Department of Regional NSW
Department of Primary Industries

Farms of the Future
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
February 2023

Farms of the Future
Agtech Grant Program Guidelines

→ The Farms of the Future (FoTF) Program will deliver improved connectivity and encourage farmers to adopt Agtech to boost productivity and improve resource management, including water efficiency and drought preparedness.
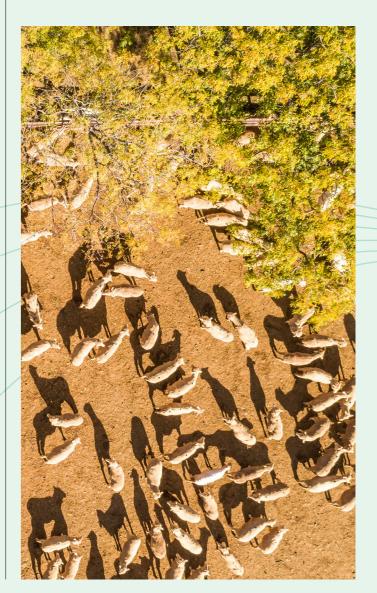
Image credit: Cotton Australia

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→ Introduction

About the program

In 2018, the NSW Government established the $4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund (the Fund) to invest in transformational and economically productive infrastructure for regional NSW.

The Fund's investment is guided by the *20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*. A key priority of the *20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW* is improving regional digital connectivity.

Over $400 million from the Fund has been committed to the Regional Digital Connectivity Program to ensure families and businesses across regional NSW have better access to faster and more reliable digital networks.

As part of the Regional Digital Connectivity program, the Farms of the Future program aims to facilitate tech-enabled production and monitoring through improved connectivity and installation of sensor equipment which support increased productivity, competitiveness, job creation and sustainable use of resources in the selected agricultural sectors: Cotton, Livestock (Sheep & Beef), Grains and Horticultural (tree crops and vines).

The Farms of the Future program has two core streams of investment:

- Extension and Capacity Building: the development and roll-out of a multifaceted education and capacity building campaign aimed at building farmer and supplier knowledge of the benefits and use of technology in agriculture. The FoTF training program provides a combination of Agtech and connectivity training, and farm planning to enable farmers to identify key pain points and Agtech solutions.

- Grants: the provision of grants for farmers in target LGAs to establish connectivity and incentivise Agtech device uptake and de-risk investment. The grant opportunity offers successful applicants funding for 70% of the cost of eligible purchases of approved Agtech.

The Farms of the Future program is committed to working with regional communities, farmers and industries, enabling them to become more self-reliant and better prepared for the impacts of future drought events and other economic shocks.

The Farms of the Future program is being delivered and administered by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), with funding from the Department of Regional NSW.

Assistance available

Eligible applicants can apply for funding of 70% of the cost of eligible purchases of Approved Agtech (which includes Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions and device data integration dashboards), up to a maximum of $35,000 (excluding GST) per eligible applicant.

Grant contributions for the connectivity solutions is subject to a specific cap of $15,000, within the overall program cap of $35,000.

Grant applications must be for a minimum of $5,000. The subscription costs for apps and devices, up until the end of the program, 30 June 2025 can be included in the grant amount.

Applications are limited to one application per Australian Business Number (ABN) for the first round of the program.

Additional applications may be made for any subsequent rounds provided the total grant to that applicant does not exceed $35,000.

The availability of grants is subject to funds being available. No grants will be offered beyond the allocated funding. Visit the NSW Government Grant and Funding website on a regular basis for the latest information.

Objectives

To assist primary producers to make data-led decisions to boost productivity, increase their market competitiveness and improve sustainable use of resources, including water efficiency, drought preparedness and resilience to climate change.

