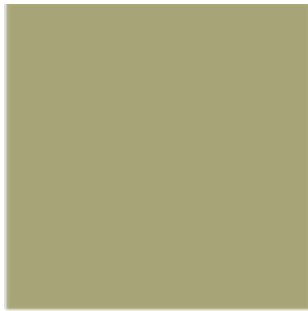
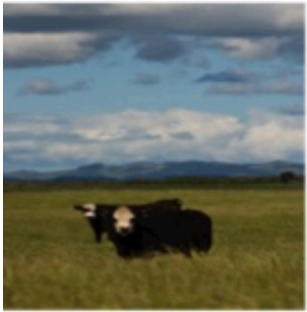


**P2D Project**  
*Accelerating  
Precision Agriculture  
to Decision Agriculture*



# Media Release

6 October, 2017

## **A wake-up call for on farm telecommunications**

A new report into on-farm telecommunications to secure a digital agriculture future has found that producers are not constrained by technology, but low levels of awareness and service provider options.

The University of New England report calls for marketplace policies to create fair access for Australian producers and an education campaign to increase use of digital agriculture technologies.

Senior researcher David Lamb said his 12-month study, working as part of the Accelerating Precision Agriculture to Decision Agriculture Project (P2D), canvassed the views and behaviors of more than 1000 producers, as well as technology providers.

"We found that the options are out there but in some cases, they're almost hidden," said Professor Lamb.

"The industry needs a much greater push on education so that producers have the information and the confidence to make the most of technology to enable digital agriculture and, in particular, we need market solutions to mobile technology access."

As part of his report's 13 recommendations, Professor Lamb is pushing for an industry-wide 'fair use' policy that keeps mobile access costs down during periods of critical and "data-hungry" farm operations like harvesting and mustering. He's also calling for greater emphasis on data speeds as part of codes that govern service provision.

"We also need an agricultural-oriented, national telecommunications network map for future planning. This data is important for the marketplace, network operators and to second tier providers to step in and deliver solutions for producers," said Professor Lamb.

"Some farmers are already exploring backhaul infrastructure and second tier providers who, in essence, act as a booster to provide local area options," said Professor Lamb.

"But you can't make use of what you don't know about which is why we need field demonstration sites, best practice case studies and information packs to make it easy for producers to cut through the jargon and find technology solutions that will work on their property."

Professor Lamb said a key priority for farmers is to improve mobile access to information so that they can make decisions on location and spend less time travelling back to the farm office.

"They also want to monitor things across the property remotely, with access to that data wherever they are and whenever they want to bring peace of mind," he said.

"As a result, mobile phone connectivity will dominate the future for agriculture enterprises, supported by developments like multi-access and mobile point solutions offered through the NBN roll out."

Report recommendations look to expand farm connectivity options including multiple access points for NBN Sky Muster or fixed wireless, based on property size and even mobile Sky Muster access. There are opportunities to improve network wireless backhaul infrastructure through initiatives like sharing tower, dish and aerial infrastructure.

"We also need to make sure that someone is in the producer's corner and pushing the agriculture view as things develop into the future," said Professor Lamb.

"That's why we have recommended an industry-wide and independent group to drive the development of long term strategies and make sure that Australia stays ahead of the game."

The full report can be found on the P2D project website - [www.farminstitute.org.au/P2Dproject](http://www.farminstitute.org.au/P2Dproject).

*This research was funded through the Accelerating Precision Agriculture to Decision Agriculture project (P2D), which is led by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation and jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Rural R&D For Profit Program and all 15 Rural Development Corporations. It involves research support from three universities, CSIRO Data 61, the Australian Farm Institute and the Data to Decisions CRC.*

**Media Contact: Jane O'Brien (Communications) 0407 666 018 or Dr Rohan Rainbow (Project Leader) 0418 422 482.**

**RDC Partners**

Australian Government  
Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation

GRDC  
GRAINS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SRA  
Sugar Research Australia

Australian Government  
Cotton Research and Development Corporation

Horticulture Innovation Australia

Wine Australia

Dairy Australia

AWI  
Australian Wool Innovation Limited

MLA  
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

AMPC

LIVECORP

Australian Pork

FRDC  
FISHERIES RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Forest & Wood Products Australia

AUSTRALIAN EGG CORPORATION LIMITED

DATA 61

CSIRO

DATA TO DECISIONS CRC

Australian Farm Institute

Griffith UNIVERSITY

University of the Sunshine Coast

UNE  
University of New England

**This project is supported by funding from ...**

Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources