

# Media Release

Friday 2 February 2024

## Coles Nurture Fund seeds growth opportunities for Aussie farmers and suppliers

Reinforcing its commitment to supporting Australian producers, Coles has announced the opening of applications for Round 12 of the Coles Nurture Fund, with grants of up to \$500,000 available to fuel projects that drive innovation, sustainability and growth.

Now in its tenth year, the Coles Nurture Fund is dedicated to helping Aussie growers and suppliers develop market-leading products, technologies, systems and processes, and has awarded more than \$33 million in financial support to over 100 businesses from across the country since 2015.

From carbon-neutral bananas to freezing technology that aims to reduce food waste, Nurture Fund recipients — including Mt Boothby Pastoral and Newton Orchards — are proof producers are leading the charge when it comes to innovation and sustainability.

Diversified family-run agricultural business, Mt Boothby Pastoral, is based in Tintinara, South Australia, and has been supplying pork, lamb and beef to Coles for more than three years. In 2021, the business was awarded a \$340,000 grant as part of the Coles Nurture Fund.

Mt Boothby Pastoral Managing Director Andrew Johnson said the grant was used to install a solar energy system that helped the business create a more integrated agricultural system to reduce its carbon footprint.

"Our team continuously strives for improvement, with a focus on welfare and doing the right thing, and the Coles Nurture Fund grant allowed us to invest in solar energy. We are proud to say our complete product system, including feed milling, is all powered off the grid from solar energy," Andrew said.

"I have always strived to create a closed-loop diversified production system, and thanks to the Coles Nurture Fund, we are producing all our own grain and straw on the farm, which reduces transportation emissions and is better for our animals.

"Coles should be congratulated for supporting businesses like ours, and we are proud to be working together to provide great quality products while improving sustainable agricultural supply chains."

Best known for its variety of delicious apples, Newton Orchards in Manjimup, Western Australia, has been supplying to Coles for nearly 35 years with several orchards throughout the region.

In 2021, Newton Orchards received a \$250,000 grant through the Coles Nurture Fund to fix permanent netting over one of its flagship orchards to protect it from cockatoo attacks and outdoor elements.

Nicole Giblet, Director at Newton Orchards, said the netting has made a huge difference to the business, including the reduction of water used to irrigate the orchards by 30% within one season.

"As a result of the nets, we have seen beautiful growth and clean, premium-quality fruit with very little bird damage," Nicole said.

“Importantly, the nets will last the lifetime of the trees and the structure will last even longer. In this heating and drying climate, it’s unworkable and untenable to grow top-grade fruit without netting.

“We also invested \$10,000 of the grant into habitat restoration for the cockatoo — funding seedling purchase and helping plant appropriate native trees that provide a new place for them to live and eat, well away from agricultural areas.

“The Nurture Fund is a wonderful initiative by Coles and I’d encourage other suppliers with an idea to make their business more sustainable to apply.”

Coles Executive General Manager Fresh Andy Mossop said he had seen firsthand the incredible impact of the Coles Nurture Fund on small and medium-sized businesses, and encouraged others to apply for the grant ahead of the Friday 23 February deadline.

“We understand the vital role Aussie growers and suppliers play in providing fresh and quality food to our customers, and through the Coles Nurture Fund, we are not only investing in projects that drive innovation but also ensuring that our partners have the support they need to thrive,” said Andy.

“Strong relationships are the backbone of our supply chain. By providing financial support to projects that align with our values, we are not just helping businesses; we are investing in the future of Australian agriculture.”

To be eligible, businesses must demonstrate their need for funding in a project that drives innovation and provides outstanding sustainability benefits. Businesses that generate less than \$25 million in annual revenue and employ 50 or fewer full-time employees are encouraged to apply.

To apply for Round 12 of the Coles Nurture Fund, log onto [www.coles.com.au/nurturefund](http://www.coles.com.au/nurturefund). Applications close on Friday 23 February at 5pm AEDT.



The team at Mt Boothby with Dale Pemberton from Coles (right).



Newton Valley Orchards owner Michael Giblet.

**-ends-**

**For media enquiries, please contact**

Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or [media.relations@coles.com.au](mailto:media.relations@coles.com.au)