Key Dates

Agtech training program open
9 September 2022

Grant applications open
3 February 2023

Grant applications close
31 August 2023

Successful applicants may submit claims for eligible costs until
29 February 2024

Program closes
30 June 2025

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→ Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants

Applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- have a primary production enterprise in any agricultural industry (see Definitions for the list of eligible ANSZIC Codes), however the program focus is on the livestock (beef and sheep), cotton, grains or horticulture (tree crops and vines) sectors

- operate the primary production enterprise in an eligible local government area: Armidale, Ballina, Byron, Cabonne, Carrathool, Griffith, Leeton, Lismore, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Orange

- hold an active ABN in respect of the primary production enterprise

- operate the primary production enterprise as a sole trader, partnership, trust or private company, or a combination of these structures

- obtain a turnover of at least $40,000 per annum from primary production or otherwise operate an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) recognised bona fide primary production enterprise

- have completed the FoTF Training Program and received a Certificate of Completion

- agree to provide DPI with access to weather data from specified complying Ag IoT devices purchased under the program to assist with seasonal conditions reporting and provision of future farm-level forecasting tools

- lodge an application by the closing date shown on the NSW Government Grant and Funding website.

Eligible purchases

These are purchases of Approved Agtech that are identified in your endorsed Agtech Plan from the approved suppliers in the FoTF Agtech Catalogue which fit the agriculture sectors and use cases defined by the FoTF Program.

Applicants are accountable for implementing the entire phase of project delivery including obtaining, where relevant, all planning permits, licences and approvals and appointing suppliers and/or contractors to complete works, including power requirements.

Ineligible purchases

The following are ineligible for grants under this program, and not will be paid:

- Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions or dashboards that are already covered by NSW Government grant funding or under an insurance policy

- Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions or dashboards purchased prior to the applicant obtaining a FoTF Agtech training certification

- any purchases of Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions, or dashboards that do not comply with the FoTF Agtech Catalogue at the time of approval.

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→ Application process

Checklist for when you apply

The following documents are required to be summited upon application prior to the closing date:

- farm business tax returns for FY 20/21
- local Government area rates notice or current lease agreement
- FoTF Training Program - Certificate of Completion (see Definitions)
- Tech list (see Definitions)
- agreement to full Terms and Conditions.

If you have provided documents to the RAA in the past 12months, you may not need to provide some of the above documents again.

Providing all documentation is ready for upload, the application should take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete. We need your documents to make sure this grant only goes to genuine eligible primary producers.

Applicants should refer to the NSW Government Grant and Funding website for information on training, to complete an online application and to make eligible claims.

Application close dates and invoice claim close dates are shown on the NSW Government Grant and Funding website.

- by submitting an application form, the applicant declares that the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation is true and accurate
- grants will only be approved while funding is still available
- an approved application guarantees an applicant will receive payment of the grant if invoices are submitted before the closure of the claims period
- if you believe your application has been unfairly denied or incorrectly processed, you can lodge an appeal through the RAA appeals process.

If you need assistance with submitting your application, please contact the DPI FoTF per below.

Email: fotf@dpi.nsw.gov.au or

Contact a Development Officer: for details refer to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/climate/digital-agriculture/farms-of-the-future

If you have difficulty understanding these guidelines or completing the application form you should seek the assistance of your rural/financial counsellor, business advisor, accountant or a trusted family member/friend.

If you need assistance with interpreting or translating, please contact Multicultural NSW on 1300 651 500 or email languageservices@multicultural.nsw.gov.au.

Please don't self-assess your eligibility for this program and grant. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility please contact the DPI FoTF Program via fotf@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit the NSW Government Grants and Funding website.

Making a Claim

Successful applicants may submit claims for eligible purchases they have made anytime between the approval of the application and the closing of the claim period.
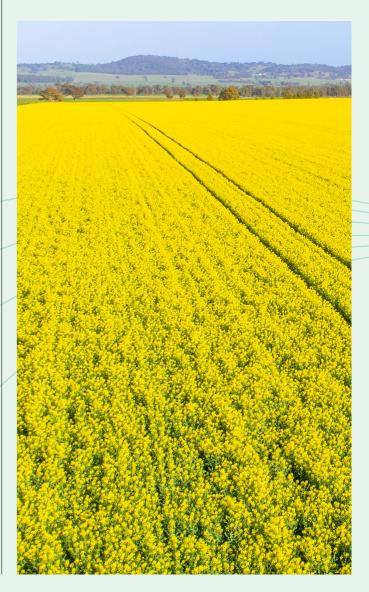
To claim the grant, complete the claim form on the RAA website and provide the following:

- valid tax invoices
- evidence you have purchased the Approved Agtech set out in your Agtech Plan from the FoTF Agtech Catalogue (e.g. $0 balance tax invoices or a copy of a bank statement with proof of payment)
- evidence the Approved Agtech have been installed at your primary industry enterprise and are ready for use (e.g. photographic evidence). The Department and the RAA may require further information before paying a claim, including without limitation:
  - explanation of inconsistencies between the approved application and the submitted invoices
  - proof of installation
  - an onsite audit.

