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## FARMERS SHARE IN \$5 MILLION FROM COLES TO COMBAT DROUGHT

Sixteen farmers across Australia will share \$5 million from the Coles Nurture Fund to help them combat drought through new initiatives to store fodder, grow more grass and save water.

A cross-section of food producers – including fruit and vegetable growers as well as cattle, sheep and pork producers - will use the Coles grants to embark on plans to help protect their businesses against drought in the long-term.

The projects range from building dams, storage sheds and silos to innovative plans to grow fodder indoors and slash water use through new technology.

The \$5 million pledge for long-term drought measures brings the overall amount committed by Coles for drought relief to \$16 million over the past nine months.

Short-term drought relief has also been provided by Coles to the Country Women's Association, which has distributed more than 2800 grants to drought-affected families to help cover household expenses such as food, medical, electricity and water bills. In addition, Coles has distributed \$3.9 million to 639 dairy farmers through drought relief payments.

Coles Chief Operating Officer Greg Davis said the \$5 million commitment for drought-related projects brings the total amount provided by the Coles Nurture Fund to nearly \$20 million since it was established in April 2015.

"We know the drought has been devastating for so many farmers across Australia and we've tried to help where we can with short-term relief. With support from the Coles Nurture Fund, we want to enable farmers to embark on projects which will help them in the long-term so they can drought-proof their businesses for the future," he said.

Farmers from across Australia with long-term drought relief projects to be financed by the Coles Nurture Fund include:

- The Crowe family near Coolac in NSW, who are establishing an automated factory to produce fodder indoors for their cattle to supplement grass.
- The Damianopoulos family from Masalki in Victoria's Goulburn Valley, who will be the first pear growers in Australia to install new vaporising equipment which will reduce their water use by up to 80 per cent in their cool rooms.
- The Edson family from Tepko in South Australia, who are leading the way in the pig industry by installing a solar system to fully power their piggery to save on costs. They will also purchase three silos to store grain to be better equipped for drought conditions.
- The Wagner family from Moura in Queensland, who will grow 1,500 hectares of the drought-resilient tree legume, Leucaena, so it can be fed to cattle to provide highly nutritious fodder when rainfall is scarce.

- The Crust family from Mount Syliva in Queensland, who will line a dam to increase their water capacity by 20 per cent and install a state-of-the-art irrigation system for water and power efficiency.
- Andrew and Lauren Winks from Woolerina Grazing, Maidenwell, Queensland will construct a shade structure over their existing feedlot to protect cattle from hot and dry conditions.
- The Lester family from Manypeaks in Western Australia, who will establish two gully dams, two solar pumps and a hay shed and also purchase a pivot irrigator so they are better placed to produce grass-fed beef year round.

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