



Dairy farm's cost-savvy hack makes cow comfort 'Cono-key'



**Queensland
Rural and
Industry
Development
Authority**

As Queensland braces for a potentially warm and dry winter, a father-son dairy farming duo hasn't let high fuel, fertiliser and feed costs sour their drought preparedness after cleverly combining a free program, grant and concessional loan to save money.

Stewart and Dylan Conochie's family operation, 'Brookland Stud Farms', located at Kalbar, 80 kilometres southwest of Brisbane, has saved tens of thousands of dollars from grant funding and in interest on a loan for drought resilient on-farm infrastructure through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA).

"Anybody who's thinking about getting ready for drought – look at QRIDA. They have amazing assistance and amazing people there to help you with any application and progress your business to be better prepared," Stewart said.

The cost-saving combination requires producers to first create a free Farm Business Resilience Plan (FBRP). Then, producers can stack a Drought Preparedness Grant with a concessional Sustainability Loan through QRIDA to fund the on-farm infrastructure improvements identified in the FBRP.

"We used a QRIDA Drought Preparedness Grant to install a centre pivot irrigator," Stewart said.

QRIDA Regional Area Manager for South East Queensland and the Lockyer Valley, Brian Coe, said the irrigator has increased the family farm's cropping area and improved the quality of their sorghum and lucerne.

"The Conochie family can now more efficiently water approximately 20 acres of double cropping which means about an extra 600 tonnes of silage for their livestock," Brian said.

The co-contribution Drought Preparedness Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to Queensland primary producers subject to the availability of funds.

The Conochie family then used a concessional QRIDA Sustainability Loan as the co-contribution for their Drought Preparedness Grant to fund a compost feed shed.

"The shed has added comfort for the cows with the soft bedding, along with being able to bring feed directly to them and it being cooler for the cows, especially on the hotter days," Dylan said.

To find out how Queensland primary producers can get ready for drought with QRIDA, visit qrda.qld.gov.au or call 1800 623 946.



QRIDA Regional Area Manager for South East Queensland and the Lockyer Valley, Brian Coe, encourages Queensland primary producers to get in touch with their local Regional Area Manager for help completing their QRIDA financial assistance application.

If this drought story raised any concerns for you, call 000 in an emergency or visit qrda.qld.gov.au for a list of confidential mental health resources available for Queensland primary producers.