

# ASEAN and Northern Australia

Northern Australia and the ASEAN region are natural partners for cooperation given the strategic location in the Asia-Pacific and close proximity to Asia. Northern Australia provides world-class agriculture, food, tropical health research, and is Australia's gateway to the Asian economy.

## Northern Australia provides ASEAN markets with:

### Geographical advantage

Within 5 flying hours of Northern Australia there's 630 million to the north and 27 million people to the south.

### Clean and green status

The ASEAN region collectively has a population of over 630 million people, with an increasing appetite for the clean and green food for which Australia is recognised as a global leader. Northern Australia is at the frontline of Australia's biosecurity efforts, with over 10,000km of coastline.

### World-leading tropical medicine research

Northern Australia is already a centre of excellence for tropical health research and tropical environments, and is home to a number of internationally recognised tropical research hubs.

### Humanitarian assistance

Given the proximity to ASEAN regions, Northern Australia is often a first responder to major humanitarian events.

### Defence

There is no region more strategically significant to Australian security than Northern Australia. Defence bases and infrastructure in the north are major drivers of economic activity in regional and remote areas, providing flow on effects to export markets.

### High-quality agri-food products

Urbanisation and the rise of a consuming middle class further fuels demand for higher quality agri-food products. Northern Australia is renowned globally for its pristine environmental assets and high-quality agriculture which combines traditional beef and horticulture productions, as well as tropical cropping and higher value commodities like spices.

### Production in tropical climates

Northern Australia is a part of the United Nations definition of the Tropics, characterised by warm climates, distinct wet and dry seasons and rich biodiversity. Research and innovation in Northern Australia means agricultural systems are adapting to increased climatic events and building resilience to meet market demands year round, supporting growth of the tropical economy.

### Investor ready

Evidence-based research is further de-risking Northern Australia, making it an attractive investment destination. With natural advantages and industry strengths across sectors, combined with First Nations knowledge and the latest research and development is expanding investor opportunities in fields like agriculture, aquaculture, energy, eco-tourism and tropical medical research.

# Trading opportunities

The Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) research found that a wide array of Northern Australia agri-food products could support established and new markets into the ASEAN region.



Beef / Live cattle



Buffalo



Mangoes



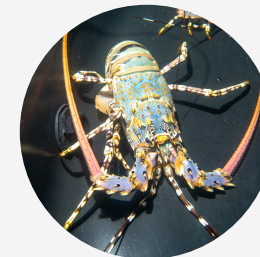
Macadamia



Avocado



Other horticulture\*



Tropical Rock Lobsters



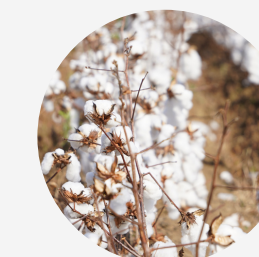
Aquaculture\*



Sugarcane



Tomatoes



Cotton



Other broadacre crops\*

\*Horticulture can include: lychees, mango, pineapple, bananas, jackfruit, melons etc.  
\*Broadacre crops can include: grains, pulses, oilseeds, corn, peanuts, sesame, cotton, soybean etc.  
\*Aquaculture can include: wild caught and on-shore products, along with mud crabs, Barramundi, Trepang, oysters, Cheriban etc.

“The increasingly urbanised ASEAN population has a growing appetite for the clean and green food for which Northern Australia is recognised, so it's crucial we gain a better understanding of what exactly it is these consumers are looking for and how Northern Australian producers and businesses can capitalise on these opportunities.”

**Sheriden Morris, Chair CRCNA**



# Research strengthening ASEAN opportunities

The CRCNA is delivering industry-led research and development collaborations to enable the sustainable economic growth of Northern Australia. CRCNA projects de-risk investment by developing new technologies, products and services which address industry issues across the North to strengthen economic markets in agriculture, aquaculture, health and First Nations led-business development.

## CRCNA projects supporting access to ASEAN markets:

### Agricultural opportunities between ASEAN markets and Northern Australia

In collaboration with the Australia-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce.

### Exporting perishables to Asia

Focused on chilled beef, mango, lychee, table grapes, avocado and other commodities currently grown in the north, to create new supply chains, assess new processing technologies and create greater collaboration among producers, logistics providers and businesses when exporting perishables.

### Cotton, Grains, Cattle program

A comprehensive program focused on integrating agricultural systems to bolster productivity across the north's cropping and cattle sectors. Designed to be specific to the north's unique agricultural operating environment, supply chains and markets.

### North Queensland agricultural ASEAN market and supply chain research

Existing and emerging agri-food products where the north has the most potential.

### Mackay, Isaac, Whitsunday regional agribusiness supply chains

Examined the opportunities for each supply chain for major regional commodities by value and volume.

### Water security for Northern Australia

Extensive research into new approaches to better manage shared water resources in the north to deal with climate impacts of drought and flooding, and provide investor confidence in the production of new agricultural products for high-value markets.

### Buffalo welfare across the supply chain

Ensuring best practice in the wild-harvest buffalo supply chain in the Northern Territory to identify barriers and potential opportunities to ensure the industry's sustainable growth.

“Asian markets remain critical to Northern Australia. There are many synergies in supply chains between the north and our neighbouring countries, but we need to shift our supply chain thinking to create scale, resilience and persistence in the market.”

**Professor Hurriyet Babacan**

The Cairns Institute - Regional Tropical Societies and CRCNA project partner

# Common challenges

CRCNA research has identified synergies in supply chains between Northern Australia and neighbouring countries that could be strengthened.

Despite progress, key gaps in the trade environment remain. Common challenges have been identified by northern agricultural producers, businesses, logistics providers, importers, exporters and consumers.

## To realise increased growth, trading strategies require:

- Supply chains strengthened through transport and processing infrastructure such as sealed roads, abattoirs and cold storage.
- A more targeted market approach to exports to enable aggregation, processing and enhanced market access.
- Adoption of digitally smart technologies and addressing skills gaps in workforces.
- Regulatory bottlenecks e.g. non-tariff measures, trade volumes intensified, ownership restrictions.

## To continue to supply ASEAN markets, Northern Australian producers need to ensure:

- ✓ Sustainable and nature positive production systems.
- ✓ Biosecurity management and disease tolerance.
- ✓ Maintenance of production expertise and adoption of research and development innovations.

Major ASEAN markets for the north's live cattle: 71% Vietnam, 13% Indonesia, 7% Malaysia.

Northern ports like Darwin (NT) manage 38% of Australia's exports, much of this is live cattle.

Northern Australia comprises 53% of Australia's landmass, with 17 million hectares of arable soil.

There's 8,059 agricultural businesses in Northern Australia. That's 9.2% of the national total (87,402).

Northern Australia produces 20% of Australia's aquaculture products.