

CalfWays



Expression of interest

Growing Beef from Dairy Demonstration site projects

Background

Australia's dairy industry generates a substantial number of non-replacement dairy calves (also called surplus calves) each year. Historically many of these calves had limited value and uncertain market pathways, contributing to ongoing animal welfare and social licence challenges.

There is an opportunity to create value from these calves within commercial beef systems. With appropriate genetics, feeding and management, dairy-origin cattle can meet market specifications and deliver improved production and eating quality outcomes.

Despite this, adoption remains constrained by knowledge, confidence, market understanding and supply chain coordination.

Dairy Australia's CalfWays Roadmap aims to improve the welfare and value of non-replacement calves across the dairy industry. Complementing this work, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Dairy Australia are delivering the Growing Beef from Dairy (GBfD) initiative to support best practice adoption across the beef from dairy production system and strengthen commercially viable market pathways for dairy-origin cattle.

As part of the GBfD initiative, on-farm demonstration sites will be established to demonstrate practical production systems, build producer capability and support adoption through peer-to-peer learning and on-farm demonstration.

Purpose

MLA is seeking Expressions of Interest from organisations to design and deliver a project that:

- Demonstrates commercially relevant beef from dairy systems
- Builds producer knowledge, skills and confidence
- Supports adoption and practice change at a regional level
- Strengthens connections across the beef from dairy supply chain
- Develops awareness across supply chain that beef from dairy can be a viable opportunity

Project scope and on-farm demonstration site project requirements

Project Scope

The project will aim to:

- Demonstrate commercially relevant beef from dairy production systems
- Build producer and advisor capability through guided learning, on-farm demonstration and peer-to-peer engagement
- Support measurable improvements in knowledge, confidence and decision-making relating to beef from dairy

Delivery will be aligned with the GBfD learning framework and extension intent, with flexibility to reflect regional production systems and market contexts.

Core Requirements

The GBfD demonstration site project is expected to include, as a minimum:

Duration:

- A minimum of two years of delivery or coverage of at least two cohorts of calves

Demonstration Sites:

- Up to 3 demonstration sites located on different commercial properties

Participants:

- A core group of at least five (5) producers, with a maximum group size of twelve (12). The group should involve beef producers and dairy producers as well as service providers. The group should have a strong focus on beef production.
- Access to a broader network of producers (observer participants), or demonstrated ability to engage a wider regional audience to attend workshops and/or field days to share project outcomes.
- Involvement of a supply-chain partner is strongly preferred, such as a processor, feedlot, brand owner and/or marketer, to support market alignment, commercial relevance and pathways for adoption. Supply-chain participants may also act as contributing partners, providing cash support consistent with [MDC co-investment requirements](#).

Learning and engagement:

- Delivery of GBfD workshops for core participants, using a mix of face-to-face and online formats.
- Workshops will be delivered over an 8–12 month period, with some components potentially self-guided.
- The workshop material will be provided to the successful organisation. The group facilitator will need to attend the GBfD train the trainer workshop.

Communications and extension outputs:

- A minimum of one (1) open field day
- Case studies – at least one per host site
- Contribution to a feature article (final production by MLA)

Funding:

- The maximum project budget is \$100,000 per year (plus MDC access fee) for the duration of the project.
- Funding is provided under the [MLA Donor Company co-investment model](#), which requires a cash contribution that is matched by MDC funding (50/50 funding split cash contribution/ MDC).
- All MDC projects incur an access fee to cover costs associated with providing and operating MDC programs:

- Where contribution funds originate from levy-paying producers, an 8% access fee applies.
- Where the contribution is sourced from a commercial third party, state government, or non-levy paying participant, a 12% access fee applies.

Eligible Use of MLA Funding

MLA funding **can** be used for:

- Project facilitation and coordination, including facilitator time, reporting and group engagement activities
- Operational aspects of the demonstration activities
- Extension and communications activities, including workshops and field days
- Development, implementation and reporting of a robust monitoring and evaluation plan
- Facilitator travel to attend the train the trainer

Note: Budget provision should be made for one overnight trip to Sydney and/or eastern states of Australia for relevant training purposes.

