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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Partnership Provides Drought Assistance

As the region continues to struggle through drought, Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) has again joined AGFORCE to assist farmers in the Gladstone Region who are finding it difficult to source feed for their stock.

QAL has over 300 hectares of buffer land surrounding the site and over the years has progressively revegetated areas of residue ponds with Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*). Each year the grass is cut, baled and used for mulch within the tree planting areas or for dust suppression on any bare areas of earth around the refinery site.

QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh said QAL was delighted to again provide a valuable contribution to our local farmers.

“The rural sector has been struggling for some time and it is great to be involved in a partnership which will provide them with a helping hand,”

“We estimate there will be 1000 round bales of hay produced from the buffer zone this year. Last year farmers mostly from properties in the central Queensland region including Boyne Valley, Calliope, Dululu and Raglan took advantage of our offer and we hope they do so again.” Mr Greenhalgh said.

Calliope president of AGFORCE, Leo Neil-Ballentine said although the drought situation was not as bad as previous years, the feed was very welcome to rural communities.

“Demand for last year’s donation exceeded supply and we have made sure that the farmers who missed out last year were on the top of our list this time around,”

“Every bit of assistance is much appreciated by the farmers and the feed comes at a good time with plenty of weaners on the ground at the moment.” Mr Ballentine said

Local transport provider Greg Bruce will also be providing a discounted transport rate to ensure the hay arrives at the farmers’ doorstep for as little cost as possible. If you would like some of the donated hay bales for your stock please contact Leo Neil Ballentine on 4974 8994 or Greg Bruce 4975 7863.

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For further information and images, contact:

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Local farmer Ian King was one of many to take advantage of QAL's donation of Rhodes grass harvested from the refinery's buffer zone land.