

# MEDIA RELEASE

14 August 2019

## **Maranoa Graziers benefit from “Technology for a Better Farm Field Day”**

New technology is changing the business of farming, as demonstrated at the “Technology for a Better Farm Field Day” hosted by Echo Hills Farming Company on 27 July.

Nearly 100 primary producers from the Maranoa and wider region were able to hear from and see practical demonstrations of the technology now available and what benefits are being experienced on the ground.

“There’s a lot of exciting advances in agriculture, and as access to new technology and connectivity continues, there are real opportunities for not just on-farm efficiencies, but improvements that will benefit the whole operation, including people and communities from the dirt up,” Peter Thompson of Echo Hills Farming said. “Technology is making life better for people rather than technology replacing people, encouraging more people to live regionally” he continued.

The event was funded by GrazingFutures, an initiative of the Queensland Government to improve drought preparedness and resilience for primary producers, and Maranoa Regional Council through funding from TRAIC SWHHS (Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care).

The Echo Hills team have been trialling remote cattle Walk-Over-Weighing technology, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Grazing Futures Project. This allows the team to remotely monitor daily weight gain in their cattle herd and support timely decision making.

The field day also covered advances in telemetry and satellite data, and sessions on mastering technology already to hand.



*Producers getting hands during a demonstration of the Walk-Over-Weighing unit in the paddock at Echo Hills*

*GrazingFutures is funded by the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP) that aims to improve drought preparedness and resilience for western Queensland producers.*

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Event co-ordinator, ConnectAg's Principal Rhonda Toms-Morgan, said a range of producers and local industry experts which were part of the day, helped attendees make the most of any data collected by either technology already in use, or new innovations.

Ms Toms-Morgan said speakers had been carefully selected for their on-ground knowledge and included EcoRich Grazing's Col Paton (forage budgeting and how to use it for decision making), Tropical Beef Technology Services' Tim Emery (herd recording and animal performance) Phil Tickle (automating estimates for feedbase management), Tim Driver (Precision Pastoral), and Grazing Futures' Andrea McKenzie. However, most importantly the Echo Hills Farming team gave their warts and all experience of using the technology and what they hoped to learn as the project continues.

"The day also gave all of us a chance to access services we might not have realised we needed," Ms Toms-Morgan said.

Staff from the Royal Flying Doctor Service were on hand and helped with the overall 'health pit stop' opportunity for attendees with their services booked out all day as people made the time to check in.

Ms Toms-Morgan said another specialist speaker included in the program was Mary O'Brien from Are You Bugged Mate?

"Are You Bugged Mate? is an initiative changing the mental health conversation for farming blokes across Australia," she said.

"Mary's efforts are making a difference and saving lives. Her frank manner speaks to farming blokes and taps into who they are, especially when times are tough, and her aim is simply to 'save one life'.

"We are losing too many of our people" said Mary. "And we need to check in with our mates, empty the emotional 'scrap bucket' and just lend a hand when we get a bit stuck or 'bogged down'."

Are you bogged mate is working to help connect farmers and graziers with professionals who can help anyone feeling bogged, or a bit lost with how to help a mate who's bogged.

"In these changing times, with ongoing dry conditions, we all need to be on top of our mental game as well, to do the best for ourselves, our families, our businesses and our communities." said Mary.



*Col Paton, EcoRich Grazing and Phil Tickle CiboLabs demonstrating pasture budgeting for calibration of remote sensing technology*