MLA funding **cannot** be used for the following:

- Purchase of capital items (applicants should investigate sponsorship, shared-use or leasing arrangements)
- Items of significant private benefit (e.g. DNA testing of whole herds)
- Purchase of animals
- Fencing and infrastructure, including temporary infrastructure
- eID tags

Reporting requirements:

- Submission of a Communication Plan, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Plan, and pre-project surveys of core participant groups.
- Provide six-monthly milestone reports outlining project progress and outcomes, including (but not limited to):
 - Progress against implementation of the MER Plan
 - Summary of key activities undertaken and demonstration site results and/or data collected during the reporting period
 - Update on communication and broader engagement activities, including outcomes and evaluations of field days and events
- Submission of a comprehensive final report at project completion that summarises objectives, activities, outcomes and achievements; evaluates performance against MER Plan targets; synthesises demonstration site results and adoption impacts; assesses communication and engagement effectiveness; and provides final datasets, key learnings, and recommendations for future work.
- Participation in an annual teleconference with MLA and project partners to review progress.

Final Project Development

The EOI stage is intended to identify suitable applicants, partnerships and regional opportunities. Detailed project design, including final site selection, learning focus areas, timelines and budgets, will be developed collaboratively with successful applicants following EOI outcomes.

Eligibility, roles and responsibilities

Eligibility to Apply

Expressions of Interest are invited from suitably qualified organisations or consortia with demonstrated capability to design and deliver producer-led demonstration and adoption projects.

Eligible applicants include:

- Producer focused organisations, extension providers, industry groups or supply chain partners
- Beef supply chain partners
- Regional or cross-regional delivery teams
- Consortia comprising funding partners, service providers and commercial producers

EOIs are encouraged from collaborative, regionally based partnerships that bring together:

- A lead delivery organisation
- Participating commercial producers (minimum requirements outlined elsewhere in this document)
- Relevant funding partners and/or technical expertise

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to:

- Coordinate delivery across multiple commercial demonstration sites
- Facilitate producer engagement and guided learning activities
- Work collaboratively with MLA, Dairy Australia (DA), and AgSTAR Projects

Roles and Responsibilities

Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant is the organisation that will contract directly with MLA and hold overall accountability for the project. Key responsibilities include:

- Entering into and managing the contract with MLA, including compliance with MDC funding requirements
- Holding financial accountability, including budget management, co-investment verification and reporting
- Ensuring appropriate governance, risk management and probity arrangements
- Overseeing project performance against agreed milestones, deliverables and outcomes
- Ensuring appropriate resourcing is in place to deliver the project as approved

The Lead Applicant does not need to directly deliver all project activities, but must demonstrate the capacity to manage and support effective delivery.

Project Facilitator (Coordination and Delivery)

The Project Facilitator is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and delivery of the demonstration site activities. This role may be undertaken by the Lead Applicant or by a separate, clearly identified organisation or individual. Key responsibilities include:

- Facilitating co-design of the final project plan with participating producers and partners
- Coordinating establishment and operation of the demonstration sites
- Leading producer engagement and facilitating guided workshops aligned to the GBfD modules
- Coordinating data collection, learning activities and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange
- Delivery of communications outputs, including field days and case studies.

- Delivery of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E), milestone and final reporting requirements
- Working closely with MLA, Dairy Australia, AgSTAR Projects and nominated Technical Advisors

Project Partners and Contributors

Project partners may include producers, service providers, facilitators, advisors or funding contributors. Their responsibilities may include:

- Active participation in project design and delivery
- Hosting or supporting demonstration activities
- Providing technical input, facilitation, or specialist services as required
- Contributing cash or in-kind resources in line with MDC co-investment requirements

Where additional specialist support is required, this must be clearly defined and fully budgeted within the project costs.

Participating Core Producers

Participating producers are expected to:

- Host or contribute to one or more demonstration sites including data collection (as applicable)
- Engage actively in workshops and learning activities
- Share experiences and outcomes to support peer learning and broader industry adoption
- Participate in communications outputs such as case studies and field days

MLA

MLA (in collaboration with DA) will:

- Provide co-investment funding through the MDC arrangement
- Support project governance and oversight
- Provide access to technical advisors, learning resources and communication channels where appropriate
- Lead or support broader communications activities, including feature articles and promotion of project outcomes

What MLA will provide

MLA, in collaboration with DA, will support successful applicants through an enabling and oversight role to help align delivery with the objectives of the Growing Beef from Dairy (GBfD) initiative.

