

# Seeking expressions of interest

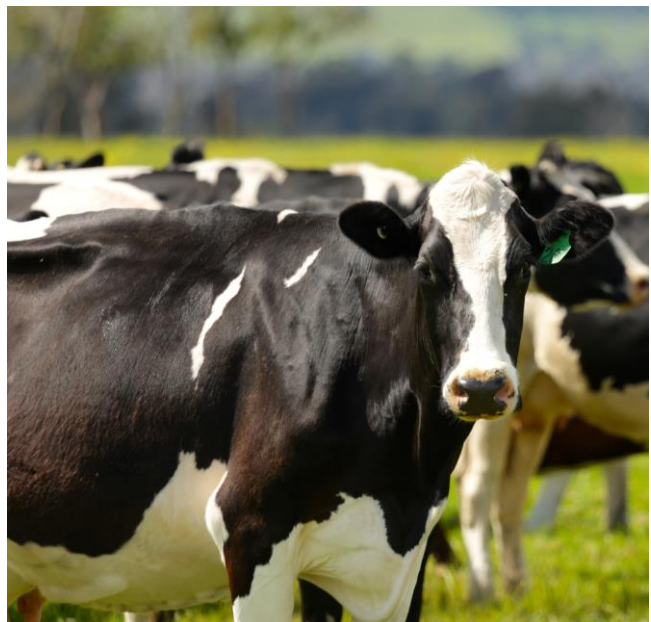
## Smart Farming Partnerships - local fertiliser trials

We are seeking expressions of interest from farmers who are interested in hosting pasture trials that aim to improve confidence in fertiliser recommendations for local soils and conditions. A desired outcome of the trials is increased uptake of evidence-based fertiliser application that optimises production whilst reducing excess run off of nutrients into waterways and estuaries.

36 trials will be established in areas receiving an average annual rainfall of 600 mm or above across six regional estuary catchments; Peel Harvey, Leschenault, Geographe, Hardy Inlet (Lower Blackwood and Scott catchments), Wilson Inlet and Oyster Harbour. Fertiliser trials and demonstrations will be run over three years with the assistance of local agronomists, scientists and catchment groups. A Technical Reference Group comprising government scientists, agronomists, farmers and fertiliser company representatives will oversee the trials and demonstrations.

## About the trials

- The major aspect of the trials will be to test different levels of phosphorus application to optimise production and minimise runoff
- Some trials will also include evaluation of innovative technology to measure pasture productivity and soil nutrient status (such as near-infrared and x-ray fluorescence)
- Trials will be run over three growing seasons – established in early 2019 and 2020 and will be established and monitored by scientists and agronomists on the Technical Reference Group with local advisors and host farmers



## What's in it for the host farmer?

- Opportunity to contribute to developing local fertiliser recommendations
- Improved understanding of soil nutrient levels and fertiliser requirements
- One-on-one fertiliser advice through local advisor or agronomist
- Improved nutrient use efficiency - saving \$
- Some opportunity to trial fertiliser treatments/rates that you are interested in
- Contribute to protecting local waterways and estuaries

## What will we do?

- Establish fertiliser trials and fencing with your input
- Undertake monitoring of trials including soil testing, tissue testing, pasture productivity, and the use of innovative technologies
- Provide farmers and their advisors with data and information from the trials
- Provide opportunities for shared learning and knowledge exchange with other trials, scientists and farmers
- Organise field days and case studies of the trials

## What we need from a host farmer

- Results of soil testing completed within the last three years
- Input into site selection of approximately a 50m by 50m section of paddock for the three-year trial (selected through soil test results and pasture species)
- Opportunity to participate in a farmer working group to share results and learning (2-3 times per year)
- Agree to host an annual field day at your trial for other farmers and interested agronomists and scientists (run by your local catchment group)
- Maintain fencing and undertake pasture management e.g. grazing measures, pest and weed control as necessary

## How will host farmers be selected?

- Host farms will be selected based on the characteristics of your farm: grazing enterprise, intensity, soil types, nutrient status and proximity to key water bodies – to ensure a cross section of trial sites within and between catchments.



## Who are we and why are we doing the trials?

The fertiliser trials are an initiative of the Regional Estuaries Initiative and Revitalising Geographie Waterways Sustainable Agriculture Project Reference Group with members from state government agencies, catchment groups, Dairy Australia, Western Dairy, Fertilizer Australia and farmers. This group currently oversees fertiliser management projects across the south west and believes local trials and local data will help farmers build confidence in understanding fertiliser recommendations that optimise production and minimise run off.

The Regional Estuaries Initiative aims to improve water quality in regional estuaries and waterways. Water quality monitoring and modelling shows a major source of nutrients entering South West estuaries is from grazing properties. Working with farmers to optimise fertiliser use is a major goal of the project.

A barrier to improved fertiliser management is concerns of productivity losses and confidence in scientific data supporting fertiliser recommendations. This project will address those concerns by trialling fertiliser applications at a local catchment scale and include productivity and economic assessments.

The trials will be designed and managed by scientists, agronomists and interested farmers on the Technical Reference Group that include representatives from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (previously Department of Agriculture), major fertiliser companies, local agronomists and soil scientists. Local catchment groups and agronomists will provide a point of contact between scientists and farmers.

Funding for the trials has been secured by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation through the Commonwealth National Landcare Program Smart Farming grants.



Your Levy at Work



# Sending in an EOI

EOIs close 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Submit to your catchment officer or alternatively complete online at  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/smartfarmEOI](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/smartfarmEOI)

**Q1.** First name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2.** Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3.** Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4.** Farm address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5.** Approximate size of farm (in hectares): \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6.** Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q7.** Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q9.** Does your farm occur in one of the six Regional Estuaries Initiative catchments, in an area receiving an average annual rainfall of 600 mm or above?

(see eligibility map at [tiny.cc/SmartFarmMap](http://tiny.cc/SmartFarmMap) )

Yes / No (not eligible)

**Q10.** What do you primarily produce?

Beef      Sheep      Dairy      Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q11.** Do you have soil test data for your farm completed in the last 3 years? If so please provide soil test results and a farm paddock map showing where soil samples have been collected. As a minimum, you will need to include soil test results for Colwell Phosphorus, Phosphorus Buffering Index and pH, but other soil test data (Colwell Potassium, Sulphur) will be very useful to assist the Technical Reference Group in making decisions about trial locations and design.

**Q12.** Are you prepared to commit to the three year project:

- Maintenance and protection of trial plot (approximately 50m by 50m)
- Involvement with local farmer working group
- Annual field day held at your property

Yes / No (not eligible)



**Q13.** Why are you interested in being part of this trial?

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**Q14.** Are there particular fertiliser application/type/rate or alternative you would like to trial on your property? If so, please describe so that the Technical Working Group can consider the feasibility of including these in the basic trial design.

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