

Farm Machinery Improvement Grant Program

Program Guidelines

1. About the program

The Victorian Government has established the Farm Machinery Improvement Grants Program (**Program**) to assist farm businesses in the far north west corner of Victoria, generally known as the Millewa, to maintain essential on-farm machinery and equipment to meet key operational requirements and prepare for the 2020 growing season.

A grant of up to \$10,000 (excl-GST) is available per eligible dryland farm business located in the Millewa.

The program is now available for eligible dryland farm businesses in Millewa and surrounding areas (**Eligible Business**). This incorporates the following towns and locality areas in the Mildura Shire: Carwarp, Cullulleraine, Lindsay Point, Meringur, Merrinee, Neds Corner, Wargan and Werrimull.

The Victorian Farmers Federation will deliver the Program.

2. Program objective

The Program aims to assist Eligible Businesses in the Millewa to maintain essential on-farm machinery and equipment to meet key operational requirements and prepare for the 2020 growing season.

3. Eligible activities

Eligible expenses must occur on or after 2 October 2019 and before 30 June 2020.

Eligible expenses are professional repairs and maintenance of essential farm machinery and equipment completed by a suitably qualified professional completed between 2 October 2019 and 30 June 2020.

Eligible farm machinery includes machinery and equipment that supports cropping or grain production, including but not limited to: harvesting, sowing and seeding. This may include tractors, harvesters, seeders and hay baling equipment.

Essential repairs include, but are not limited to, essential maintenance and repairs to meet safety standards, repairs to fix or replace broken/non-operational parts.

4. Ineligible activities

Activities and expenses not eligible under the Program include, but are not limited to:

- purchasing new machinery or equipment
- upgrading or replacing existing machinery or equipment
- paying wages for employees or self-assessed labour or transport costs related to maintenance or repair
- purchase, lease or acquisition of transportation
- repair or registration for personal vehicles (e.g. cars, motorbikes, quad bikes)
- purchase, lease or acquisition of quad bike safety devices
- stock containment units, feeding systems or other infrastructure covered by the On-Farm Drought Resilience Grants program.

5. Who can apply?

In order to apply, applicants[^] must:

- Be the owner, operator, share farmer or lease holder of a commercial scale, dryland farm business[#];
- Have a farm property located in the Millewa*;
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- Be registered for GST;
- Contribute a significant part of your labour and capital to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, you earn more than 51 per cent of your individual income from the farming enterprise.

and/or

Have commenced your farming enterprise between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2019 and your intention is that more than 51 per cent of your individual income will be derived from the farming enterprise within three years of the date of your Application. Eligibility on this basis will be considered on a case-by-case basis;

- If requested, provide further evidence in relation to any of the eligibility requirements above.

[^]Applicants may be an individual, company, trust or partnership.

[#]As a guide it is anticipated that farm turnover would exceed \$50,000 per annum in most years to be considered a commercial scale farm business for the purpose of this grant.

*The Millewa is taken to mean the far north west corner of Victoria, generally known as the Millewa and surrounding areas. This incorporates the following towns and locality areas in the Mildura Shire: Carwarp, Cullulleraine, Lindsay Point, Meringur, Merrinee, Neds Corner, Wargan and Werrimull.

6. Additional eligibility criteria

- One grant will be offered per applicant. An applicant who operates more than one farm business or that has more than one farm property may only apply for one grant.
- The maximum value of the grant to eligible applicants is \$10,000 (excl-GST).
- Only eligible activities can be reimbursed.
- Applicants can apply for in-principal approval or reimbursement:
 - **In-principal approval:** prospective eligible farm machinery improvement expenses may be approved in-principle prior to proceeding with the works.
 - **Reimbursement:** alternatively, applicants can complete the works and apply for payment with submission of the receipt of the services and evidence of payment.

- Activities or invoices that have received (or are approved to receive) funding from another source will be ineligible for payments under this program. Examples include, but are not limited to, the On-Farm Drought Resilience Grants.

7. Application and Assessment Process

Applicants should carefully consider activities against the eligibility criteria set out in the Program Guidelines before submitting an Application.

