

# Macalister Demonstration Farm

PO Box 87, MAFFRA, VIC 3860

Ph. 0488 175 366

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## NEWSLETTER 92

September 2014



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### IN THE NEWSLETTER THIS MONTH

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What's been going on at MDF?

## ***MACALISTER DEMONSTRATION FARM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

The Macalister Demonstration Farm Annual General Meeting will be held on **TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2014**. For this year, the Annual General Meeting will be held during the day at the farm. The winner of the RF (Bob) Pitman award will be announced, a key note speaker will be in attendance as well as MDF Learning and Travel Scholarship awardee, Jon Ryan who will present his final report on his scholarship project.

### **DETAILS ARE:**

**WHEN:** TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2014  
**WHERE:** Macalister Demonstration Farm  
285 Boggy Creek Road, Riverslea  
**TIME:** 10 am to 2.30 pm

**FREE CATERED LUNCH FOR ALL ATTENDEES-- Please RSVP attendance to Sandie on 0488 175 366 or by email at [mdf@wideband.net.au](mailto:mdf@wideband.net.au)**

## ***NOMINATION OF DIRECTORS MACALISTER DEMONSTRATION FARM***

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The Macalister Demonstration Farm invites nominations of candidates for election to its Board of Directors. In accordance with Co-operative rules, four current directors, M. Humphris, B. White, C. Wright and G. Lamb are due to retire at the Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014. Three directors, M. Humphris, B. White and C. Wright are offering themselves for re-election with further nominations from shareholders invited.

Details of eligibility, duties and responsibilities of directors and nomination forms are available from the Secretary, MDF, PO Box 87, Maffra 3860, email [mdf@wideband.net.au](mailto:mdf@wideband.net.au) or by phoning 0488 175 366.

Nominations must be lodged with the Secretary, PO Box 87 Maffra, 3860 by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.

## ***RF (BOB) PITMAN AWARD CALL FOR NOMINATIONS***

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The Directors at the Macalister Demonstration Farm are seeking nominations for the RF (Bob) Pitman Award. This award was established in honour of Bob Pitman to recognise others within our farming community that make an outstanding contribution to the many facets of our industry. In creating this legacy we are seeking nominations from the community of people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to strive to better the lot for the broader farming community.

The recipient of this award should have one if not all of the following attributes:

- Commitment to the betterment of the dairy industry in the Macalister Irrigation District via one/all of the following : Production, Technology, Extension, Environmental awareness or mentorship
- Served on Boards or committees which support the dairy industry
- Served with integrity, humility and altruism.

The award is open to public nomination but ultimately decided by the present day board.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary by phone 0488 175 366. Nominations can be mailed to: The Secretary, Macalister Demonstration Farm, PO Box 87, Maffra 3860 and will close on Friday 10th October, 2014. The winner shall be announced at our AGM on the 21st October, 2014 starting at 10.00 am

# Yellow Rag Bit

Maria Rose, Dairy Extension Officer, DEPI Maffra

## **MID Irrigation Efficiency Incentives Program funding closes very soon**

Applications for funding under the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Irrigation Efficiency Incentive Program close on **Thursday 25 September 2014**. These incentives are available to help landholders with irrigation farm planning processes and on-farm works that will contribute to the following objectives:

- increasing water security through improved irrigation efficiency
- helping irrigators take advantage of new opportunities following MID2030 modernisation
- reducing the adverse environmental impacts of irrigation

Funding from this Incentives Program is available under the following rebate categories;

### 1. Irrigation Farm Plans

A 75 percent rebate of the cost of an irrigation farm plan (up to a maximum of \$90 per hectare plus GST) to engage an irrigation farm planner to produce an irrigation survey and design plan.

### 2. Modernised (Updated) Irrigation Farm Plans

A 75 percent rebate of the cost to update an irrigation farm plan (design only). Up to a maximum of \$45 per hectare (+GST) is available to engage an irrigation farm planner to update your plan and assess potential on-farm benefits from delivery system modernisation works.

### 3. Reuse Systems

A 50 percent rebate of the cost of building a reuse system up to a maximum of \$400 per hectare of the irrigated catchment area (plus GST).

### 4. Pressurised (Spray) Irrigation Conversion

A 50 percent rebate of the cost up to a maximum of \$400 per ha (+GST) for the conversion of surface (flood) irrigated area to pressurised irrigation.

### 5. Best Practice Surface Irrigation

A 50 percent rebate of the cost up to a maximum of \$400 per ha (+GST) for on-farm works and measures that meet current best management practices for surface irrigation. This rebate is only available to irrigators connected by a modernised outlet or currently involved in SRW's outlet rationalisation program.

