



2009 CONSERVATION FARMING INCENTIVE FACTSHEET

Guidelines for landmanagers who are wanting to apply for incentive funding to implement sustainable farming practices.

Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. on behalf of the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority, now has \$50,000 available for upgrades to farm machinery for activities that lead to sustainable cropping practices i.e. reduced soil erosion and improved soil health.

Applications are now being sort by interested land managers who wish to apply for incentive funding under the following theme areas:

1. Convert existing machinery to no-tillage/zero tillage/precision agriculture farming.
2. Purchase new or second-hand no-tillage/zero tillage/precision agriculture machinery.
3. Purchase equipment either new or second-hand to aid in precision agriculture farming.

APPLICATIONS:

Applications may be hand delivered, faxed or posted to:

Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc.
PO Box 5093
Mildura Vic 3502
Phone No: 03 50219100

Fax No. 03 50220579



Funded by:



Australian Government

“Caring For Our Country”

CLOSING DATE:

Applications close Friday 28th November, 2008

Works must commence and invoices submitted by **Friday 13 February 2009** to Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. Works must be completed by 30 May 2009.

CONTACTING MALLEE SUSTAINABLE FARMING INC

The best approach to submitting an application is by working with the staff at Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc.

The below listed Officer will be available to assist you with any inquires that you may have.

Location	Position	Name	Contact
Mildura	Extension Coordinator	<i>Nicole Dimos</i>	03 50219103

Other staff who may be able to assist you in submitting the best possible application for your project are listed below.

Buronga	Team Leader PVP and Projects	<i>Noel Hayward</i>	03 5021 9435
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CATCHMENT TARGETS

The Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority Catchment Action Plan identifies five Catchment Objectives of which Soil and Vegetation are one of them. From the five Catchment Objectives, Catchment Targets and Management Targets were developed as a foundation for measuring the progress and succes of Catchment Management Authorities Natural Resoruce Management activities. From the Soil and Vegetation Catchment Objective, the Soil Catchment Target was developed. The intent of the Soil Catchment Target is *'to bring 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.'* Some of the soil management activities include:

- maintaining conservative stocking rates in grazing systems on soils susceptible to wind erosion;
- developing, planning and implementing drought mitigation strategies;
- utilising farming systems that maintain cover and soil aggregation thereby minimising the extent, severity and duration of the disturbance to soil and vegetation cover;
- implementing clearing and cropping patterns that leave highly erodible soils (i.e. those with less than 13% clay content) under native vegetation;
- maintaining wind breaks of adequate size and spacing in cropping areas;
- using temporary mitigation techniques such as soil roughening as a measure to reduce the severity of wind erosion on suitable soils; and
- developing a commitment from farmers and advisers to reduce the risk of erosion and to develop the knowledge and skills for adopting less erosive practices.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Land managers whose livelihood is derived from dryland cropping within the Lower Murray Darling catchment and who have current cultivation permits or own free-hold cropping land, are eligible. Land managers who share-farm property in another catchment and WHO DO NOT OWN land in the Lower Murray Darling catchment are not eligible.
2. One-way ploughs, disc ploughs and other multiple tillage seeding equipment that creates topsoil disturbance of greater than 20% will not be eligible for funding. Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. and the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority reserve the right to decide if the proposed machinery meets the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authorities Soil Targets. As a result of this decision making process each project proposal will be assessed for its eligilbility by a Technical Panel.

3. No-tillage/precision agriculture equipment/machinery both new/second-hand or conversions, are eligible. Conversions to machinery and the purchase of equipment are limited to one per farm business or property.
4. Land managers are to keep accurate records of their costings related to conversions or the purchases of new/second-hand equipment, management practices, seeding and fertiliser rates, yield and climatic conditions. Land managers must be willing upon request by Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority staff to present the above listed information at crop walks or at grower group meetings that may be organised jointly by Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc., NSW Department of Primary Industries and Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority.
5. Land managers must be willing to enter into a Management Agreement for a minimum term of 5 years.
6. Applicants with current Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority incentives that are past the contracted finish date or have uncompleted milestones will NOT be eligible for funding.

Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. and Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority will fund the cost of machinery conversions or purchase of new/second-hand equipment to a maximum of \$10,000 on a 1:1 in-kind basis or monetary contribution by the landholder.

THEMES TO BE FUNDED

Theme 1. Conversion of Existing Machinery

This theme provides funding for the conversion of existing seeding machinery to no-tillage/zero tillage or machinery that aims to be set up for precision agriculture farming. Examples of eligible project activities include:

- converting to variable rate technology in a no-tillage system (precision agriculture)
- knife points, press wheels and coulters etc (no-tillage)
- converting machinery to disc seeding (zero tillage)

Theme 2. Purchase of Second-hand Machinery

This theme provides funding for the purchase of second-hand seeding machinery that will allow land managers to be able to undertake no-tillage/zero tillage or precision agriculture farming. Examples of eligible project activities include:

- purchase of no-tillage/zero tillage seeding equipment (i.e. knife points, press wheels, coulters, discs etc)
- purchase of seeding equipment that aids in varying fertiliser rates (i.e. variable rate technology) across paddocks or equipment that aids in applying liquid fertilisers and/or trace elements

Theme 3. Precision Agriculture Technology

This theme provides funding for the purchase of auto-steer/guidance technology that will allow land managers to be able to undertake site specific crop management. Examples of eligible project activities include:

- auto-steer/guidance technology for seeding equipment and for spraying

MONITORING/EVALUATION AND MINIMUM TARGETS AND REQUIRED OUTCOMES

If your project proposal is successful, you will be required to carry out certain monitoring of the outcomes from your project proposal. Monitoring will be required for the whole term of the Management Agreement and at times Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority staff may contact you regarding your monitoring processes.

Land managers will have to address the relevant Soil Targets listed below and how these targets will be achieved and monitored. Examples of indicators that land managers may wish to use are listed below the Soil Management Targets.

Soil Management Targets

1. To increase the number of farmers using conservation and phase farming techniques from 50 to 80 by 2015.
2. For cultivation, to have an additional 30 landholders (through grazing and soil management training) adopting the erosion protection standard of 50% dry aggregation greater than 1mm in diameter or 50% cover of vegetation (or a combination of both) until sowing by 2015.
3. Promote the retirement from cropping and rehabilitation of 5,000 hectares of eroding sandhills by 2015.
4. Fifty landholders to use the Property Vegetation Planning tool to reduce total grazing pressure through various grazing strategies including; managing grazing management according to landscape/vegetation, identifying areas for total grazing pressure management, early de-stocking and resting areas for rehabilitation by 2015.
5. To increase the area to over 80% of the catchment achieving ground cover levels that avoids wind and water erosion (i.e. minimum level of 40% cover) by 2015.

Examples of Indicators to be used in Measuring and Monitoring

Erosion Protection Standard

As outlined above (point 2).

Monitoring Aggregation and Groundcover

As outlined in FarmTalks 26 and 29 (see attached).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All conversions or purchases of equipment must be completed by 30 June 2009. Partial payments will be made at the beginning of the conversion, with the remaining payment being made once the conversion is complete. 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.

COST SHARING

Funding for all incentives are on a dollar-for-dollar basis (i.e. 50% contribution required). Labour and time that a landholder has contributed to the project will be considered as in-kind at \$30 hour.

PROJECT MAP

Along with the project proposal, a project map should be provided showing the location of the area that is to be cropped and where the property is located. Cultivation licences and number of hectares that are proposed to be cropped is also required and should be illustrated on the map. Included on your map should be all reference points and infrastructure along with distances and areas relevant to the proposed cropped area.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING?

1. Complete Incentives Application Form

Complete an Application Form with your details and a brief and clear description of what you would like to do, along with your project budget. Forward this application and budget to Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc. **before Friday 28th November, 2008**. If you need any assistance in completing the application form, please contact one of the nominated Officers that are listed above. If there is no application form attached contact Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc on 03 5021 9100 and a form will be sent, faxed or emailed to you.

What happens once my application is received by Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc.?

2. Application Assessment

After receipt of the application by Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc., a Technical Panel will assess and rank the applications according to the below listed key criteria:

- how well the proposal addressed the Soil Management Targets
- to what degree the conversion/application moves the landholder toward addressing the CAP targets (eg. Conversion from conventional to zero till ranks higher than no-till to zero till)
- value for money or \$/Ha (e.g. number of hectares cropped, alteration/purchase of equipment)

What happens if my application is successful?

Successful applicants will be notified by Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc.

3. Draft Agreement

A draft Management Agreement will be sent to the landholder outlining the management actions and outcomes required, along with a proposed schedule of milestones and payments.

4. 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. **Please note:** that in this incentive funding round works must be commenced and an invoice received by Mallee Sustainable Farming **by Friday 13 February 2009**. Works must be completed by 30 May 2009.