

Smart Farms Newsletter

Issue 2: May 2010

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NutrientSmart Farms on target early..... but GRANTS are still available!

In less than a year the NutrientSmart Farms (NSF) project has nearly reached its initial nutrient reduction target - although significant grant funds are still available. Projects approved to date will reduce nutrient export to the Hawkesbury Nepean system by an estimated 26 tonnes nitrogen and 5 tonnes phosphorus annually.

Works have varied greatly, ranging from basic stock exclusion fences, through to complex dairy effluent systems and significant structural earthworks. The project has also worked with a variety of industries, including dairy, vegetable, turf, polo and hobby farms.

However, significant **grant funding is still available** to invest in projects to better manage nutrients on rural land throughout the project area. Grants are available for projects of any size.

For further information please use the contact details overleaf.



Nepean River at Cobbitty

The Smart Farms projects (NutrientSmart Farms & WaterSmart Farms) are working with landholders in the lower Hawkesbury Nepean region to improve nutrient management and water use efficiency. Free workshops and grants for on-ground works are available to eligible landholders.



WSF Grants can fund upgrades to more efficient pumps

GRANTS for River Water Irrigators

Grants are available to river water irrigators in the lower Hawkesbury Nepean region for irrigation efficiency improvements.

An initial round of Expressions of Interest (EoI's) for WaterSmart Farms grants closed on 26 March 2010 with around 200 irrigators registering to be involved. However, further funding is now available to river water irrigators in the project area.

The grants have also been extended to include river water irrigators of recreational grounds such as **golf courses** and **sports fields**.

Works that can be funded include upgrading pumps and irrigation systems, installing efficient sprinklers, water harvesting and reuse systems and irrigation scheduling equipment.

River water irrigators interested in a WaterSmart Farms Grant need to submit an EoI form. For further information please use the contact details overleaf.



NutrientSmart Farms Case Study: **Microbes to Manage Dairy Effluent Ponds**

In 2009, NutrientSmart Farms (NSF) provided a grant to Leppington Pastoral Company to apply a microbial product to its effluent ponds that would literally 'eat' the effluent. The company operates one of the largest dairies in Australia, with a 2,000 strong herd producing over 70,000 litres of milk per day – and at least 300 tonnes of nitrogen and 50 tonnes of phosphorus per annum in the form of effluent.

The nutrient-rich effluent is used to irrigate 200 hectares, but the already fertile soil means that nutrient loss will occur to local waterways. Further, the cost of excess effluent waste management exceeds the benefits from effluent irrigation.

Regular testing of the effluent ponds since the project began 6 months ago has revealed a large drop in nitrogen and phosphorus levels, with less odour and solids accumulation also observed. This will lead to greatly reduced waste management costs, increased farm efficiency, and likely improvements in local water quality.

Team Leader NutrientSmart Farms, Ashley Senn, has been closely monitoring the results of this project. "On this property, paddock fertility is high and the emphasis is on waste management, not the re-use of nutrients as fertiliser. This product has resulted in a dramatic drop in the level of nutrients, pond crusting and build up of solids" he said.

For further information or to discuss a NSF grant proposal, please use the contact details below.



Effluent pond at Leppington Pastoral Company (western Sydney) prior to application of the microbial product

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NSF grants are available to remediate gully erosion

Grants for Land Management Projects: BIG or small!

A key focus of the NutrientSmart Farms (NSF) grant program for the remainder of 2010 will be to fund projects that repair degraded landscapes affected by issues such as erosion.

When eroded sediment is washed into waterways it often carries with it significant loads of nutrients. Projects to contain sediments will assist in retaining these valuable nutrients on-farm and reduce their damaging effects downstream.

Types of works that can be funded under NSF to repair degraded landscapes include engineering works such as flumes and sediment traps, but also natural solutions such as revegetation, riparian restoration and the application of compost. Technical design of works is also available through NSF and can be factored into the project costs that are subsidised by grants.

Grants are available for projects of all sizes - ranging from minor works on small rural blocks right through to extensive earthworks and engineering structures on large intensive farms.

For further information contact Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority on 4725 3050 or use the contact details below.

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Be Nutrient & Water Smart—it's worth it!