If you wish to apply for funding there are six very important aspects to note and consider;

- (a) Eligibility for categories 2, 3, 4 & 5 require proof of a current approved Irrigation Farm Plan.
- (b) You can apply for more than one funding category and or more than one project, but these must be applied for on separate application forms.
- (c) To be eligible for rebate categories 2 and 5, the proposed project area must be connected by a modernised outlet or the landholder be currently involved in SRW's outlet rationalisation program.
- (d) Funding is for this current (2014-15) financial year only and limited. It will be allocated through a prioritisation process; only funding for farm planning (category 1 only) will be allocated on a first come first serve basis.

- (e) If a proposed project covers an area of your farm that has received incentives funding in previous rounds, it will not be eligible.
- (f) The WGCMA is unable to guarantee funding for the incentive program into future years as it is applied for on a year by year basis projects. Therefore intended projects must be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015. No extensions will be granted.

Once all applications are processed, applicants will be notified by telephone of the outcome by 20 October 2014. Quotes for on-ground works will be collected when incentives agreements are signed.

If you require help completing the application form or have any questions about the application process please contact the irrigation team at the DEPI in Maffra on 5147 0800.

REMEMBER if you are applying for an MID Irrigation Incentive, don't forget that for each proposed project, a separate application form needs to be completed and submitted by **4PM Thursday 25 September 2014**. If an application is not submitted, you will not be eligible for this current funding round.

## *What's been going on at the MDF?*

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Calving is well underway with 154 cows in the herd and rapidly increasing, and 128 in the vat, also rapidly increasing. There are 100 cows in the springer paddock, and a further 36 later dry cows. The milkers are lifting well, with 25.6 litres @ 4.3% fat and 4.0% protein, or 2.12kgMS, although as litres are lifting, the protein is just starting to drop. The target production for the year has 270 cows at a peak production of 2.15kgMS, and so let's hope things continue as they are heading at the moment.

Cows are being allocated ample pasture, with residuals longer than desired. The dries have on occasion been used to clean these up, and the mower used on the odd longer paddock. Allocations will be manipulated to try and get a good residual, through tightening the cows up, and if and when they have eaten their allocation, a second strip fence will be in place to allow a fresh pasture strip to the milkers. The aim is to get a good peak, with plenty of pasture consumed, and not leaving too long a residual over the farm. There is also the option of topping into the next round, with the odd paddock being dropped out for silage should feed be getting away in front of cows.

Pellets were dropped by 1kg around two weeks ago to 5kg and these will drop 1kg further in two ½ kg drops, especially whilst there is ample pasture. This kg will be kept up the sleeve for later in spring should it be required if there is a feed pinch.

### **Current Income Over Supplementary Feed Cost:**

25.6litres x 47c/l (August price on current test) = \$12.03/cow/day

- 5kg x 38.1c/kg = \$1.91/day pellets
- = \$10.12/cow/day or 21.5net litres.
- = \$1,295/day herd.

Supplement cost = \$1.91/cow/day or 4 litres/cow.

This calculation uses current (announced) milk price only and not projected closing price.

The cows are grazing around 1.8ha/24hours or 40 day round on available area (73ha) but with springer allocation, true round length is 35 days. Theoretical pasture harvest is 12.9kg/cow x 154 cows = 1987kgDM/ha/day. On 1.8ha this equals 1100kgDM/ha harvested.

Pasture demand (eat rate) is 2317kgDM total/24 hours or 30 kgDM/ha for springers and milkers, and so the required growth rate to match eat rate is 30 kgDM/ha/day.

### **Springer management:**

100 Springers are receiving a small allocation of pasture (0.3ha), 2kg lead feed pellets, MagC and around 8kgDM oaten hay. Milk fevers have been low, at four instances so far. This compares to a horror run last year. The transition diet and fresh cow management has been excellent this year.

### **Other:**

In order to maintain quality grass in front of milkers, generate a surplus for silage and ensure ample pasture as milker numbers continue to lift, Nitrogen will be applied at 37kgN/ha (80kg/ha urea equivalent) and where required (non-effluent paddocks, wet paddocks and poorer responding paddocks) Potassium (K) would be applied at 25kgK/ha.

Two poor autumn resow paddocks will be sprayed out and resown to Italian ryegrass in the next week. These paddocks will also have spinner cuts done to ensure good drainage. The wet March and April immediately as these paddocks were resown caused a terrible ryegrass strike but fantastic germination of Poa Annual (winter grass), and growth on them through winter has been terrible. After some discussion, it has been decided to resow this spring to help meet the farm pasture consumption target.

Matt Harms  
ONFARM Consulting  
0408 311 118

## ***Celebration Time!! Becky's 1<sup>st</sup> year at the Demo Farm***

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Becky Horsham and Tahlia Petersen marked the anniversary of Becky's 1<sup>st</sup> year as Farm Manager at the Demonstration Farm with a celebratory chocolate proudly presented to her by the Board. The cake was a gesture of appreciation from the Board in recognition of the hard work and effort Becky, together with the assistance of Tahlia, has made to bring the farm to where it is today.



**Becky and Tahlia preparing to tuck into the celebratory chocolate cake!**

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