



Farm Business Assistance

Program Guidelines



RURAL FINANCE

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

FARM BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Victorian Government (through Agriculture Victoria of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions) (Agriculture Victoria) is offering Farm Business Assistance for eligible farm businesses in the Wellington Shire, East Gippsland Shire and Northern Victoria.

The Farm Business Assistance Program (Program) provides support payments for eligible farm businesses that are experiencing significant financial pressure because of prolonged drought and dry seasonal conditions and industry downturn. The Program offers a one-off grant payment of \$2,500 or \$3,500 per eligible farm business.

The Program will be administered on behalf of the Victorian Government by Rural Finance.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Program aims to provide immediate financial relief and alleviate some farm business pressures for eligible farm businesses affected by drought and dry seasonal conditions.



WHO CAN APPLY

Grants under the Program are available for the following eligible farm businesses, in the amounts shown:

- Farm Household Allowance (FHA) recipients in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire (\$3,500).
- Young farmers in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire (\$3,500).
- Remaining commercial farms in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire (\$2,500).
- Northern Victoria dairy farmers that are FHA recipients (\$2,500).
- Northern Victoria young dairy farmers (\$2,500).

The Program has general eligibility requirements for all applicants as well as specific eligibility requirements for each cohort.

Only one grant is available per eligible farm business.

Eligibility Requirements: \$3,500 one-off payment for Farm Household Allowance recipients in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire

To access the \$3,500 one-off payment, applicants are required to:

- Own, share or lease a farm business located in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire;
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST;
- Demonstrate that they were or are currently receiving FHA anytime during the 2018-19 financial year;
- Provide evidence of FHA status through:
 - Copy of the front page of a Centrelink Income Statement; OR
 - Copy of letter from Centrelink notifying receipt of FHA (Payment Letter); and
- Sign a Statutory Declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.

Eligibility Requirements: \$3,500 one-off payment for Young Farmers in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire

To access the \$3,500 one-off payment, applicants are required to:

- Own, share or lease a farm business located in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire;
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST;
- Contribute the majority (more than 51 per cent) of his/her labour to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, earn more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise;* OR
 - Commenced farming operation between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2018 and 50 per cent of his/her gross income will be derived from the primary production business within three years of the date of application;
- Show proof of age to determine the applicant is a young farmer (under 35 and over 18 years as of 30 June 2019).
 - If there are two or more owners of the farm business and one is under 35 as of 30 June 2019, the farm business still qualifies for the one-off payment; and
- Sign a Statutory Declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.



Eligibility Requirements: \$2,500 for remaining commercial farms in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire

To access the \$2,500 one-off payment, applicants are required to:

- Own, share or lease a farm business located in Wellington Shire or East Gippsland Shire;
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST;
- Contribute the majority (more than 51 per cent) of his/her labour to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, earn more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise;* OR
 - Commenced farming operation between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2018 and 50 per cent of his/her gross income will be derived from the primary production business within three years of the date of application; and
- Sign a Statutory Declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.

Eligibility Requirements: \$2,500 one-off payment for dairy farmers in Northern and North West Victoria that are Farm Household Allowance recipients

To access the \$2,500 one-off payment, applicants are required to:

- Own, share or lease a dairy farm business in Northern or North West Victoria;**
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST;
- Provide proof of being a licensed dairy farm operator, lessee or share farmer. This may include a dairy industry license issued by Dairy Food Safety Victoria, lease documentation, share farming contract or agreement with a dairy production/supply company;
- Demonstrate that they were or are currently receiving FHA anytime during the 2018-19 financial year;
- Provide evidence of FHA status through:
 - Copy of the front page of a Centrelink Income Statement; OR
 - Copy of Letter from Centrelink notifying receipt of FHA (Payment Letter); and
- Sign a Statutory Declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.



Eligibility Requirements: \$2,500 one-off payment for young dairy farmers in Northern and North West Victoria (excluding Farm Household Allowance recipients)

To access the \$2,500 one-off payment, applicants are required to:

- Own, share or lease a dairy farm business located Northern or North West Victoria;**
- Be registered as a primary producer with the Australian Tax Office and have an ABN and be registered for GST;
- Contribute the majority (more than 51 per cent) of his/her labour to the farming enterprise, and under normal business conditions, earn more than 51 per cent of his/her individual income from the farming enterprise;* OR
 - Commenced farming operation between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2018 and 50 per cent of his/her gross income will be derived from the primary production business within three years of the date of application;
- Provide proof of being a licensed dairy farm operator, lessee or share farmer. This may include a dairy industry license issued by Dairy Food Safety Victoria, lease documentation, share farming contract or agreement with a dairy production/ supply company;
- Show proof of age to determine the applicant is a young farmer (under 35 and over 18 years as of 30 June 2019).
 - If there are two or more owners of the farm business and one is under 35 as of 30 June 2019, the farm business still qualifies for the one-off payment; and
- Sign a Statutory Declaration confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements of the Program.

