

Guide to using the Fodder code

Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code

Managing Fodder Harvesting

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About this guide

This guide has been developed to help landholders operate under the *Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing fodder harvesting* (Fodder code). It refers to the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and the *Planning Act 2016*, which jointly regulate the clearing of native vegetation in Queensland.

The guide is not intended to be exhaustive. It only deals with operating under the Fodder code. It provides supplementary information, and is designed to be read in conjunction with the Fodder code, and with the *General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes* which provides information about the notification process, landholder obligations, and technical information that applies to all codes.

Landholders are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the local, state and federal Acts and Regulations that apply to their operations.

Common abbreviations and definitions used in this document

- Code = accepted development vegetation clearing code
- Fodder code = Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Code: Managing Fodder Harvesting
- The department/NRMMRRD = Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development
- RE = regional ecosystem
- VM REDD = Vegetation Management Regional Ecosystem Description Database

All terms in this guide have the meaning provided in the Fodder code or the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*.

Further information

For more information call **135 VEG (135 834)**

email vegetation@nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au

or search 'Vegetation Management' on www.qld.gov.au.

Links to other resources

[Accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#)

[General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#)

[Vegetation Management Regional Ecosystem Description Database \(VM REDD\)](#)

Managing fodder harvesting

The current Fodder code became effective on 22 November 2023.

You can also apply for a development approval to harvest fodder under the *Planning Act 2016*. Further information on development approvals is available online at www.qld.gov.au (search for 'development approvals to clear native vegetation').

Scope

The Fodder code applies to most land in the local government areas of Balonne, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall Tambo, Bulloo, Diamantina, Goondiwindi, Longreach, Maranoa, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Western Downs, and Winton. Note that the fodder code does not apply to some land tenures, such as dedicated roads. Refer to the Fodder code for more information.

The Fodder code authorises fodder harvesting in category B areas (remnant vegetation), category C areas and category R areas (both regulated regrowth vegetation).

What is fodder harvesting?

Fodder harvesting is the clearing of vegetation that predominantly consists of fodder species and is necessary to provide fodder for stock.

TIP *You do not need to notify the department or follow the code if you are only lopping branches off fodder trees in a way that does not kill the trees.*

To meet requirements of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, the Fodder code has specific environmental outcomes to be achieved (see section 1.3) and includes requirements to ensure that the harvesting of fodder for stock occurs in a sustainable way. This ensures that harvesting practices will retain or restore the regional ecosystem over time and prevent land degradation.

Fodder species

The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* defines fodder species as comprising *Acacia aneura*; *Acacia brachystachya*; *Acacia excelsa*; *Acacia pendula*; *Acacia sibirica*; *Alphitonia excelsa*; *Flindersia maculosa*; and *Geijera parviflora*.

Fodder harvesting practices

The fodder harvesting practices in the code will:

- ensure the vegetation is available for future generations
- conserve the regional ecosystem (RE)
- result in vegetation being left where it is cleared.

Section 4 of the Fodder code deals with fodder harvesting practices, and refers to specific sections in the code for more information on each requirement:

Limitations (section 4.1)

- Selective harvesting (section 4.2)
- Strip and block harvesting (section 4.3)
- Soil and water quality protection (section 4.4)
- Exchange area requirements (section 4.5)

