

MEDIA RELEASE

SA dairy farmers receive incentive payments for innovative effluent management systems

The Statewide Dairy Effluent program steering committee has completed assessing applications for the *2007 On-ground works incentive scheme*, with eight properties being successful.

South Australian dairy farmers were encouraged to apply for limited funding to support the implementation of best management practices (BMP) on their properties. Of the sixteen applications received, eight met the assessment criteria and have been offered incentive payments ranging from \$6,200 - \$8,800, payable once the completed works have been inspected.

The *On-ground works incentive scheme* is focused on the management of effluent from dairy milking shed yards, and intensive feeding areas such as feed pads or feedlots, where BMP is considered to be any practice that exceeded the minimum legal requirements for dairy shed effluent management systems. Management practices which reduced the amount of effluent, treated effluent in innovative ways, enhanced sustainable re-use, minimised environmental impacts, or monitored the re-use of the nutrients in effluent were all eligible.

Seven of the successful properties are located in the South East Natural Resource Management (NRM) region and one in the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM region. DairySA was able to secure \$68,000 from the National Landcare Programme and they have successfully re-applied for funding in 2008 to continue to the *On-ground works incentive scheme*.

Rural Solutions SA (RSSA) consultant Michael O'Keefe has been assisting in the delivery of the Statewide Dairy Effluent program, and more recently the *On-ground works incentive scheme*. Michael said the most commonly implemented practice was the use of recycled effluent for dairy yard and feed pad washing.

"At one South East property the use of recycled effluent for dairy yard washing will reduce their annual freshwater consumption by up to 36 megalitres. The ability to utilise recycled effluent is being achieved through the use of effective solids separation infrastructure, including press screw separators, static wedge wire run down screens and multiple gravity-settling pond systems," said Michael.

Michael has been providing technical assistance on dairy shed effluent design and management to South Australian dairy farmers since 2005.

The free assistance to farmers includes the assessment of existing effluent systems, and the provision of design and/or upgrade specifications for new and existing dairies. The free technical assistance is available until the end of March 2008 to help dairy farmers decide what changes, if any, are needed to their dairy shed effluent management system.

South Australian Dairying for Tomorrow coordinator Monique White said dairy farmers who did not apply for the 2007 incentive scheme, or did not meet all the assessment criteria

may be eligible for other funding opportunities. She said properties could be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine their eligibility for funding.

Details: *On-ground works incentive scheme* or technical assistance contact Michael O'Keefe on 8842 6222, other funding opportunities contact Monique White 0400 972 206.