



# CONSERVATION FARMING MACHINERY INCENTIVES GUIDELINES

Guidelines for landholders applying for Incentive Funding to implement **conservation farming practices** to reduce soil erosion and improve soil health in the Lower Murray Darling Catchment.

Applications are now invited from landholders interested in the Lower Murray Darling CMA's Conservation Farming Incentive which aims to help land managers become more sustainable. Under this program, land managers can apply for funding to convert machinery, or purchase new or second hand machinery for use in conservation farming, precision Ag technology/farming and technology to improve weed management through reduced tillage.

Conservation farming helps to improve soil health by *bringing about a significant improvement in the condition and health of catchment soils through fostering an improved understanding of the relationship between land management practices and soil health, and achieve soil erosion levels of less than 50% of the 1999 benchmark by 2015* in accordance with the LMD CMA - Catchment Action Plan (CAP).

A total funding pool of up to \$70,000 is available for these incentives to assist landholders adopt best dryland cropping management practices.

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## **APPLICATIONS:**

Applications may be hand delivered, faxed or posted to the:

### ***Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority***

*32 Enterprise Way (PO Box 363)*

*Buronga NSW 2739*

Phone No: 03 5021 9460

*Fax No. 03 5021 1308*

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**Funded by:**



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
National Landcare Program

**CLOSING DATE: Applications close at 5pm Friday **28 March 2008.****

***LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.***

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#### **CONTACTING THE LOWER MURRAY DARLING CMA:**

The best approach to submitting an application is by working with the staff of the Lower Murray Darling CMA.

Our Soils and Cropping Officer, or Team Leader PVP & Projects, detailed below are there to assist you in submitting an application for this incentive.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Soils and Cropping Officer	<i>Kat Biesaga</i>	03 5021 9460
Team Leader PVP & Projects:	<i>Noel Hayward</i>	03 5021 9460

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The LMD CMA - CAP outlines a number of targets for reducing soil erosion across the region. Strategies to achieve this include:

##### **Awareness of Conservation Farming Techniques**

Increase the number of farmers using conservation and phase farming techniques.

##### **Erosion Protection Standard**

By adopting the erosion protection standard of 50% dry aggregation greater than 1mm in diameter or 50% cover of vegetative matter (or a combination of both) in cultivated paddocks until sowing, land managers will be able to assist in reducing soil erosion, improve- their profitability and assist- in achieving CAP targets.

##### **Improvement in Soil Health**

The adoption of conservation farming techniques will also improve soil health by increasing groundcover, through reducing soil disturbance and - wind erosion and improves the condition of their soils.

#### **WHAT THE INCENTIVES WILL FUND:**

Listed below are the areas which the incentive will fund:

##### **1. Conversion of Existing Machinery**

- The LMD CMA will provide incentive funding for the conversion or upgrade of existing machinery to conservation farming machinery.

##### **2. Purchase of Second Hand Conservation Farming Machinery**

- The LMD CMA will provide incentive funding for the purchase of second hand conservation farming machinery.

##### **3. Purchase of New Conservation Farming Machinery**

- The LMD CMA will provide incentive funding for the purchase of new conservation farming machinery.

##### **4. Precision Ag Technology/Farming**

- The LMD CMA will provide incentive funding for the purchase or upgrade of precision Ag technology to aid in conservation farming.

##### **5. Technology to Improve Weed Management**

- The LMD CMA will provide incentive funding for the purchase or upgrade of technology related to the effective weed management in conservation farming systems.

#### **FUNDING AMOUNTS**

The LMD CMA will fund the cost of machinery conversion or purchase to a maximum \$10,000 on the basis of a 1:1 in-kind or monetary contribution by the Landholder.

Conversions are limited to one per farm business or separate property at the discretion of the LMD CMA Board.

## MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS

### Eligibility

Individuals who share-farm property in another catchment and who do not own land in the NSW LMD catchment are not entitled to the incentive.

### Eligible Conservation Farming Machinery

Only conservation farming machinery is eligible i.e. minimum till, no-till or zero-till equipment. One-way ploughs, disc ploughs or other machinery that create soil disturbance, are ineligible for funding. The LMD CMA reserves the right to decide if the proposed machinery meets the LMD CMA's Soil Targets. As a result of this decision making process, each project will be assessed for its eligibility with the applicant notified of their success.