Fodder harvesting limitations

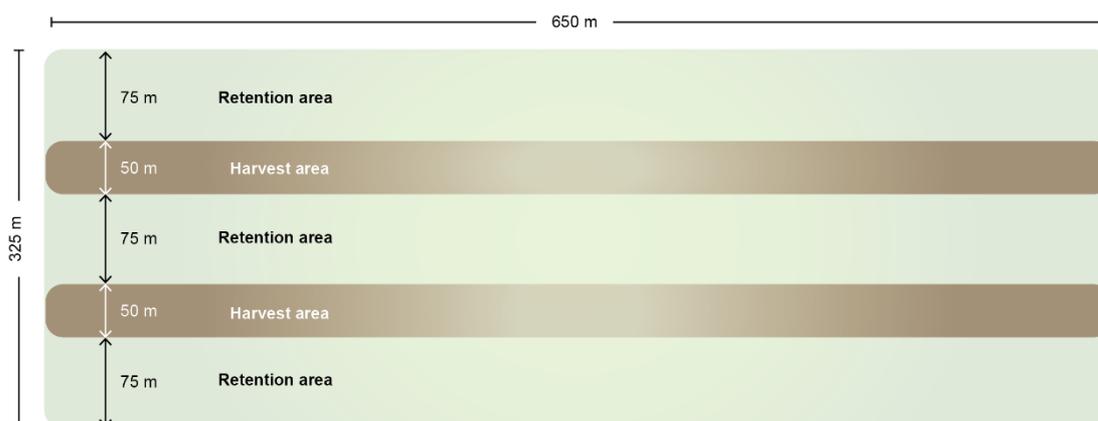
Section 4.1 of the Fodder code applies a range of fodder harvesting limitations, regardless of the harvesting method. The following information provides general information only for some of these limitations. Landholders should refer to the full list of limitations contained in the code.

Fodder harvesting notification area limits

Section 4.1(1) of the Fodder code limits fodder harvesting to 500 hectares per notification. There is no limit on the number of notifications you may lodge per lot; however, before lodging a subsequent notification you will need to conduct a self-audit of fodder harvesting under the previous notification to ensure it was compliant with the code.

TIP *You are not required to submit the self-audit to the department but you must retain the audit and make it available to the department upon request. For more information about the notification and self-audit process, refer to the [General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#)*

For the purpose of this limitation, the 500 hectares covers both the actual harvested area and the associated retained area. For example, Figure 1 shows both the strip harvest area and the strip retention area for a strip harvesting scenario. While the actual area harvested is about 6.5 hectares, the total area of about 21.1 hectares, is the figure used to determine the 500 hectare area limit.



$$\text{Total area} = 650 \text{ m} \times 325 \text{ m} = 211\,250 \text{ m}^2 = 21.1 \text{ hectares}$$

$$\text{Harvest area} = 650 \text{ m} \times 50 \text{ m} \times 2 = 65\,000 \text{ m}^2 = 6.5 \text{ hectares}$$

Figure 1: Strip harvesting scenario showing actual harvest area compared to total area considered in the notification.

Maintaining regional ecosystems on each lot

In some REs (those listed in the code), fodder harvesting must not be undertaken in more than 50 percent of the area on the lot within any 10-year period from the date of any of the following:

- Clearing under a development approval
- The expiry of a prior accepted development vegetation clearing code notification to clear for fodder harvesting
- The expiry of a prior accepted development vegetation clearing code notification to clear for managing thickened vegetation (now revoked)

When determining 50 percent of the area of a RE on the lot, calculations should consider each RE individually over the entire lot in any given 10 year period.

 See Table A1-1 and Table A1-2 in Appendix 1 of the Fodder code for a list of these REs.

Essential habitat

Essential habitat is the habitat of native wildlife prescribed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or near-threatened (protected wildlife). See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for more information on how to identify essential habitat.

The code does not permit clearing in areas mapped as essential habitat unless the area is a category C area or a category R area, and an exchange area is legally secured in accordance with section 4.5 of the Fodder code. The exchange area reference number must be provided with the notification to clear under the Fodder code.

 For information about how to secure an exchange area refer to the *General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes*

Exchange area requirement recommendation

Before undertaking clearing that requires legally securing an exchange area, it is recommended that independent legal and financial advice is obtained regarding the impact of any subsequent certification of a property map of assessable vegetation (PMAV) or declared area (voluntary).

Land zone 7

Landholders may not harvest vegetation in a RE that includes land zone 7, unless all other reasonably accessible fodder resources have been used. That is, if there are other REs on your lot that are reasonably accessible in which you can harvest fodder consistent with the code requirements, you should use that resource before harvesting fodder on land zone 7. The land zone number is the middle number from the three-part RE number (e.g. RE 6.7.9). Land zone 7 is described as 'ironstone jump-ups'.

RE numbers can be viewed on the vegetation management supporting map at www.qld.gov.au (search for 'vegetation management map') or on Queensland Globe at www.qld.gov.au (search 'Queensland Globe'). For more information on REs, see the *General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes*.