MLA/DA will provide:

- Work collaboratively with successful applicants during the post EOI phase to support the design and finalisation of the detailed project plan.
- Investment support through the agreed MDC funding arrangement, as outlined elsewhere in this document
- Project oversight and coordination, including contract management with the Lead Applicant and alignment with agreed outcomes and milestones
- Access to GBfD frameworks and emerging learning resources, and connection to relevant technical advisors where appropriate
- Collaboration with AgSTAR Projects and DA learning and digital teams to support consistency and alignment with broader GBfD extension activities
- Communications support, including promotion of key project outcomes and development of a feature article using project-provided inputs

- Capability-building opportunities, including support for participation in Train-the-Trainer activities linked to GBfD delivery

MLA's role is to support, guide and enable effective delivery of the PDS investment. Day-to-day coordination and implementation remain the responsibility of the Lead Applicant and Project Facilitator.

Assessment criteria

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the following criteria. At the EOI stage, emphasis will be placed on capability, partnerships and readiness to participate in a co-design process, rather than on a fully developed project design.

1. Alignment with GBfD and demonstration site intent

- Demonstrated understanding of the Growing Beef from Dairy (GBfD) initiative and the role of Demonstration Sites What are you trying to achieve
- Clear alignment with the intent to support beef producers, dairy producers, service providers and supply-chain participants
- Evidence that the applicant understands the purpose of the demonstration site as a learning, demonstration and adoption mechanism rather than a research trial

2. Co-Investment capacity

- Demonstrated ability to meet MDC co-investment requirements, including:
 - Access to cash and in-kind contributions
 - An understanding of how co-investment would be secured and verified
- Confidence that funding commitments can be confirmed during the co-design phase

3. Ability to build and coordinate a core group

- Demonstrated ability to bring together and influence an appropriate group, who have strong focus on beef production, with the participants including:
 - Beef producers
 - Dairy producers
 - Advisors, service providers and supply-chain participants
- Evidence of strong producer relationships, stakeholder networks and regional credibility
- Clear identification of potential participants or pathways to recruit suitable participants

4. Capability and experience

- Capability of the proposed Lead Applicant to manage contractual, financial and governance requirements
- Capability of the Project Facilitator to coordinate, engage and support producer-led learning and demonstration activities
- Relevant experience in producer extension, facilitation, adoption or demonstration-based projects

5. Capacity to deliver

- Demonstrated capacity to deliver a project of the scale and complexity outlined in this EOI
- An understanding of the resourcing, coordination and facilitation required over a multi-year delivery period
- Identification of key risks and high-level approaches to managing them (not detailed delivery plans)

6. Readiness to participate in co-design

- Demonstrated willingness and ability to engage in a post-EOI co-design process with MLA, Dairy Australia and project partners
- Flexibility to refine project scope, activities and delivery approaches during the co-design phase
- Understanding that detailed project design, timelines and budgets will be finalised following EOI selection

Notes to applicants

Applicants are not expected to submit a fully scoped or costed project plan at the EOI stage.

The total available budget has been defined by MLA; detailed budgets will be developed through co-design with successful applicants.

EOIs should focus on people, partnerships, capability and readiness to deliver, rather than detailed technical project design.

Submission and key dates

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in accordance with the requirements outlined in this document.

Submissions should:

- Be submitted via [the Online EOI Form](#)
- Address all sections outlined in the EOI form
- Clearly identify the Lead Applicant, proposed partners (producers and dairy farmers) and nominated Project Facilitator

Late submissions may not be accepted / considered at MLA's discretion.

Indicative timelines for the EOI process are outlined below. MLA reserves the right to amend these dates at its discretion.

EOI Milestone	Date
EOI released	21 September 2026
Deadline for clarification questions	12 October 2026
EOI submissions close	30 October 2026
Assessment period	3 weeks
Notification of shortlisted applicants	23 November 2026
Co-design and project development phase commences	30 November 2026
Anticipated project commencement	1 March 2027

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