

## INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

As an irrigator who doesn't purposely floodplain harvest, I find the current situation inequitable. My farm is on a narrow flood plain and we are not allowed flood exclusion banks (levee banks), this means that when there is a large rain event I cannot stop my neighbours runoff water from flowing onto my farm, according to the LAW!. My neighbour is a dryland farmer and doesn't have drains or channels to direct the flow of water on their farm. Their water flows onto my farm and into my irrigation system, this is now called "Floodplain Harvesting", this neighbours water mixes with my rainfall runoff water and i must now call all the water in my irrigation drainage system "Floodplain Harvested Water". How is that fair???

I was under the belief that any water that fell on my farm was water I could legally retain, in fact under the EPA Clean Waters Act I must retain, to store this water to be used on my farm. However, as soon as my neighbours runoff water co-mingles with any of my rainfall runoff water the entire volume in my system is then deemed to be Floodplain Harvested water for which i must account.

I don't want their water, but i must allow it to flow onto my farm as we are not allowed to have exclusion banks, once it flows onto my farm I am deemed to have Floodplain Harvested water and must account for it.

How is that fair? Firstly there is the issue that my 1000 ha of rainfall runoff water, which lets' say I had just irrigated 2/3rd of my farm, rain occurs and the area irrigated is 100% runoff water which I have a right to recover as irrigation water savings, however as it is being contaminated with my neighbours water all of this water is now deemed to be Floodplain harvested water, which it is not! Only a very small proportion of the volume is water from my neighbour the rest is rightfully my water. under the current definition however all of this water is no longer my runoff rainwater but now called Floodplain Harvested water which I must account for.

Secondly how am I to account for this water, my neighbours water is exactly the same colour, I can't draft it off and seperate it and now I must somehow measure it and account for it seperate to my rainfall runoff water, how exactly am I supposed to do that? The number of water meters and pipes that would have to be installed to control my neighbours so that it can be measured would be insane not to mention the cost.

Thirdly, I have not broken any law, in fact I am following the law by allowing my neighbours water to flow onto my farm, however if I don't/can't measure it I am breaking the law and being called a water thief! How is that fair?

Surely the laws makers of this society can see sense, accidental flow of water onto a farm must be exempt from the commercial take of Flood Plain water under the Floodplain Harvesting definition. I don't want my neighbours water, I wish i could put up levee banks to keep it out but the law won't allow me. But now it is illegal for me to have this water come on my farm unless I can seperate it from my own water, measure it and account for it. what a nightmare that will be.

To make all of this worse, I am now told that any water that is deemed to be Floodplain Harvested water will be accounted for by taking that water from my Uregulated river License! How is that fair?

My Unregulated River License has nothing to do with my tailwater management of rainfall runoff or in very wet times also managing the water that flows onto my farm from my neighbour. Why should water allocation be taken off my Unregulated River License to account for water that has flowed onto my farm from a completely different water source? How is that fair?

What would be fair is changing the law to make my dryland neighbour build a water reticulation system forcing them to manage and keep their own water on their place. I would love to see how farmers would react to that cost!

The rainfall runoff regulation meant that I could continue to operate my farm as designed for best practice, to meet these largely environmental obligations without the need to be a floodplain harvester.

I do not consider myself a floodplain harvester, but I am an irrigator with expertly designed and precision developed irrigated land, which, captures my excess irrigation water and rainfall runoff within my farm to avoid releasing potentially contaminated water back into our rivers.

The rainfall runoff regulation clearly enabled me to continue that historical practice without the need for excessive regulation or cost. The rainfall runoff regulation would have provided me the ongoing certainty around how to operate my farm without impacting legal limits, as it's a small volume of water.

I support that all major water take for irrigation should be licensed, metered, and reported to Government and our community. This obviously must include floodplain harvesting where it occurs.

However, it should exempt where small amounts of runoff water enter a farm from neighbouring properties.

I hope that sensible process and decisions can be applied to sort out this mess.

Thank you