Leaving harvested vegetation where it falls

The code prohibits raking or moving harvested vegetation from where it falls, except where removal is required for essential or routine management (such as vehicular tracks or fire management lines up to 10 metres wide).

Leaving harvested vegetation where it falls maintains fauna habitat, helps control erosion and run-off, accumulates seed banks, conserves topsoil and protects young regenerating fodder species.



Figure 2: Keeping harvested fodder where it falls

Retention of tall non-fodder species

The Fodder code requires that all non-fodder species that are 4 metres in height or taller must be retained (see section 4.1). Non-fodder trees that are 4 metres or taller cannot be felled for any reason under the Fodder code. This requirement applies to all fodder harvesting methods. For methods to estimate tree height see the *General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes*.

Note, when using selective harvesting all non-fodder species (i.e. regardless of height) must be retained, unless damage is an unavoidable consequence of harvesting (see section 4.2). Block or strip harvesting methods are not required to retain non-fodder species in the harvest area that are less than 4 metres in height.

Fodder requirements for stock

To comply with the Fodder code, fodder harvesting must not exceed the amount necessary to supply the required fodder for the number of stock on the property. When calculating how much you need to harvest, you should take into account the fodder required per head and the length of time that cut fodder will last on the ground.

Feed value of cut fodder

The feed value of fodder trees can vary significantly, depending on tree species, growing conditions and the availability of supplements. While it's common to cut two to three days' supply ahead so that leaves will have reduced tannin levels, daily cutting may be necessary in summer to avoid leaves withering.

Mechanical clearing

Mechanical clearing refers to clearing of vegetation using a machine such as a tractor and any attachments such as a blade or thinning bar, cutter bar, chopper roller or other implement.

The code prohibits mechanical clearing in a number of situations (described in Table 1).

Table 1: Mechanical clearing limitations for fodder harvesting

Areas where mechanical clearing must not occur	Additional guidance available
On slopes greater than 5%	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further explanation on measuring slope.
Within 50 metres of soil erosion and instability	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further explanation of soil erosion and instability.
Inside or within specified distances from the defining bank of wetlands, watercourses or drainage features. Refer to the code for specified distances.	See General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for relevant terms and mapping.

Fodder harvesting methods

The fodder harvesting methods available under the code are:

- selective harvesting
- strip harvesting
- block harvesting.

The method you choose will depend on factors such as the form and distribution of your fodder species, the amount you need to harvest each week, the labour and equipment available and the slope of the land.

Selective harvesting

Selective harvesting involves the targeted felling of individual fodder trees while avoiding damage to the surrounding vegetation.

 *Section 4.2 of the Fodder code describes acceptable selective harvesting practices.*

Selective harvesting regional ecosystems

Selective harvesting can be used in any RE listed in the code. However, selective harvesting is the only method that can be used in RE's listed in table A1-2 of Appendix 1 in the code. This is because fodder species are generally not dominant in those RE's or the RE's are more susceptible to land degradation. Selective harvesting is the felling of individual fodder trees using a chainsaw, or selectively pushing individual fodder trees using a tractor or dozer.

 *See Table A1-1 and Table A1-2 in Appendix 1 of the fodder code for a list of these REs.*

Retaining non-fodder species

All non-fodder species (any species not listed as a fodder species) must be retained when selective harvesting, except where damage is an unavoidable consequence of harvesting the targeted fodder species. Non-fodder species that are 4 metres high or more may not be felled for any reason. Refer to the General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for explanation on how to measure tree height.

Retaining fodder species

Fodder tree retention depends on the RE number and its class. Retention requirements are based on a felled tree to retained tree ratio, being either 1:1 (for least concern REs) or 1:2 (for of concern REs).

The most practical way to achieve this retention ratio is to retain one or two fodder trees nearest to the felled tree. After harvesting a small area (e.g. half a hectare) you should check whether you have retained the correct number of fodder trees in relation to the number of felled fodder trees, and adjust your approach accordingly.