## MINIMUM TARGETS AND REQUIRED OUTCOMES

For this incentive the landholder will need to address the relevant CAP Targets of reducing erosion and improving soil condition, and address how this will be achieved and monitored. Indicators which the landholder may use to measure this include:

### Management of Total Grazing Pressure (minimum level of groundcover)

To achieve the aim, landholders are encouraged to achieve a minimum level of 50% groundcover in cropping paddocks that are to be stocked. Maintaining a minimum groundcover level of 50% ensures that wind and water erosion will be reduced.

### Erosion Protection Standard

In cultivated paddocks, the erosion protection standard of 50% dry aggregation greater than 1mm in diameter or 50% cover of vegetative matter (or a combination of both) until sowing, be adopted by land managers.

### Monitoring Aggregation and Groundcover

In conjunction with the Soils/Cropping Officer with the LMD CMA and the District Agronomist with NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the landholder will monitor the aggregation and groundcover levels in cultivated paddocks based on photo standards, a simple soil sieving test to be conducted on a 20m transect at - two locations in the cropping paddock (based on soil and landform type), and photo points at each of the -two sites. These monitoring standards are currently being used by the Vic No-Till Group, MSF Inc (Mallee Sustainable Farming), the Birchip Cropping Group, -DECC (Department of -Environment and Climate Change) and the LMD CMA in their monitoring of aggregation and groundcover in cropping paddocks.

### Record Keeping

The landholder will keep accurate and up to date records of management practices, seeding, yield, and climatic conditions, which will be made available to LMD CMA staff upon request.

### Photographic Evidence on the Conversion of Machinery

If machinery is to be converted, photos of the machinery before and after the conversion are to be taken and are to be lodged with receipts for payment. Partial payments will be made at the beginning of the conversion, with the remaining payment being made once the conversion is complete.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

### Eligibility

Eligible applicants include landholders and groups within the NSW -LMD Catchment who have a cultivation permit or own freehold cropping land.

### Delivery Mechanisms

PAMS Management Agreement (MA) will be the delivery mechanism for the LMD CMA Conservation Farming incentives. MAs only require a simple map and little or no field assessment and will be for a term of 5 years. They are a record of the terms of agreement and include; standard conditions, special conditions, agreement objectives, agreement period, activities and milestones, landholder and property details and the payment schedule.

### Cost Sharing

- Funding for all incentives is on a dollar for dollar basis (ie. 50% landholder contribution required).
- A landholders labour/time component of a project will be considered as - in-kind - (at \$30/hr), as will the use of the landholder's own machinery (at 80% of a contractor's rate).

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING?

Application to the Lower Murray Darling Incentive Program is open at all times.

1. Complete Incentives Application Form – Complete an Application Form with your details and a brief description of what you would like to do, then return it to the -LMD CMA. (If there is no application form attached contact the LMD CMA on 03 5021 9460 and a form will be sent out, alternatively download the relevant forms from the internet at [www.lmd.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lmd.cma.nsw.gov.au) ).
2. Discussion - Once the completed Application form is received, the landholder will be contacted by a PVP Officer to discuss their ideas in more detail and organise a site visit, if appropriate.
3. Assessment and Ranking of Applications – The Technical Panel will assess and rank the applications on a number of key criteria including:
  - How well the proposal addresses CAP Targets
  - Cost of the proposal per hectare managed to meet CAP Targets
  - How well the proposal fits into and improves the overall cropping system
  - Value for money (eg number of hectares cropped utilising conservation farming techniques by alteration/purchase of equipment)
4. Draft Agreement – A draft Incentive -PVP or PAMS -MA will be sent to the landholder outlining the management actions and outcomes required, along with a proposed schedule of milestones and payments.
5. Final Agreement – Once the landholder accepts the offer or negotiates amendments that are acceptable to all parties, a final agreement is produced and approved. Works may then commence and an invoice for the first payment instalment may be submitted.

Funding Source:



**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**  
National Landcare Program



**NOTE - This document was current at time of production; please check latest details with LMD CMA.**

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