

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture
Acting Minister for Local Government
Acting Minister for Suburban Development



Thursday, 23 September 2021

SUPPORTING AGRIBUSINESSES TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE

Victorian farmers are saving on their energy costs and reducing their emissions on-farm, thanks to a Victorian Government grant program supporting investments in more energy efficient technology.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Meredith Dairy in western Victoria, one of several businesses benefitting from the *Agriculture Energy Investment Plan* (AEIP). The AEIP offers grants up to \$250,000 to install infrastructure and technology that will make farms more competitive and protect local jobs.

Under the AEIP, family-run business Meredith Dairy received a \$250,000 grant to support its investment in a biomass energy unit, a solar power system and cool room upgrade.

The project is expected to generate over \$94,000 in on-farm energy savings each year, which is almost a third of the business's on-farm energy costs.

In addition to grant funding, the AEIP supports farm businesses better understand their on-farm energy usage and how to reduce it.

This includes free on-farm energy assessments to assist farmers in identifying how they can improve energy efficiency and productivity, as well as research partnerships, demonstrations of energy-efficient technology on-farm, and educational resources for producers on alternative energy options.

Under the AEIP, 546 grants totalling \$29 million have been awarded so far and almost 1,370 on-farm energy assessments have been completed, valued at \$12 million.

The Government is protecting and strengthening the future of agriculture through the 10-year *Agriculture Strategy*, building a more resilient, energy efficient and internationally competitive sector that is well-placed to respond to climate change.

This program is one of the many ways the Victorian Government is leading the way in providing a clear path forward for farmers to prepare for and respond to climate change.

For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Energy is a significant cost for many farmers – we are working to put money back in farmers pockets by supporting them to improve energy efficiency on-farm and take action on climate change."

Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

"Supporting agricultural businesses to invest in energy efficient infrastructure and technology will build resilience within the sector and help farmers to be financially and environmentally viable."

Quote attributable to Meredith Dairy co-owner Sandy Cameron

"This project allows us to supply 70 per cent of our electricity requirements and all heating requirements with renewable energy, helping us to become a net-zero emissions agribusiness."

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