



Grounds for Growth

Soil and pasture biodiversity event – Warrnambool, Victoria

Program details

Day 1 – Tuesday 4 March 2025 (proudly sponsored by AGF Seeds)	
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 – Purnim Presentations by farm owners <i>Nick Allen</i> and <i>David Allen</i> , and others
5:15pm	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)
	Farmer motivations 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 rationale for adopting practices to support optimum soil diversity and health <i>Emerita Professor Lyn Abbott</i> (University of Western Australia)
10:30am	Morning tea

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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 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)
	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 and Brian Schuler</i> (Western Victorian dairy farmers)
	Making the decision to transition to multispecies pastures <i>Cam Nicholson</i> (consultant, Nicon Rural Services)
	Designing and establishing multispecies swards for Australian grazing <i>Dr Anna Thomson</i> (Agriculture Victoria)
	Perennial pastures in variable climates <i>Jen Smith</i> (General Manager, Gippsland Agriculture Group)
5:00pm	End day 2 sessions
6:30pm - 10:30pm	Conference dinner – City Memorial Bowling Club (Carmichael Room) <i>Matthew Evans</i> (chef turned farmer, writer, broadcaster, food activist and co-owner of Fat Pig Farm)
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)
	Plantain benefits beyond forage production <i>Elena Minnee</i> (Senior Scientist, Dairy New Zealand)
	Farmer experience – establishing multispecies pastures <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 – starting on the path to improved soil health <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 – putting it in practice: what we did well and what we wouldn't do again <i>Mark Lambert, Adam Forbes, Kate Mirams, Gillian O'Sullivan, Karrinjeet Singh-Mahil</i>
	Event reflections
3:00pm	End day 3 sessions