

FUTURE DROUGHT FUND: PRODUCER GROUPS

The Future Drought Fund has delivered some fantastic outcomes for rural and regional communities. AgSTAR Projects believes there is significant potential to build on that success with funding for programs targeting producer groups in the 2024-2028 round.

THE NEED

Many primary producers are solo operators making decisions and running enterprises on their own. Producer groups play a crucial role in Australian agriculture, serving as catalysts for increased agricultural productivity, innovation, adoption of best practice and enhanced socio-economic wellbeing.

Locally based groups of innovative producers can:

- share ideas and on-farm experiences/results;
- problem solve together to address common challenges;
- discuss application of emerging technologies;
- leverage collective strength for mutual benefit – such as funding applications;
- encourage other local producers to join;
- build social resilience through in person meetings and storytelling;
- share knowledge and information with producers who aren't part of the group; and
- provide engaged, effective methods for primary industries extension and engagement.

Whilst there are existing producer groups based on a particular industry such as grains or cotton, and some short-term, project-based producer groups, there is an opportunity to better understand where there are geographical gaps in existing producer groups and pilot a model for ongoing, locally based producer groups.

AgSTAR Projects has extensive experience with producer groups and has developed a program we could pilot through the next round. The program is based on co-design with the group. We are willing to discuss opportunities to scale the pilot and collaborate and deliver outcomes with Innovation Hubs, RDC's or commercial partners. We have connections with Local Land Services in regional NSW.

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