by MLA and supported by funding from the Australian Government.**

Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this fact sheet. However MLA or the Australian Government acting through the Department of Agriculture cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Some information in this fact sheet was drawn from publically available information provided by the Clean Energy Regulator ([www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au)).