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$\rightarrow$ Assessment

Assessment

Applications will be assessed in order of receipt by the FoTF program. Incomplete applications will not enter the assessment queue or be assessed until all required information is provided. Late applications will not be accepted.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

The Department will make an initial assessment of eligibility, based on your completion of the FoTF Training Program and provision of an endorsed Agtech Plan.

Applications that pass this stage will be referred to the RAA for final assessment of eligibility (including Primary Producer status), approval and processing.

The RAA will not approve an application from a person, or a close associate of a person, who is under investigation or has been charged in relation to the fraudulent receipt of grants under this program or other programs.

The RAA reserves the right to request further information from you or from any business or individual you have engaged, to assist in assessing your application and to verify any information provided in your application. Failure to provide such information may result in the RAA refusing your application.

The RAA reserves the right to refuse an application where eligibility criteria are not met, or where you do not or cannot provide sufficient information for the RAA to determine if eligibility criteria have been met.

Applicants should note that past financial assistance under this program or any other program is not a reliable indicator of eligibility for future financial assistance under this program.

Applications submitted may be subject to audit by the RAA or its agents in order to determine compliance with scheme guidelines.

Before applying for financial assistance under this program, you should seek advice from your legal, business or financial advisers about the tax implications of this financial assistance.

You will be required to provide a range of supporting documentation that may include the latest Local Land Services rates notice, local council rate notice, tax returns and financial statements for the applying entity.

Applications will be assessed and notified within 20 business days of an applicant's submission. Where complex applications are received this timeframe may be up to 30 days.

Details of successful applicants will be supplied to the responsible Minister's office five working days before the applicant is notified

Claim processing timeframes will be within 15 days of the RAA and FoTF receiving applicant claim submission. Where complex applications are received this timeframe may be up to 20 days.

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→ Terms and conditions

Important information

These guidelines are correct at the time of publishing.

The DPI FoTF Program and the RAA reserve the right to amend, alter or change these guidelines at any time, and it is your responsibility to check the relevant website prior to application.

The Department has selected suppliers for the Agtech Catalogue (available on the DPI FoTF website) using an open assessment process.

Supplier pricing stated in the Agtech Catalogue is subject to change and is indicative only. Contact suppliers for current pricing.

The Department is not responsible for recommending the Approved Agtech nor the ongoing management of the network, devices or dashboards. All issues concerning the supply, maintenance and performance of such devices and connectivity are governed by the agreements between the supplier and purchaser, whether or not the purchaser has applied for or received a grant under this program.

DPI is seeking permission from participants to access climate data (rainfall, radiation temperature and near surface wind speed) from devices purchased under the program. DPI will use this data in a trial to improve state-wide drought monitoring and forecasting, as part of its Seasonal Conditions reporting services.

At the end of the trial on 30th June 2025 the data will not be retailed and further use of data and or sensor feeds will require a separate agreement to be formed between DPI and landholders. Arrangements for data sharing will be made with your chosen supplier if you agree to share it for this purpose. No personal information or information which could be used to identify individual properties will be published.

The final decision maker is the Secretary Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW).

Without limiting its rights, the RAA (or another NSW agency) in its sole discretion may recover funds from the applicant, and determine that a debt is due, if evidence indicates that the applicant:

- did not meet the eligibility criteria
- received an over-payment of the grant (whether of the up-front grant or of an additional grant payment)
- spent any part of the grant on costs that were not eligible purchases items or activities.

Fraudulent claims

The RAA takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be assessed and investigated as appropriate, which may require the involvement of external parties such as the NSW Police Force or the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

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

Providing inaccurate, untrue or misleading information may be a breach of the *Rural Assistance Act 1989* or criminal law for which serious penalties may apply.

The RAA responds to fraud by:

- audit and site validation of applications and claims that are of concern
- referral to the NSW Police Force or the ICAC of suspected fraud
- recovery of any assistance provided under a fraudulent application.

