

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



Thursday, 9 December 2021

RED SEAWEED TRIALS - REDUCING COW METHANE EMISSIONS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting the agriculture sector to boost productivity and sustainability.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited Ellinbank SmartFarm in West Gippsland to recognise the first anniversary of the Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Council (VACCC) being appointed and observing experiments which test the impact of red seaweed on reducing methane emissions of dairy cows.

As part of the research investment, dairy cows at the Ellinbank SmartFarm are taking part in an experiment where they are fed red seaweed (*Asparagopsis*) in controlled amounts. Red seaweed has shown great potential to significantly reduce methane emissions.

The Ellinbank SmartFarm is positioned to be the world's first carbon neutral dairy farm by 2026 and is showing this can be done while maintaining or improving productivity.

VACCC was appointed last year to provide independent advice to the Victorian Government on how to support the state's agriculture sector to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

In its first year, the VACCC has played a key role in shaping the design and delivery of the Agriculture Sector Pledge – the Labor Government's \$20 million investment in emissions reduction activities.

This includes working with industry and government to develop Victoria's first Agriculture and Climate Change Statement, setting a shared vision for agriculture's role in a net zero emissions economy.

The VACCC has also provided critical input to the five-year Primary Production Adaptation Action Plan – set for release in early 2022 – which outlines government's priorities for ensuring Victoria's primary industries are climate resilient now and into the future.

For more information visit [Agriculture Victoria website](#).

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"The research being done at Ellinbank SmartFarm guided by our VACCC is a key example of how we are responding to industry's need to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate."

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Victoria is leading the way in emissions reductions with the agriculture sector playing a critical role in helping our state reach the target of halving emissions by 2030."

Quote attributable to VACCC member Professor Richard Eckard

"The agriculture sector is the fourth largest contributor to Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions so we value the opportunity to shape the direction and delivery of the state's agriculture and climate change programs."

Quote attributable to Agriculture Victoria Research Director Professor Joe Jacobs

"The research at the Ellinbank SmartFarm is delivering benefits to the Australian dairy industry and providing critical insights to support the agriculture sector respond to climate change challenges while reducing emissions."

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