Strip and block harvesting

 *Section 4.3 of the Fodder code defines the requirements for strip and block harvesting.*

Strip harvesting involves pushing or pulling stands of fodder species in strips, while retaining undisturbed areas of vegetation on either side. This method may be more appropriate where fodder species dominate the RE.

Block harvesting involves harvesting fodder species in blocks or clumps, while retaining undisturbed areas of vegetation on all sides.

Within the strips and blocks, you must not clear non-fodder species that are 4 metres in height or more. In circumstances where the distribution of fodder species is patchy, a combination of strip and block harvesting may be used to make the best use of the available fodder. In dense stands, any attempt to selectively push will inevitably result in the clearing of a strip, as you walk the machine from tree to tree. In this case it may be best to strip harvest. In less dense stands, it may be possible to selectively push individual fodder trees without inadvertently knocking over other vegetation.

In both cases, vegetation must be retained around each strip or block (retention areas). Retention areas help maintain connectivity, act as windbreaks and promote revegetation of harvested areas.

Within these retention areas, the clearing is only permitted if it is required to provide machinery access between strip or block harvest areas, up to a width of 15 metres. These are also called 'machine laneways'.

Strip and block harvesting regional ecosystems

The Fodder code restricts strip and block harvesting to certain REs listed in the code.

 *See Table A1-1 in Appendix 1 of the Fodder code for a list of these REs.*

Strip harvesting configuration and retention areas

The Fodder code places a width limit on strip harvest areas of 50 metres. It also requires that strip retention areas equal to 1.5 times the width of the strip harvest area are retained along both sides of the strip harvest area.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate how strip harvest areas and retention areas operate together. Table 2 provides examples of the required width of strip retention areas for various strip harvest area widths, in order to comply with the code.

Strip harvesting

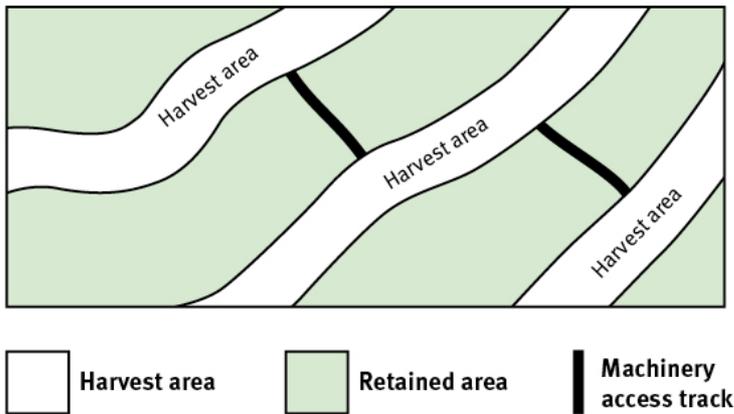


Figure 3: Strip harvesting—retained areas and harvest areas

Strip harvesting

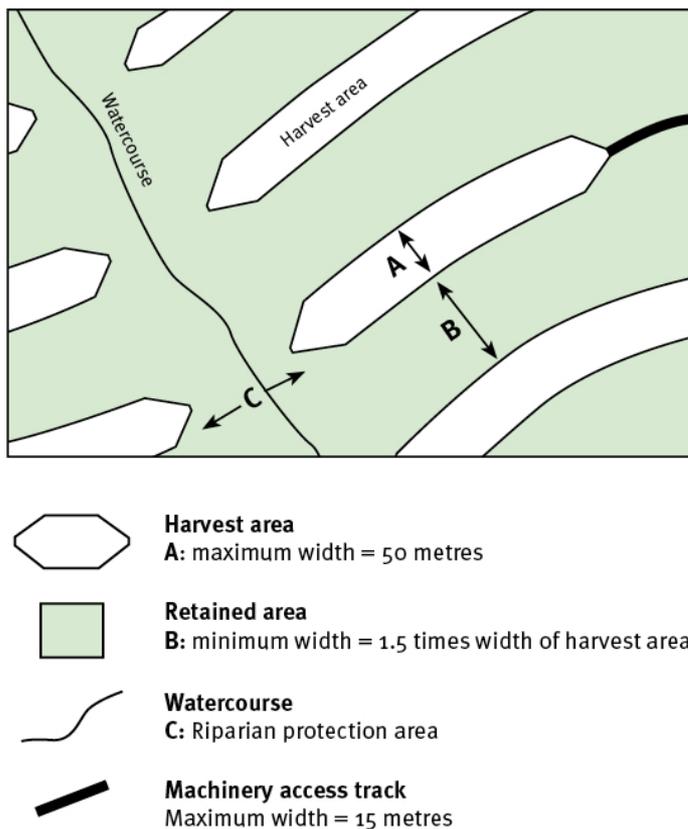


Figure 4: Configuration of harvest areas and retained areas

Table 2: Examples of harvest and retained area widths for strip harvesting that will comply with the Fodder code

Strip harvest area width (metres)	Minimum width of strip retention areas (metres)
5	7.5
10	15
20	30
50	75

Block harvesting configuration and retention areas

The Fodder code places an area limit on block harvest areas of one hectare. It also requires that block retention areas are retained around all sides of the block harvest areas. These areas need to equal the areas stated in Table 2 of the Fodder code, being a minimum of:

- 75 metres for a block harvest area that is less than 0.5 hectare
- 150 metres for a block harvest area that is between 0.5 – 1 hectare.

Figure 5 illustrates how block harvest areas and retention areas operate together.

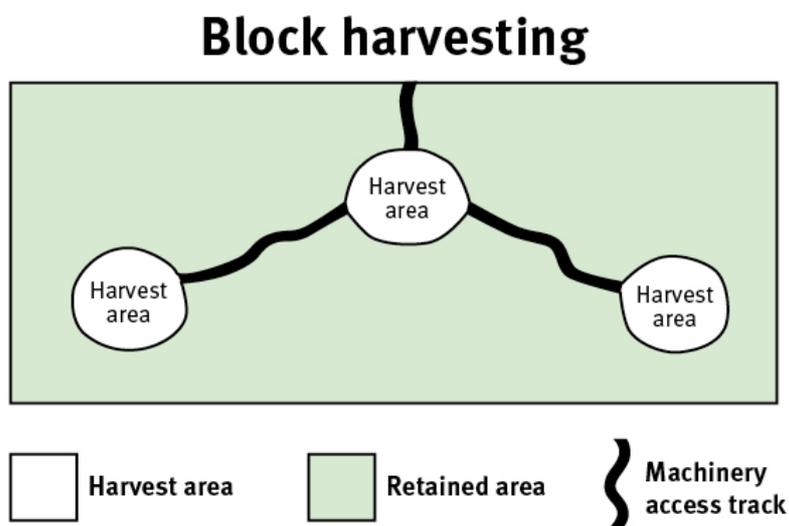


Figure 5: Block harvesting—block retention areas and block harvest areas

Strip and block harvesting limitations

Strip and block harvesting:

- must not occur in REs that are less than 10 hectares in area or less than 500 metres wide
- must be aligned to the contour where practical
- must not remove non-fodder species that are 4 metres high or more. Refer to the General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for explanation on how to measure tree height.

Strip and block harvesting tree maturity and retention areas

Strip and block harvesting has specific requirements associated with tree heights and retention areas to help ensure the RE is not adversely affected by fodder harvesting.

Fodder harvesting must not occur in vegetation that has been harvested in the last 10 years. This vegetation includes strip-harvest areas, block-harvest areas and retained areas. This means you can't undertake any type of harvesting in an area if it is still functioning as a retained area for an adjacent area harvested in the last 10 years.

Retention areas must contain fodder species with an average height of at least 4 metres. In other words, if the average height of the fodder species in that part of the RE is less than 4 metres, then that part of the RE does not qualify as a retention area. Refer to General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further explanation on how to measure tree height.

If fodder harvesting has previously occurred within the RE, strip or block harvesting may only occur if the previously harvested fodder trees have attained an average height of at least 4 metres and the average height of the fodder trees is at least 70% of the height of the tallest stands of that fodder species in the RE.

Figure 6 shows how some of these requirements would apply.