An application approval, or payment of a claim against an approved grant, may be delayed where:

- assistance previously provided by this or any other related NSW Government grant program cannot be validated or
- the outcome of relevant legal or validation actions may impact the decision to grant further assistance.

If the applicant has received a payment under this program and the Department is satisfied that the eligibility conditions were or have been contravened, the payment or part of the payment may be recovered by the Crown in a court of competent jurisdiction as debt due to the Crown, pursuant to section 5.7(3) of the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*.

Invoices submitted in relation to this application must not be used to secure grant funding under any other NSW Government scheme.

Evaluation

Participants will be required to take part in DPI's post-trial performance monitoring and evaluation activities, including surveys and case studies.

The RAA is receiving applications and distributing approved funding on behalf of the DPI FoTF Program. The RAA is committed to providing excellent service that responds to your needs and for that reason, the RAA evaluates its programs.

This includes surveys at various points of your application, approval and completion. The RAA may also contact you to ask about your experience of the assistance you received. The RAA will always treat the responses you provide as confidential and use the information only for the purposes it was collected.

Government Information (Public Access) Act

Applicants should be aware information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW). Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Complaints

Any concerns about the DPI FoTF Program should be submitted in writing to fotf@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way your feedback or complaint has been handled, you may wish to contact the Department via regional@yourfeedback.nsw.gov.au or contact the NSW Ombudsman via www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.
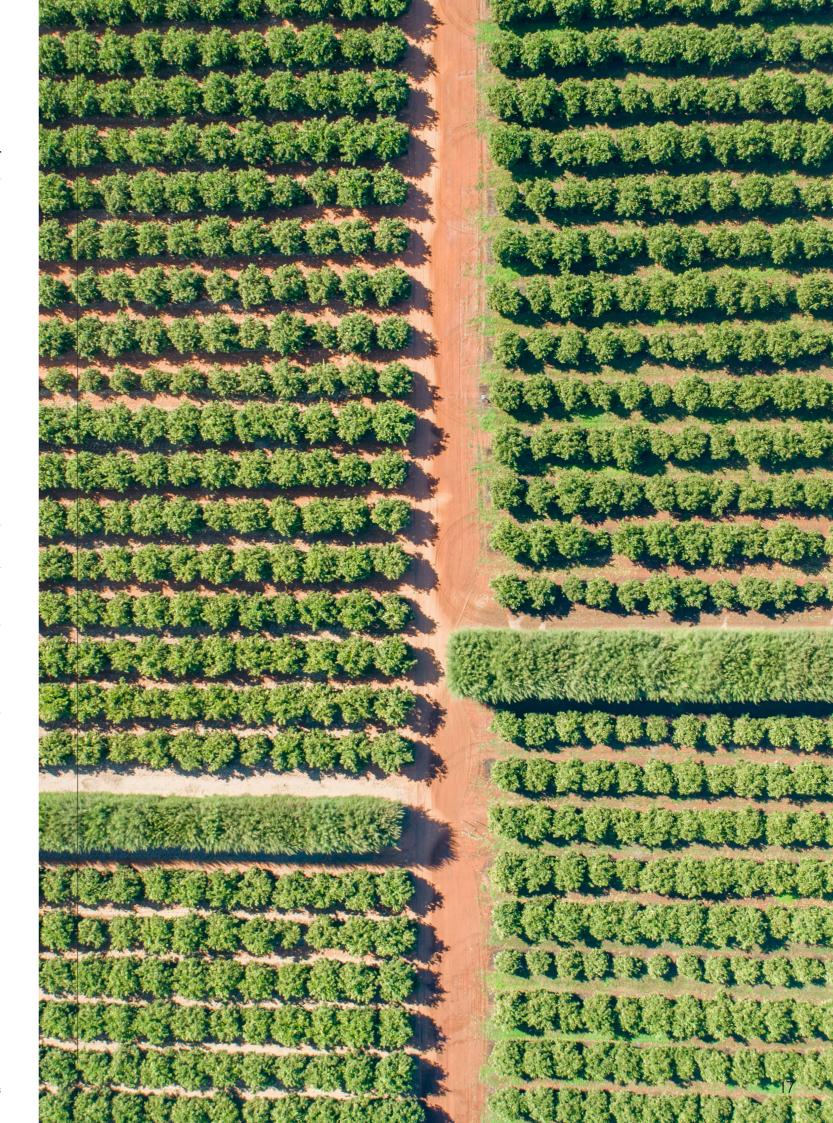
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→ ## Definitions

