



Grounds for Growth

Soil and pasture biodiversity event – Warrnambool, Victoria

Program details

Day 1 – Tuesday 4 March 2025	
11:15am	Farm visit 1 – Barongarook (including lunch) Presentations by farm owner <i>Simon Scott</i> , <i>Professor Helen Suter</i> , <i>Dr Pauline Mele</i> and others
	Travel to second farm
	Farm visit 2 Includes presentations from farm owners and agronomists
5:00pm	Arrive Warrnambool and check into accommodation
6:00-7.30pm	Welcome function at Warrnambool Art Gallery

Day 2 – Wednesday 5 March 2025	
8:00am	Registration and tea/coffee
Session 1	Welcome and introduction to event
9:00am	Welcome
	Introduction – why are we here? <i>James Mann</i> (former Board Chair of Dairy Australia and South Australian dairy farmer)
	Farming drivers for adopting practices to support optimum soil diversity and health <i>Brad Collins</i> (Western Victorian dairy farmer)
	Market drivers for adopting practices to support optimum soil diversity and health <i>Jack Holden</i> (sustainability consultant and MLA Board Director) and <i>Laura Grubb</i> (sustainability and engagement specialist, Greenham)
	Scientific drivers for adopting practices to support optimum soil diversity and health
10:30am	Morning tea

Proudly sponsored by [Warrnambool City Council](#), [Gardiner Foundation](#) and [Meat & Livestock Australia](#).



**Delivering
for Dairy**

Session 2	Productivity, profitability and quality considerations
10:50am	Farming case study <i>Kate Mirams and Peter Neaves</i> (Gippsland dairy farmers)
	Farming case study <i>Gillian O’Sullivan</i> (Irish dairy farmer)
	Dairy High 2 – farmlet trial: four pasture systems <i>Dr James Hills</i> (Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture)
	Whenua Haumanu – regenerative agriculture in New Zealand <i>Professor Danny Donaghy</i> (Massey University, New Zealand)
12:50pm	Lunch
Session 3	Improving soil organic matter, soil health and function
1:40pm	Farming case study <i>Mark Lambert</i> (Tasmanian dairy farmer)
	Farming case study <i>Simon Scott</i> (Western Victorian dairy farmer)
	What's the science behind the outcomes? <i>Professor Helen Suter</i> (University of Melbourne)
	Soil health – why is biology the key? <i>Emerita Professor Lyn Abbott</i> (University of Western Australia)
	Whenua Haumanu – regenerative agriculture in New Zealand <i>Associate Professor Lucy Burkitt</i> (Massey University, New Zealand)
3:20pm	Afternoon tea
Session 4	Transitioning to a multispecies pasture – opportunities and challenges
3:40pm	Farmer experience – making the decision to alter pasture and forage system <i>Karrinjeet Singh-Mahil</i> (Western Victorian dairy farmer)
	Farmer experience – making the decision to transition to multispecies <i>Cam Nicholson</i> (consultant, Nikon Rural Services)
	Research in multispecies forages in the Australian context <i>Dr Anna Thomson</i> (Agriculture Victoria)
5:00pm	End day 2 sessions
6:30pm - 10:30pm	Official dinner – City Memorial Bowling Club (Carmichael room)

Day 3 – Thursday 6 March 2025	
Session 5	Designing a pasture and forage mix for your region
9:00am	Designing a multispecies pasture – mixes and proportions <i>Dr John Finn</i> (Teagasc, Ireland)
	Which species where and why? Grasses, legumes and herbs <i>Damien Adcock</i> - Barenbrug
	Additive benefits of mixes – plantain benefits beyond forage production
	Farmer experience – establishing mixed species pasture <i>Adam Forbes</i> (New South Wales dairy farmer)
	Species and establishment and practical farmer experience <i>Jade Killoran</i> (Healthy Farming Systems)
10:30am	Morning tea

Session 6	Incremental strategies to achieve better soil health – steps in the right direction
10:50am	Farmer experience – Ireland <i>Gillian O'Sullivan</i> (Irish dairy farmer)
	Building on existing practice, measurement and regional considerations <i>Dr Pauline Mele</i> (Biome Services)
	Dairy soils – research that assists to build the pieces for change <i>Angela Avery</i> (Agriculture Victoria)
	Wins, losses and learnings <i>Kate Mirams</i> (Gippsland dairy farmer)
	Q&A and workshop – what support is required to effect change in soil management practices? All delegates
12:45pm	Lunch
Session 7	On farm practices to manage multispecies pastures and improve soil health
1:25pm	Introduction to session
	Farmer panel session – practices that worked or didn't work <i>Mark Lambert, Adam Forbes, Kate Mirams, Gillian O'Sullivan, Karrinjeet Singh-Mahil</i>
	Event reflections
3:00pm	End day 3 sessions