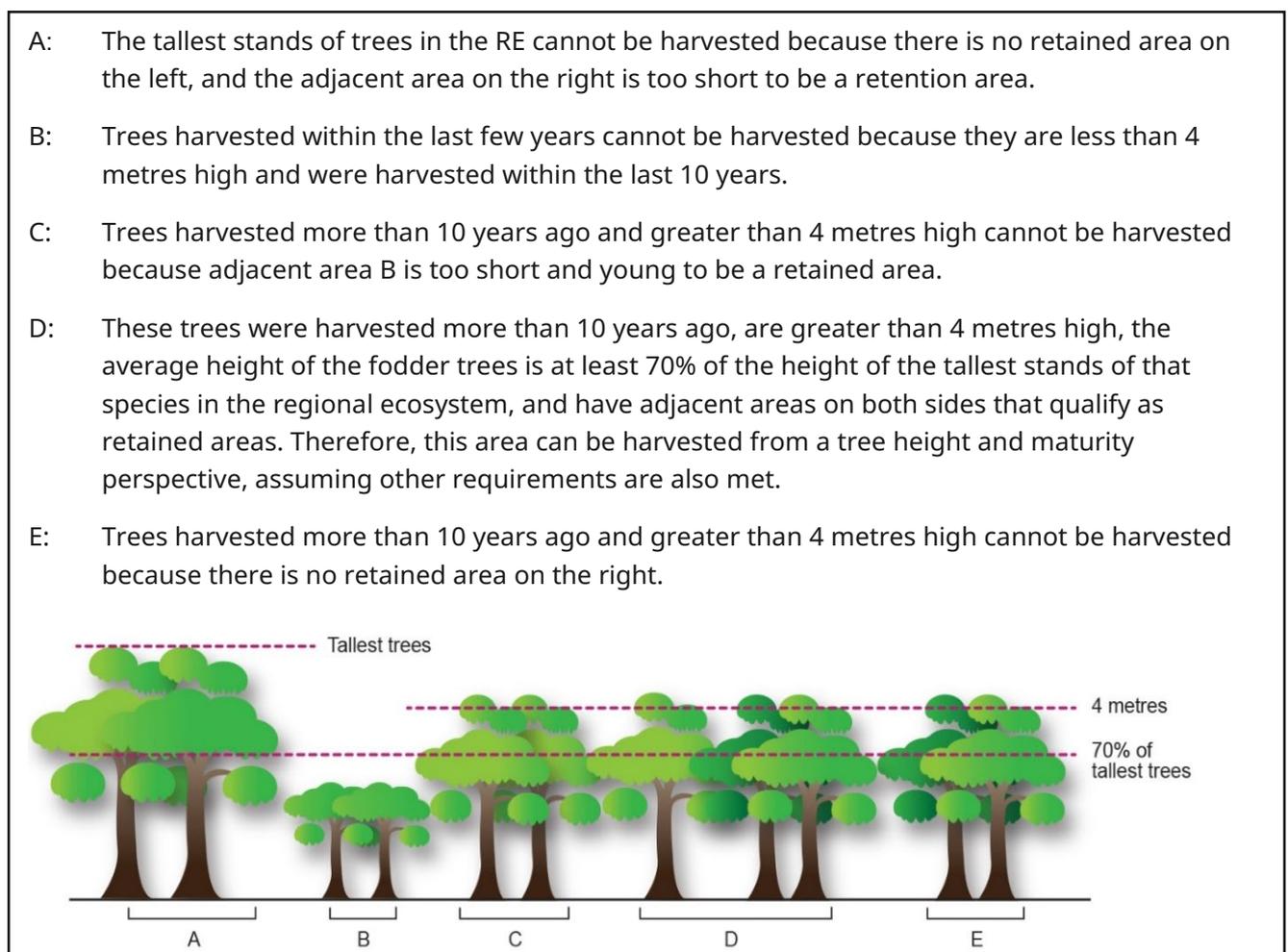


Figure 6: Example of tree heights and maturity that can and cannot be harvested for fodder

Soil and water quality protections

Soil and water quality protections are covered in section 4.4 of the Fodder code. Please see General guide to accepted development vegetation clearing codes for further information on protections for soil and water quality.