

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



Wednesday, 13 May 2020

UPSKILLING WORKERS TO BOOST VICTORIA'S DAIRY WORKFORCE

Job seekers matched with Victorian dairy farmers looking for help will be brought up to speed with specific training as part of a new program run by Dairy Australia and backed by the Victorian Government.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced \$715,000 for the *Dairy Farm Induction Program*, which will help job seekers rapidly upskill and provide employers with training to induct new workers into their farm business.

The Program is part of the \$50 million *Agriculture Workforce Plan* which seeks to support Victoria's agricultural industries and provide job-ready workers to meet labour demands.

The new Program highlights an important component of the Workforce Plan in making sure incoming workers have access to rapid and high quality training, to ensure agricultural roles can be taken up quickly.

As part of the *Dairy Farm Induction Program*, an online learning package will be offered to help job seekers understand the culture of the workplace, and important day-to-day tasks such as machinery operation and handling stock.

Consultants will also be available to support farmers by providing training support on their farms for a smooth worker induction.

The Victorian Government is working closely with the state's agricultural sector to ensure its crucial supply chains can continue during the coronavirus pandemic.

This includes continuing to test Victorians with even mild symptoms through new rapid response outbreak squads proactively visiting high-risk facilities, businesses and industries, and through pop-up testing sites.

Agriculture Victoria is also meeting weekly with the Victorian Agriculture Industry Reference Group to share information from the Government, ensure they have most up-to-date health and business advice and directly respond to feedback and concerns.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"The need to find new workers to meet labour gaps in agriculture has thankfully been less than anticipated due to the strong position of our ag sector – but the effects of this pandemic will still be felt for a long time to come."

"This program is just one example of how we're working with industry to make sure their needs are met and to keep Victoria as the dairy heartland of Australia."

Quote attributable to Managing Director of Dairy Australia David Nation

"This new program will fast track the dairy industry's ability to upskill new workers and help make training more accessible. It is needed now to support the production of high-quality dairy products through the pandemic and to grow one of Victoria's industry success stories."