

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Thursday, 30 April 2020

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED FARMERS

Drought-impacted farmers will now be able to receive expanded grant support from the Victorian Government to ensure they have more access to the technology and expertise they need now and to prepare for future seasons.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced the changes to funding programs to acknowledge the ongoing challenges farmers are facing dealing with drought, bushfires and coronavirus.

The maximum amount available for the On-Farm Drought Resilience Grant Program will increase from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This means farmers can use up to \$5,000 for farm business planning activities and \$5,000 for drought infrastructure investments.

The program now also allows applications for new eligible technologies to improve mobile phone connectivity for access to the internet and online drought services, and items such as soil moisture probes.

Farmers in drought-affected areas also impacted by the bushfires will be able to reapply for the grant where their previously funded investment was destroyed or damaged.

The popular Farm Machinery Grant Program has also been extended to allow more farmers in the Millewa region to access these grants of up to \$10,000. Farmers interested in applying are encouraged to contact the Victorian Farmers Federation.

While recent rainfall across much of the state has been a promising sign, many farmers still face a long road to recovery from years of dry conditions. The expanded funding grants will provide targeted help to where it is most needed.

These grant programs are part of the Victorian Government's \$31 million support package announced in October, providing targeted support for areas hit hardest by dry conditions.

For more information on drought and dry seasonal conditions support and services visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons or call 136 186.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We know there is continued financial pressure on farmers already dealing with drought and bushfire impact – we want to make sure they have access to all the services on offer from the Government."

"We recognise that supporting farmers through informed decision-making is more important than ever. Our support doesn't just help farmers now, but sets farming communities up to adapt to more frequent and severe dry conditions in years to come."

Quote attributable to Rural Assistance Commissioner Peter Tuohey

"It's important not to self-assess – you don't want to miss out on something you are eligible for. I encourage farmers who have been managing through the drought to contact Rural Finance or the Rural Financial Counselling Service to get advice on the support available to them."

Media contact: Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 | casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au