*As a guide it is anticipated that farm turnover would exceed \$50,000 per annum under normal business conditions. Normal business conditions refer to a year with no adverse climatic conditions (drought/flood/fire) in which average yields/ productivity is achieved. Normal year income is based on this productivity and long-term achievable commodity prices.

**Dairy farms in the Northern and North West Victoria region refers to dairy farms located in the following Local Government Areas: Alpine, Benalla, Buloke, Campaspe, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Greater Shepparton, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Indigo, Loddon, Mildura, Moira, Northern Grampians, Strathbogie, Swan Hill, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Yarriambiack.

Applicants in receipt of Farm Household Allowance have already been assessed by the Australian Government to have contributed a significant part of their labour and capital to the farm business.

Applicants in receipt of Farm Household Allowance can obtain a copy of their Centrelink Income Statement via the following methods:

Online: Signing into their myGov account then accessing their Centrelink account and requesting an income document which will be sent via email (detailed instructions are available through <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/request-document-using-your-centrelink-online-account>)

Phone: Farmer Assistance Hotline – Farm Household Allowance on 132 316 (available from Monday to Friday, 8 am to 8 pm).

In person: requesting a copy via their nearest Centrelink Service Centre.



ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A farm business is a business undertaking agricultural activity recorded in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Business Register (ABSBR), based on the Australian Business Register (ABR) maintained by the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The ABSBR stores details about businesses and organisations when they register for an Australian Business Number (ABN).

One grant will be offered per farm business. An applicant who operates more than one farm business may only apply for a grant for one of their businesses. If there is more than one person owning/operating/leasing a farm business, only one payment may be granted towards the business.

If you are concerned about the impact on other social security payments, including Farm Household Allowance, received from the Australian Government Department of Human Services (Centrelink), please contact the Farmer Assistance Hotline on 132 316.

Before applying for financial assistance under this Program, applicants should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine their eligibility for and the terms of the financial assistance.

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications for the grant payment must be made via the application form to Rural Finance and be accompanied by the documentary evidence stated in the application form.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

<p>Step 1</p> <p>Application process opens</p>	<p>Applicant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the guidelines to establish eligibility. • Call Rural Finance for general enquiries about the application process. • Complete application form and submit to Rural Finance via post or email.
---	---

Step 2

Approval and grant process

- Once application is approved, Rural Finance will provide the grant payment by direct bank deposit

Rural Finance and/or Agriculture Victoria reserves the right to request further information from you to assist in assessing the application and to verify any information provided in your application.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit to determine compliance with the Program guidelines.

By signing the application form, you are declaring that the information provided, including supporting documentation is true and accurate.

Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

FUNDING SOURCE

The Victorian Government is providing \$42 million of drought and dry seasonal conditions support for Victorian farmers. This includes \$12.6 million of targeted support announced on 22 February 2019 with a focus on providing financial relief to farmers. The Farm Business Assistance Program has an allocated budget of \$5.6 million.

DURATION OF THE PROGRAM

The application period for grants will be open from the date the Program opens until 30 June 2019.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

The Program Guidelines are correct at the time of publishing. Agriculture Victoria may review and amend the Program and/or the Program Guidelines at any time.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Victorian Government may conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which the Program has met its objectives. Grant applicants and recipients may be requested to provide information to assist in auditing during the Program or the evaluation after the Program's completion.



PUBLICITY

Grant recipients may be asked to assist Agriculture Victoria in promotion of the Program. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies and/or promotional events and activities.

Agriculture Victoria may request recipients to fact check any text and seek all relevant approvals for Agriculture Victoria to use any imagery provided by the recipient associated with the Program prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Agriculture Victoria may publicise the benefits accruing to the recipient and/or the State of Victoria associated with the provision of a Farm Business Assistance payment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any personal information provided by the Applicant or a third party in an application will be collected by Rural Finance and Agriculture Victoria for administration of the Program. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government bodies for the purposes of assessing Farm Business Assistance applications.

Data gathered through assessments may be compiled, aggregated and anonymised by Rural Finance and Agriculture Victoria for Program reporting, evaluation and research purposes.

Any personal information collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred will be held in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

Agriculture Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Agriculture Victoria's Privacy Policy can be found online at www.economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au. Enquiries about access to information should be directed to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions' Privacy Unit by phone on (03) 9651 9749 or email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Finance

Telephone: 1800 260 425

Email: governmentservices@ruralfinance.com.au

Web: www.ruralfinance.com.au

Postal address: GPO Box 1313, Bendigo Central, Victoria 3552

Agriculture Victoria

For more information about other drought support being provided by the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government, please contact Agriculture Victoria.

A range of other support is available to farmers affected by the drought and potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs.

Telephone: 136 186

Email: drought.support@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Web: agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons