

MEDIA RELEASE

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NFF launches free Information Service to boost on-farm digital and agtech adoption

Digital and agtech adoption on Australian farms has been held back by connectivity issues and digital literacy, but this complex landscape will now be easier to navigate with the launch of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) On Farm Connectivity Information Service.

The independent Information Service will provide free, practical, tailored support for farmers through the NFF's Regional Tech Hub – as a key pillar of the Australian Government's \$30 million On Farm Connectivity Program (OFCP).

Announced by the Minister for Communications the Hon Michelle Rowland MP at today's NFF's National Conference, the OFCP will support primary producers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries to adopt connected machinery and sensor technology by providing a 50 per cent rebate (between \$3,000 and \$30,000) for the cost of eligible equipment, including installation and training.

“We live in an increasingly digital and competitive society and measures like the On Farm Connectivity Program will ensure our agricultural sector has every opportunity and the best technology to take advantage of an increasingly digital economy,” said the Hon Michelle Rowland MP.

NFF CEO Tony Mahar said today's launch of the OFCP, in conjunction with the NFF's Information Service, will enable farmers to make informed decisions around the connectivity technologies best suited to their business.

“We have long been advocating for accessible, reliable, quality and affordable connectivity services in the bush, with our recent nationwide survey of more than 1600 farmers highlighting three quarters hold concerns around access to telecommunications.

“While there are many technologies out there to capture data and support decision making, including telemetry and sensors, its uptake has been hindered by connectivity issues, and lack of digital and connectivity literacy, which is putting a handbrake on on-farm productivity.”

Stepping farmers through the myriad of choices of digital technologies, the applications available to them, and solutions for equipment, set-up and installation, Regional Tech Hub Manager Jen Medway said the information will be tailored for each user of the service.

“The Regional Tech Hub has already supported more than 150,000 people in regional and remote Australia since its inception nearly three years ago.

“Our extended service capabilities through the OFCP will mean farmers can pick up the phone or reach out on our website, to talk specifically about their on-farm connectivity requirements – whether that be how to extend connectivity from the house to the machinery shed or yards, or how to support some of the highly sophisticated production networks and systems they wish to adopt.

“To be able to talk to someone who speaks their language, understands the unique environment in which they operate, and can listen to what they are wanting to achieve with their on-farm connectivity requirements makes the decision process so much easier.

“We are urging farmers to make use of this free, independent advisory service, as well as our online information toolkit and webinars, so they can confidently participate in the OFCP to access the on-farm connectivity equipment that will make a difference to them, and the running of their business.”

For more information head to nff.org.au/on-farm-connectivity-information-service/ or to find out more about the OFCP visit infrastructure.gov.au/ofcp



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