

# Dairy Focus Farm

## Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest are invited from dairy farmers who are keen to be involved in a new focus farm project on the far north coast of NSW.

This project will focus on recent entrants to the industry and young farmers with the aim of improving the economic and environmental sustainability of their businesses.

The participants will be supported by Phil Shannon of Shannon Farm Consulting, and Dr Bill Fulkerson - two of the most well respected and leading advisors on pasture based dairy farming in Australia.

Both Phil Shannon and Bill Fulkerson were involved in the previous Northern Rivers Focus Farm which was run at Andrew & Kelly Wilsons farm near Lismore from 2015 to 2017.

This project has funding to assist in demonstrating or trialling practices that have the ability to;

- improve operating surplus,
- reduce exposure of the business to climatic extremes, or
- demonstrate improved environmental outcomes.

The project aims to identify dairy farmers who are interested in participating as the focus farm, as well as five farmers who will act as support group members.

The focus farmer will receive a thorough financial and physical analysis of the farm at the beginning and end of the two year project. This will include a full soil nutrient program, a plan developed that captures the short, medium and long term goals for the farm and business, as well as assistance in trialling, implementing and analysing the effect of changes made to the farm and business.

The support group members will also receive an assessment for their farm performance, a full soil nutrient program and the benefits of following the implementation and analysis of the plan on the focus farm. They will also have the opportunity to learn from the experience of Phil, Bill and other group members.

If you are interested in being a focus or support farmer please contact:

Nathan Jennings

T: 0437 083 147

E: [nathan.jennings@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nathan.jennings@lls.nsw.gov.au)

Applications close on the 1st October.



Local Land  
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## What do I need to be a focus farmer?

- An interest and desire to build a productive, profitable and sustainable future in dairy farming
- Be the key decision maker/s of the farming business
- Have financial control over the farming business
- Willingness to share financial information within the support group so that the entire farm position is understood, as this will influence the farm strategies employed
- Have evidence of good record keeping
- Confirmation that you intend to be farming for the duration of the project (two years)
- Ability to cope with exposure to the wider dairy industry (no detailed financial information will be shared outside the support group)
- Willingness to provide a site for pasture demonstrations on farm that you are interested in
- Ability to cope with a level of scrutiny of your farming practice from others
- Ability to cope with criticism, feedback and suggestions
- Enthusiasm to learn from other farmers and leading advisors
- Have an open mind to suggestions from the support group, but ultimately you decide what you change and implement on farm

## What do I need to be a support group farmer?

- Prepared to attend all the support group meetings and open days
- Willing to genuinely support a developing dairy farming business
- Respect other people's opinions and experiences.

## What are Support Group Meetings?

There will be a 2-day foundational workshop in February 2022, where Phil Shannon will upskill all members in the farm analysis process that will be used over the project and also commence discussions around the strengths, opportunities, weakness and threats the focus farm may face.

There will be six subsequent support group meetings which will run for up to three hours, and include a farm walk on the focus farm. The discussions will involve relevant issues the focus farm is facing, look at trial progression, financial analysis since the last group meeting and ongoing planning.

## What about the open days?

There will be two open days with dates to be set once the group is formed. These days are intended to be open to the wider dairy industry and will likely involve a farm walk and discussion related to how the business is operating. No financial information will be disclosed at these events.

Phil Shannon will facilitate the day with the focus farmer and support group encouraged to participate in the discussion. These days will allow the opportunity to address certain topic areas of interest.

## What do I need to do to apply?

Simply contact North Coast Local Land Services and register your details

- E: [admin.northcoast@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin.northcoast@lls.nsw.gov.au)
- T: 1300 795 299
- W: <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/north-coast/contact-us/online-customer-inquiry-form>

