

Media Release

Ms Danielle Green MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Sport

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria



Wednesday, 15 December 2021

HAMILTON SMARTFARM SHOWCASING INNOVATION

The Andrews Labor Government is backing farmers to adapt to climate change and increase productivity, with a fifth SmartFarm at Hamilton in the state's south-west.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green was in Hamilton today to officially open the SmartFarm, which has been backed by the Labor Government's \$5 million *Smarter, Safer Farms* initiative.

The Hamilton SmartFarm will support 34 researchers and innovation staff and students to work on cutting-edge research. The discoveries from the SmartFarm will support farmers to become more innovative through using new technologies specific to the livestock industries and cereal and oilseed production in Victoria's high rainfall zone.

With a focus on the production of feed for livestock, the Hamilton SmartFarm is home to the world's largest ryegrass field experiment, where scientists are using robotic and sensor technologies to measure and assess 1,300 varieties of ryegrass in the field.

This approach has dramatically accelerated the plant breeding process, ensuring farmers have faster access to pasture varieties that are more productive and nutritious for their livestock, and are better able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

A Forage Innovation Precinct is being established at the SmartFarm to demonstrate the potential of improved feed crops and their management to optimise livestock performance.

The Forage Innovation Precinct will be managed as a self-contained 'farmlet' to provide scalability to farmers and will include a platform to develop new and emerging technologies to measure and manage forages and animal performance.

The Hamilton SmartFarm will address emerging issues facing high-rainfall grain growers, with research focused on improved resource-use efficiency, on-farm management packages to optimise new genetics, effective disease and pest management and proactive risk management strategies to manage seasonal variability.

Hamilton SmartFarm is one of five across the state, with other SmartFarms based in Mildura, Tatura, Ellinbank and Horsham.

The SmartFarms are delivering on the Victorian Government's commitment to modernise and protect the state's farming industries through innovation, investment and future skills as outlined in its Strategy for Agriculture. For more information on SmartFarms, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green

"The Hamilton SmartFarm is ensuring our scientists remain at the forefront of agricultural research and can provide Victorian farmers with the skills and knowledge they need to continue to thrive under a changing climate."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"The use of the latest remote and sensor technologies at Hamilton SmartFarm is helping to fast-track research so farmers can access improved crop varieties and adopt new practices on their farms to improve yields – which means more local jobs."

Media contact: Nadia Dimattina 0438 701 306 | Nadia.dimattina@minstaff.vic.gov.au