

# Come clean go clean

## Vehicle and machinery hygiene is vital to reducing the spread of weeds on your farm

Weeds are a significant biosecurity concern for all farms. They reduce the carrying capacity of pasture, rob moisture and fertiliser from crops and cost producers time and money to control.

When vehicles and machinery enter a property or move from paddock to paddock, there is a risk that they will spread weeds along the way.

Vehicle and machinery movements are inevitable, but effective clean-down practices can reduce the risk of weed spread.



Weed seed can lodge in the cracks and crevices of vehicles and are easily spread within and between properties

## Developing an effective and dedicated clean-down facility



A clean-down facility is an area where farmers and contractors can clean and disinfect all vehicles and machinery entering or leaving the property. Effective farm clean-down facilities go a long way to reducing the chance of spreading weeds.

**Clean-down activities can seem time-consuming but will substantially reduce the risk of new weeds entering your property, saving time and money in the future.**

## Features of an effective clean-down facility

- **Signposts** should be clearly visible with simple instructions so that visitors to your property understand the biosecurity practices you have in place.
- **Positioning** - the facility should be in an open area, preferably close to entry/exit points of the property. Keep it as far away as possible from any production areas. Keep drainage from the clean-down facility confined and away from access to drainage lines.
- The **size** of the facility should ensure there is enough room for large machines to move around.
- **Power and high-pressure water/compressed air cleaners** should be accessible, as this will make clean-down quicker, easier and more effective. If power is not available, a petrol powered pressure cleaner could be used instead.

Great state. Great opportunity.

- Ideally, the **surface** should be sealed with concrete or bitumen. Compacted gravel can be used but is harder to rinse down. If the surface is grassed, it will require extra vigilance and regular treatment of germinating weeds.
- A **sump or waste water collection** area is recommended for water, dirt and any contaminants to drain into. It's important that this, and the surrounding area, is checked regularly and treated for weeds when necessary.

**To stop the spread of weeds between paddocks, use mobile clean-down equipment such as a high pressure water cleaner or air compressor.**



Mobile wash down equipment being used to clean a cane harvester

## Four easy steps for an effective clean-down

### 1. Cleaning down

Clean all incoming and outgoing vehicles and machinery using a high pressure water hose or compressed air to remove any rubbish, plant debris and mud.

Pay careful attention to any crevices where mud or plant debris may be trapped including tricky areas like chassis rails, grills, tyre treads and wheel arches. Be sure to also clean floor mats and vehicle cabin floors to prevent weed seed contamination from footwear.



### 2. Decontamination

Apply a decontaminant solution (which is registered for use for the crop) to all surfaces where dirt and organic material may lodge. This includes tools, footwear, floor mats and other surfaces that may have come into contact with footwear (e.g. foot pedals).

Decontaminant solutions help loosen mud, oil and grease and include anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-viral agents to help stop the spread of specific plant diseases.

Decontaminants should be used in accordance with the product's label recommendations.

### 3. Rinsing the wash pad

Before moving the vehicle, use high pressure water spray to clean the wash pad. Allow drying time before moving the vehicle off the wash pad to a dry surface – this avoids picking up too much dirt in the tyres. Clean the wash pad down so that any dislodged seeds are captured in the sump area where they are less likely to germinate or be spread by other vehicles, animals or wind.

### 4. Cleaning personal equipment

Ensure personal equipment and clothing is cleaned and decontaminated. A foot bath can be used to make sure boots are free of pests and pathogens.

A footbath, cleaning and decontamination solutions should be used to clean footwear and equipment



**Plan work activities so that work is conducted in weed free areas first and infested areas last to minimise the risk of weed spread.**

For further information, visit [www.daff.qld.gov.au](http://www.daff.qld.gov.au) or call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