Applications for the Program should be submitted to the Victoria Farmers Federation – Farm Machinery Improvement Grant application process.

Applicants may seek reimbursement for eligible activities or items that have been purchased and undertaken since 2 October 2019 and before 30 June 2020. Tax invoices and/or receipts showing evidence of payment by the Eligible Business must be provided. There is no guarantee that machinery improvements and repairs already purchased will be reimbursed under the Program. All eligibility criteria will need to be met prior to approval.

or

Applicants may seek 'in-principle approval' before expenditure is committed. Quotations for eligible activities must be provided.

All applications must be accompanied with the following supporting documents:

- Evidence of owning, operating, share farming or leasing a dryland commercial farm business in the Millewa region;
- If you are seeking reimbursement for eligible activities that have been purchased and undertaken since 2 October 2019, evidence of purchase: tax invoices and/or receipts and photos (or other evidence of completion of works and payment);
OR
- If you are seeking in-principle approval before expenditure is committed, quotes for the proposed machinery improvements and repairs:
 - o On receiving written in-principle approval, applicants are required to purchase and/or engage services to complete the work proposed within three months of the date of approval for their application to be eligible for a grant;
 - o On completion of the project, grant recipients are required to forward paid tax invoices for all claims and photos of completed works or other evidence of maintenance and reports to the VFF; and
 - o The grant recipient must pay for the project and/or activities initially and then if eligible, the VFF will forward payment of the grant amount on completion.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

By making an application, you agree to the VFF and/or the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to request further information from you or from any business or individual you have engaged for the VFF to be able to assess the application and to verify any information provided in your application.

The VFF will process completed applications in order of receipt.

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided in the application and supporting documentation is true and accurate.

Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be an offence for which serious penalties may apply.

GST is excluded from any grant payment.

Payment of the approved amount will be arranged and processed as soon as possible, via electronic funds transfer to the applicants nominated account.

The VFF, in consultation with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions may audit successful applicants for up to two years following the closure of the Program. By making an application, applicants are deemed to have agreed to provide VFF and/or the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions with all documentation and access to the Farm Business and premises reasonably requested in order to carry out the audit.

8. Funding Source

The Victorian Government is providing increased support to assist farming families impacted by drought and dry conditions. On 2 October 2019, the Victorian Government announced a 2019-20 Drought Support Package. This funding included \$0.5 million for a Farm Machinery Improvement Grants Program to assist drought-affected farm businesses in the Millewa.

9. Duration of the Program

Payments will be available from the date the program opens until the earlier of 30 June 2020 or until the program funds are fully expended.

10. Review and Amendment

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions may review and amend this Program at any time.

11. Evaluation of the Program

The Victorian Government may conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which the Program has contributed to Victorian Government policy objectives. By making an application, if requested by the Department, a grant recipient is deemed to consent to their personal information and information regarding their application being provided to third parties under an obligation of confidence to assist in auditing during the Program or the evaluation after the Program's completion.

12. Further Information

Victorian Farmers Federation

Telephone: 1300 882 833

Email: farmmachinerygrants@vff.org.au

Postal address: Level 5, 24 Collins St Melbourne 3000 Vic

Web:

https://www.vff.org.au/vff/Projects/Farm_Machinery_Grants/vff/Initiatives/Farm_Machinery_Improvement_Program.aspx?hkey=5e2bfea5-4e8f-4cbc-ba22-3a05e76a95c6

Agriculture Victoria

For more information about other drought support being provided by the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government, please contact Agriculture Victoria.

A range of support is available to farmers affected by the drought and potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs.

Telephone: 136 186

Email: drought.support@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Web: agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons

13. Confidentiality

Any personal information provided by the Applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by the VFF and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions for the purpose of administration of the Program. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing the Program.

By making an application, you consent to data (including personal information) gathered through assessments being compiled, aggregated and made anonymous by the VFF and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions for Program reporting, evaluation and research purposes.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

Agriculture Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions' Privacy Policy can be found online at <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/privacy>. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions' Privacy Unit by phone on (03) 9651 9749 or email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.