

Soil Moisture Monitoring Equipment Incentive in the Shepparton Irrigation Region (Pilot)

Background

Field studies undertaken within the Shepparton Irrigation Region have shown that many irrigators do not have a good understanding of how much water they are applying versus the actual crops water requirements. This results in underwatering and loss of production potential. There is also potential for overwatering which can result in environmental implications for regional groundwater recharge and drainage runoff which can contribute to salinity and nutrient issues on farms and in waterways.

Soil moisture monitoring devices provide information about the water status of the soil. Gaining a better understanding of the soils water status can assist irrigators to improve their irrigation scheduling to best suit their irrigated crops water requirements whilst minimising the risks of any offsite impacts.

Purpose of the Pilot

The aim of the Pilot incentive scheme is to encourage landowners in the Shepparton Irrigation Region to purchase and install soil moisture monitoring equipment so that irrigation management is improved, resulting in an increase in production and improved water use efficiency.

Follow up work will be undertaken with these landowners post equipment installation to;

- a. Assist them to understand what the soil moisture monitoring equipment is telling them.
- b. Gain an understanding of whether they have changed their irrigation practices which has led to improvements in water use efficiency.

The information gathered will be used to determine the need and value of seeking funding to extend this incentive beyond this pilot.

The incentive available

The incentive will be administered by the Goulburn Broken CMA and be available for costs associated with the purchase and installation of soil moisture monitoring equipment for irrigation.

The incentive consists of a payment, paid on provision of an invoice and receipt, for 50 % of the cost of equipment that measures soil moisture to a maximum payment of \$5,000 excluding GST per property. The incentive is for new equipment only and does not cover second hand equipment, repairs or maintenance or ongoing costs such as licence/subscription fees.

The application will be ruled invalid if any other source of State or Federal government funding for this activity is received by the landowner.

Eligibility

For a property to be eligible for an incentive for the purchase and installation of a soil moisture monitoring system it must meet the following requirements:

- a) The property must be located within the Shepparton Irrigation Region and be covered by a water use licence.

- b) The property where the soil moisture monitoring equipment is to be must have a whole farm plan that shows the irrigation system that will be operating where the soil moisture monitoring equipment is to be installed.
- c) Equipment that would be considered eligible would include, but not limited to;
 - Tensiometers
 - Capacitance probes

Timeframe

The pilot will run from April 2019 through to June 2020.

Contact

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