

LMD CMA FACT SHEET No. 034

CONSERVATION FARMING MACHINERY INCENTIVES

The Lower Murray Darling CMA (LMD CMA) is offering a Conservation Farming Machinery incentive to help land managers convert existing machinery or purchase second hand or new machinery for the purposes of conservation farming. Conservation farming helps to improve soil health and *achieve soil erosion levels of less than 50% of the 1999 benchmark by 2015* in accordance with the LMD CMA Draft Catchment Action Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The LMD CMA Draft 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, improving their profitability and assisting in achieving CAP targets.

Improvement in Soil Health

The adoption of conservation farming techniques will also improve soil health by increasing groundcover, reducing soil disturbance and reducing wind erosion.

Listed below are the areas which the incentive will fund:

1. Conversion of Existing Machinery

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

2. Purchase of Second Hand Conservation Farming Machinery

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

3. Purchase of New Conservation Farming Machinery

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

FUNDING AMOUNTS

The 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 CMA Board.



MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS

Eligibility

Individuals who share-farm property in the NSW Murray 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 Catchment Action Plan Targets of reducing erosion, 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 40% groundcover in cropping paddocks (where undisturbed groundcover persists) that are to be stocked. Maintaining a minimum groundcover level of 40% 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 Extension Coordinator with MSF Inc (Mallee Sustainable Farming), 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 five locations in the cropping paddock (based on soil and landform type), and photo points at each of the five sites. These monitoring standards are currently being used by the Vic No-Till Group, MSF Inc (Mallee Sustainable Farming), the Birchip Cropping Group, DNR (Department of Natural Resources) 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.

Soil Testing

Up to date soil tests (must have been undertaken in the last 12 months) are required. If current soil tests have not been undertaken within the last 12 months then the applicant must agree to be a part of a three year 'Understanding Your Soils' program. This program will give the applicant soil tests which will be undertaken twice a year (pre-sowing and harvest) for a period of three years. Soil reports (pre-sowing and harvest) will be generated over the three years outlining subsoil moisture, subsoil constraints, nutrient availability and water use efficiency. These reports will be generated by the LMD CMA Soils/Cropping Officer and the NSW DPI Agronomist. The LMD CMA will subsidise the cost of the soil testing with the applicant contributing a small fee of \$50. All soil tests will be undertaken from 0 – 60cm and will be sent to an Accredited Testing Laboratory.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include landholders and groups within the NSW Lower Murray Darling Catchment who have natural resource management responsibilities.

Delivery Mechanisms

A Property Vegetation Plans (PVP) or PAMS Management Agreement (MA) will be the primary incentive delivery mechanism for the LMD CMA incentives.

A PVP generally requires detailed mapping and significant field assessment and will be used for the larger property scale projects of \$10,000 or more.

Management Agreements will usually only require a simple map and little or no field assessment. They will be used for smaller projects of typically less than \$10,000 such as goat traps or waterpoint control.

Both MAs and PVPs are voluntary, legally binding agreements under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*, between the landholder and the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA). 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.

An Incentive Funding PVP can be negotiated to last for any length of time and is transferred to the new owner if the property is sold. Some project types have a minimum agreement length, please check the minimum standards for each project.

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 an in-kind a (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 Lower Murray Darling 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).
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. Site Familiarisation Visit - During the site visit, a PVP Officer will inspect the proposed site, provide technical advice and guidance on the 'minimum standards' which the proposal is required to meet. The Officer will also discuss funding options and assist in estimating the funding required.
4. Environmental Assessment - Once a project meets the applicable minimum standards, the field officer will carry out an environmental assessment to evaluate the environmental benefits of the project. The higher the score, the higher the environmental benefits of the project. The score will then be checked against the funding criteria to determine if the project value meets the requirements.
5. Draft Agreement – A draft Incentive Property Vegetation Plan or PAMS Management Agreement will be sent to the landholder outlining the management actions and outcomes required, along with a proposed schedule of milestones and payments.
6. 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.

ALL RELEVANT LEGISLATION, PERMITS AND LICENSES THAT MAY BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE PROPOSED PROJECTS MUST BE ADHERED TO. ALL RELEVANT PERMITS AND LICENSES ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LANDHOLDERS TO OBTAIN BEFORE ANY WORKS ARE CARRIED OUT.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Lower Murray Darling CMA will not fund:

- Standard boundary fencing that is a land manager's normal responsibility under the *Western Lands Act 1901*.
- Works or training that has been commenced or completed prior to a incentive funding application being approved.
- The same or similar activities on areas of land which have previously received public funds
- Purchase, lease or acquisition of land, computer hardware or software, photocopiers, GPS equipment or media equipment, motor vehicles, watercraft or aircraft.
- Overseas travel or research.
- Running conferences (support may be provided for local community workshops or field days).
- Activities that are inconsistent with the Lower Murray Darling's Catchment Action Plan (CAP).
- Offsets required under a development PVP.

FUNDING FOR THIS PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL LANDCARE PROGRAM.

PLEASE NOTE:

UNDER THE *NATIVE VEGETATION ACT 2003*, APPLICANTS WHO ACCEPT FUNDING FOR ACTIONS OR WORKS ON AREAS OF LAND MAY BE INELIGIBLE TO USE THOSE FUNDED AREAS AS OFFSETS IN A CLEARING PVP.

Further Information contact:

PVP Team
LMD CMA Buronga Office
32 Enterprise Way
Buronga NSW 2739

Phone: 03 5021 9460
Fax: 03 5021 1308

Funding Source:



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Program

Lower Murray Darling CMA

Respect for our communities
& the environment



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

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