

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the
Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources

Friday, 5 July 2019



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

PIONEERING TECHNOLOGY FOR VICTORIAN FARMERS

An innovative trial testing the potential of Internet of Things technology on farms is now open to Victorian horticulture, dairy, sheep and grains farmers, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today visited the Southern Mallee, which will be home to the grains industry trial, to open expressions of interest for the Labor Government's \$12 million program.

The trial will support Victorian farmers to investigate and capitalise on the opportunities of digital technology, putting themselves – and Victorian agriculture – at the forefront of farming innovation.

Embracing digital agriculture has the potential to boost the value of Australia's agricultural production by \$20.3 billion, with Internet of Things technology – making appliances 'smart' by connecting them to each other via the internet – at the heart of this growth.

The Internet of Things technology will allow farmers to gather on-farm data from embedding sensors on devices such as soil moisture probes, weather stations and silo storage monitors.

Over the next two years, Agriculture Victoria will partner with hundreds of farms in the trial across four regions: dairy in Maffra, grains in Birchip, sheep in Serpentine and horticulture in Tatura.

The program is now encouraging farmers who want to take a low-risk approach to investing in new technology to apply for the program and trial new devices that could boost their farm's efficiency and productivity.

In the first round of the trial, eligible farmers will have access to grants of up to \$30,000 to cover up to two-thirds of the cost of acquiring Internet of Things technology from a catalogue of products put together for the trial.

Four Agriculture Victoria Industry Technology Co-ordinators were also recently appointed to support farmers to select technologies that best match the needs of their business.

The trial is part of the Government's *Connecting Victoria Program* which aims to improve digital connectivity and usability for rural and regional Victoria.

Farmers interested in taking part in this exciting new trial can submit their expression of interest at agriculture.vic.gov.au/digitalag. Expressions of interest close on 2 August.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We've been working with Victorian farmers to understand how digital technology can revolutionise their businesses – and we're excited to invite farmers to trial new Internet of Things tech on their own farms."

"Our Internet of Things trial is an ambitious program supporting Victorian farmers to be at the forefront of modern agriculture, to improve farm productivity, efficiency and safety."