Farming Smarter – a soils project for the next generation

This project focuses on precision agriculture for pastures and working with the next generation of farmers to manage the risks of acidification and hill-slope erosion in the eastern Riverina. Riverina Local Land Services will use soil testing on a paddock scale in the topsoil (0-10cm) and subsoil (10-20cm) to measure soil pH and exchangeable cations. Precision agriculture technology will be used to generate soil management maps and guide producers’ decisions on investing in lime and perennial pastures on their properties.

Perennial pastures are part of the long-term solution to managing acidification. However some pasture species and legume rhizobia are known to be sensitive to acid soils. The purchase of lime and the expense of sowing perennial pasture mixes are both significant investments for livestock producers. *Farming smarter – a soils project for the next generation* will focus on guiding decisions in terms of investing in new perennial pastures, liming acidic soils before sowing to new pastures and reducing the risk of wind and water erosion.

How can landholders get involved?
Landholders will work closely with Riverina Local Land Services to achieve environmental and sustainable agriculture outcomes. There are incentives available to assist land managers to carry out this work on their property. There is also a co-investment approach in the project which involves soil testing and soil mapping. Eligible landholders located within the high risk zone (or where there is no data within the red zone) are asked to submit an Expression of Interest via the form on www.lls.nsw.gov.au/riverina. See map over page.

What assistance is available?
Through this project assistance is available to landholders for a suite of on-ground works including:

- soil coring and soil testing of 50 hectares in total on one property (maximum of 3 paddocks, ideally 1-2 paddocks on a property)
- independent soil test interpretation
- soil mapping into soil management zones
- variable rate lime application map and advice on liming
- selection of perennial pasture mix to suit the targeted area and persist for a minimum of 7 years
- advice on pest and weed control pre pasture establishment
- co-investment in a new perennial pasture between 2020 and 2022

What are the next steps?
Funding is limited.
Landholders must submit an Expression of Interest via www.lls.nsw.gov.au/riverina

Once an EOI has been submitted, a Riverina Local land Services officer will contact you to discuss your project and the project proposal form.

**EOIs open Wednesday 13 November 2019 at 9am and close on Friday 29 November 2019 at 5pm.**

See eligibility criteria over the page.
Eligibility to apply

To be eligible for this project:

- Your soils project area nominated or selected must be appropriately 50 hectares.
- Co-investment in the soils project is required up-front from the land-holder at a rate of $10/hectare over the 50 hectares nominated or no less than $500.
- A minimum area of 20 hectares is required for sowing of the new perennial pasture, to receive the $200/hectare incentive under a landholder agreement. A maximum area of 50 hectares is possible for sowing of the new perennial pasture, to receive the $200/hectare incentive under a landholder agreement.
- Landholders must be prepared to consider a variable rate lime application based on a soil management map.
- Landholders must be prepared to establish a new perennial pasture area between 2020 and 2022 which will persist for at least 7 years.
- The area of 50 hectares nominated or selected must not have a previous incentive agreement for groundcover management.
- All previous works funded by Riverina Local Land Services or the Catchment Management Authority must be completed (or within agreed timelines).
- The soils project area nominated or selected must not be an existing native pasture, already considered to be perennial in nature.
- You must be willing to enter into a contractual agreement with Riverina Local Land Services for seven years.
- Landholders must be prepared to allow remeasurement of changes in soil pH in 2023, as part of the soils project.
- You must have no outstanding debts to Riverina Local Land Services.
- You must have public liability insurance for a minimum of $10 million to be considered for funding.

Access to an external service provider must be allowed for the purpose of soil sampling and soil testing works which are likely to occur during February to April 2020. Landholders will be consulted before the service provider requires access to the property for the collection of soil cores, and given the option of being present. Good soil moisture is not required for soil sampling to take place.

Questions?

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