

## Digital engagement with landholders – AgValuate tool

### Relevant Hub Outcome

**ST5:** Efficient and effective activities to support RDEA&C and uptake by end users.

**MT1:** Increased availability and accessibility of, and capacity to use and adopt, knowledge that can be applied to improve drought resilience

**MT2:** Increased adoption and commercialisation of drought resilience technologies and practices

### Impact Statement

AgValuate is an innovation readiness assessment tool designed with, and for landholders. It aids in evaluating business strategy and identifying where a farm may sit on the spectrum of 'innovation readiness'. The tool produces an actionable report which outlines the best technologies for a landholders needs and identifies long term improvements to ease future implementation. Overall, AgValuate enables landholders to transform business practice to enhance productivity, resilience and sustainability.

### Background

Agricultural innovation is key to building economic and environmental resilience to drought and other climate change impacts. Adopting new technologies and practices can reduce exposure to drought risk. This helps farmers and their communities sustain productivity and profitability in times of drought. However, not every innovation is suitable for every farm and the technological tool itself represents a singular aspect of the innovation needed to drive resilience. The capacity of landholders to adopt suitable innovations and streamline business practices will be essential to ensuring productivity and sustainability. Farmers need to be able to access tools and information on the innovation options available to them as well as assess what changes to business practice might need to be made in order to adopt them.

AgValuate is a tool designed to assess innovation readiness in agriculture and has been purpose built for farmers, producer and land managers. Through the program and use of the tool, producers have the basis to consider growth and investment in digital agriculture innovation and technologies that can add value and impact to their business in meaningful ways.

### Influence of the Hub

AgValuate was developed as part of the Drought Resilience Research and Adoption program through the TNQ Hub. It was built, designed and extensively tested by the TNQ Hub's Digital Ag Innovation Consultant, Kara Worth. The tool is part of the hub's mission to lead a regional, collaborative approach to support the agricultural sector and communities become more drought and climate resilient by strengthening relationships. The Hub utilises its connections among NRM groups and with other stakeholders to connect farmers with Ag Tech experts in their region. While there is a plethora of technology being continually developed which is available to farmers, it is also important to pair these tools with human expertise in order to support interpretation and implementation.

More recently, the AgValuate program has partnered with TAFE to expand the use of the tool through their "Embracing Agriculture Digital Innovation Workshops".

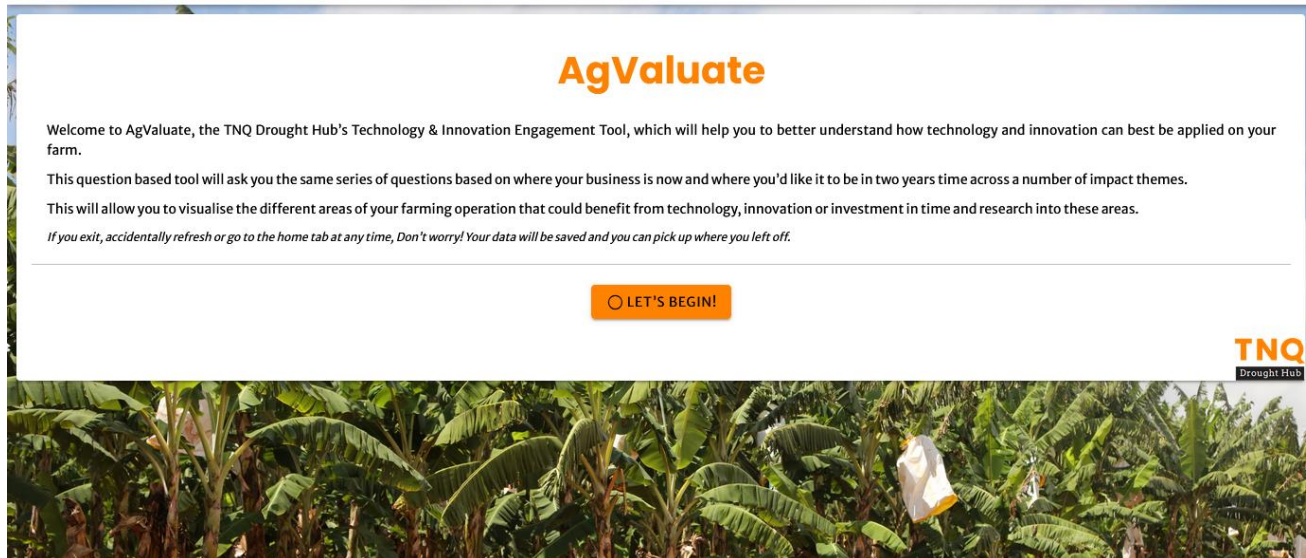
### Operations

Using a co-designed, question-based tool, producers are able to assess their own farm business model identifying areas where innovation can make the biggest impact. The tool evaluates, social, economic and

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environmental impact as well as readiness for technological and innovation adoption. AgValuate asks farmers about their current practices and what their business aspirations are in 2 years' time, it then recommends the types of technologies which may bridge that gap. Once the survey has been completed, a personalised report is generated. The tool was originally targeted toward producers in the Tropical Far North Queensland region, which spans the remit area of the TNQ Drought Hub. However, recently adjustments have been made to allow extension professionals to also access and deliver AgValuate through Train-the-Trainer delivery formats, which includes training on agtech solutions.

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### Issues being addressed

There are more than 1800 technology providers across Australia, representing an overwhelming task for producers who may wish to adopt novel technology on their farms. AgValuate fills this gap by showing farmers in a clear and understandable way which technology types might be immediately suitable for their business and which they might need to make business adjustments for in order to implement. AgValuate will not recommend a specific tool or technology but will offer guidance in the type of innovation that may be beneficial whether that be automated irrigation, cloud based storage or upgrading machinery.

### Impacts and benefits

AgValuate provides a comprehensive assessment of a farm's innovation readiness, offering insights into opportunities for both short-term and long-term improvements. These opportunities are categorized as 'Quick Wins' or 'Longer Term' initiatives based on ease of implementation and the gap between current practices and innovation goals. Part of the broader impact of AgValuate is that it does not solely focus on complex technology such as drones or robotics but instead also includes simple to use, small 'tweaks' that can drastically change business practices and increase efficient farm management (such as cloud-based data storage).

'Quick Wins' are actions that will take less than 6 months to implement and involves making small or non-resource intensive changes to practices. Examples of these include:

- Implementing basic software for farm management
- Streamlining processes by adjusting workflows or communications
- Upgrading existing machinery
- Implementing cloud-based

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Longer term initiatives are those that will take more than 6 months to implement and represent a significant difference between current and aspirational practices. These may involve more substantial shifts in farm management, additional skills or training and adoption of novel tools. They may require testing through on farm trials to may need to be resourced through specifically funded projects, such as:

- Exploring carbon credits
- Adoption of precision agriculture technology through AI or drones
- Utilizing data analytics

Once the AG Valuate report is complete, the team then works with the producers to narrow down the solutions to a manageable list and can provide connections with other programs to assist with implementation (such as TEK Farm)

Since September 2023, 200 producers have utilised AgValuate. The tool has been instrumental in providing a starting point in conversations round AgTech and translating benefits specific to the producer's needs, aiding in effective on-farm uptake.

### Contact

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Producer who wish to utilise the tool can do so here: <https://www.tnqdroughthub.com.au/program-innovation-and-commercialisation/agvaluate/>