ENERGY EFFICIENCY GAINS FOR AUSTRALIAN IRRIGATORS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project aims to empower irrigators and community organisations to make informed decisions about energy efficiency. The process will include the following components:

▪ Build the capacity of Australian irrigators to adopt energy efficiency practices and technologies
▪ Use trusted local organisations and consultants to deliver high quality and relevant information
▪ Conduct on-farm assessments, benchmarking exercises and case studies of irrigators in the Burdekin, Bowen, Mackay, Bundaberg and ISIS regions.

This process will bridge the gap in understanding, and provide the opportunity for irrigators to comprehend and adopt the numerous existing, but under-utilised tools available to improve irrigation efficiency.

A whole of system approach will be central to the project and will capture energy efficiency gains through improved irrigation infrastructure design, as well as improved irrigation application efficiencies.

Farmers hit with the brunt of high electricity prices will now have access to information and assistance, to find ways to better reduce their irrigation energy costs. It comes after local community Natural Resource Management agency, BBIFMAC successfully gained funding through the Department of Industry’s Energy Efficiency Information Grants.

Although high quality energy efficiency information for Australian irrigators already exists, this project will remove the impediment of time and resource poor irrigators by presenting relevant, filtered information through a trusted local agencies to achieve energy efficiency gains.

For more information please contact the BBIFMAC office on (07) 4783 4344 or at 2/20 Queen Street, Ayr QLD.
1 FARM SCALE BENCHMARKING

The initial farm scale benchmarking exercise will alert irrigators of their energy efficiency compared to other similar irrigators in the area. Through an online database, participating irrigators will be able to search by comparable parameters such as water supply, farming area, irrigation type etc.

To participate we require the growers approval to access electricity account data from Ergon and productivity data from Wilmar – This data is confidential and will be entered into a tool which will allow customised queries to be made.

Once the irrigator has made an assessment of their farm’s energy efficiency status, a closer look can be had at where efficiency gains can be made.

These opportunities may be:
- Tariff options
- Pump selection
- Pump efficiency
- Bore maintenance
- Effective irrigating

There is still opportunities to sign up for the Level 1 Benchmarking exercise! Please contact the BBIFMAC office for more information on (07) 4783 4344.

2 PADDOCK OR PUMP SCALE AUDITS AND ASSESSMENTS

The paddock/pump scale assessments aim to provide irrigators with a better understanding of the benefits of pumping evaluations through field days and workshops.

To ensure that the necessary skills will be easily accessible after the life of the project, the program will provide training to local people involved in the irrigation industry. In the training process a number of pumping assessments will be conducted, the cost of which will be covered by program. Pumping assessments provide an evaluation of the cost to pump each megalitre (ML) of water and examine the opportunities to reduce that cost.

Through this we aim to provide relevant customised information to irrigators that will assist them in improving their energy efficiency.

3 CASE STUDIES AND FACT SHEETS

A number of case studies will be developed using real grower information. The case study irrigators will be supported by quality mentors (project team and contractors) with relevant tools and information to implement on-ground actions aimed towards energy efficiency gains.

Over the course of the project these case studies will be monitored closely and the resultant, expected energy efficiency gains will be documented and promoted via organised field days, media releases, progress and final reports, and on our project website.

Keep an eye out for more energising information!