Term	Definition
Ag IoT device	Any device sold for use in agriculture that has a sensor attached to or embedded within it to enable the measurement and transmission of data over a communications network.
Agtech Catalogue	An online catalogue of information on Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions and device data integration platforms which DPI will develop for use by producers in NSW wishing to develop their farm productivity through on-farm connectivity and related technology.
Agtech Plan	The combination of the Monitoring Plan and the Tech List.
Approved Agtech	Any Ag IoT devices, connectivity solutions and device data integration dashboards that have been deemed suitable by the Department to be included in the Agtech Catalogue.
ANZSIC codes	Eligible primary production enterprises (ANZSIC codes):

011 Nursery & Floriculture Production	012 Mushroom & Vegetable Growing	013 Fruit & Tree Nut Growing	014 Sheep, Beef Cattle & Grain Farming	015 Other Crop Growing	016 Dairy Cattle Growing	017 Poultry Farming	018 Deer Farming	019 Other Livestock Farming
0111 Nursery Production (Under Cover)	0121 Mushroom Growing	0131 Grape Growing	0141 Sheep Farming (specialised)	0151 Sugar Cane Growing	0160 Dairy Cattle Farming	0171 Poultry Farming (Meat)	0180 Deer Farming	0191 Horse Farming
0112 Nursery Production (Outdoors)	0122 Vegetable Growing (Under Cover)	0132 Kiwifruit Growing	0142 Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised)	0152 Cotton Growing		0172 Poultry Farming (Eggs)		0192 Pig Farming
0113 Turf Growing	0123 Vegetable Growing (Outdoors)	0133 Berry Fruit Growing	0143 Beef Cattle Feedlots (Specialised)	0159 Other Crop Growing n.e.c				0193 Beekeeping
0114 Floriculture Production (Under Cover)		0134 Apple & Pear Growing	0144 Sheep-Beef Cattle Farming					0199 Other Livestock Farming n.e.c
0115 Floriculture Production (Outdoors)		0135 Stone Fruit Growing	0145 Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming					
		0136 Citrus Fruit Growing	0146 Rice Growing					
		0137 Olive Growing	0149 Other Grain Growing					
		0139 Other Fruit & Tree Nut Growing						

Follow this link for further clarification of eligible ANZSIC Codes   n.e.c - not elsewhere classified

Monitoring Plan	A plan that outlines what is going to be monitored across the primary production enterprise. A product of the FoTF program training, it will encompass operational pain points, farm mapping, a landscape assessment and connectivity availability. It will act as a tool to assist in the selection of on-farm Agtech devices and the creation of an Agtech Plan which can be used as part of a whole farm plan or support a grant application.

Term	Definition

Primary production enterprise	An enterprise that:
	
	• is carried on by a primary producer and involves primary production, as defined by the ANZSIC Codes approved for this program
	
	• is registered for tax purposes in Australia with an Australian Business Number (ABN)
	
	• is not a public company under the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)
	
	• is in the opinion of the RAA, a bona fide primary production enterprise that:
	
	  » has a significant commercial purpose or character
	
	  » has more than a mere intention to engage in primary production
	
	  » has an intention to make a profit or a genuine belief that a profit will be made
	
	  » has repetition and regularity in the activity
	
	  » is the same kind and carried on in a similar way to that of similar primary production enterprises
	
	  » is organised in a business-like manner.

Supplier	An organisation that has been pre-selected by DPI as being qualified to supply devices under the FoTF Agtech Catalogue.
Tech List	A list of Agtech devices, connectivity solutions and integration products from the Agtech Catalogue that will fulfill the monitoring needs outlined in the monitoring plan.
Valid tax invoice	A paid invoice including the name, address and ABN (if applicable) of the entity that issued the invoice and a description of each item to which the invoice relates which is clearly identifiable as being related to approved expenditure for the applicant. The RAA can ask for proof of payment of the invoice or a $0 balance.

For more information:
fotf@dpi.nsw.gov.au
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fotf