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PRODUCERS SHARE IN OVER \$3.7M TO DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION ***Giant manure vacuum for dairy farms among 14 projects funded by Coles***

A unique plan to use a giant vacuum to collect manure from dairy farms and convert it to renewable energy will be one of 14 innovative projects to share in more than \$3.7 million from the Coles Nurture Fund.

Coles announced today it would provide grants to 14 small and medium sized businesses which are implementing plans to improve sustainability and produce more Australian food and beverages. The latest grants bring the total financial support provided by the Coles Nurture Fund to more than \$28 million since 2015.

NSW agricultural business, Sawmill Circuit will receive a \$455,000 grant to purchase a large vacuum truck which will collect manure from 18 dairy farms in Nowra so that it can be transported to a biogas plant which is being built in the local area. Once collected, the manure will be converted to renewable energy and put back into the grid.

Dairy farmers who are part of the plan will benefit from cheaper electricity and will also receive liquid fertiliser which they can apply to their pastures.

The vacuum truck – known as a Nuhn Self Propelled Alley Vac – is manufactured in Canada and is unique to Australia. The biogas plant where the effluent will be processed has received funding from the Federal Government and is due to be operational in 2022.

David Ryan of Sawmill Circuit said: “Coles Nurture Fund support to purchase the Alley Vac will make a significant difference to the effluent management for the dairy farms in the Nowra area. It will enable the farmers to collect manure for the Innovating Energy Biogas Plant which will solve an ongoing environmental problem which occurs when heavy rainfall leads to effluent run-off into the Shoalhaven River.”

Coles Group CEO Steven Cain said the commitment of more than \$3.7 million from Round 9 for 14 businesses meant the Coles Nurture Fund had now provided financial support to more than 80 producers since 2015.

“The Coles Nurture Fund was set up to help producers to bring innovative and sustainable ideas to life on their farms and in their factories. By helping to fund initiatives which increase recycling, reduce water use, increase renewable energy and support local production, we aim to drive generational sustainability in Australia,” he said.

As a panellist for the Coles Nurture Fund, Coles Chef and Ambassador Curtis Stone said all 14 applicants have clearly shown that they are worthy recipients of the Nurture Fund.

“It is wonderful to see so many incredible initiatives and innovations from our farmers and suppliers. I am an avid supporter of sustainability, organic produce and innovation efficiencies to enhance, protect and assist our farmers. It is exciting to read about the wonderful work that our

Aussie famers are doing for this great country of ours and that we at Coles are able to support the efforts of our farming partners," he said.

Other producers to receive grants in Round 9 include:

- Recycled Plastic Pipe Manufacturer at Lancaster in Victoria, which will purchase equipment to increase its ability to accept additional plastic waste from the kerbside bin and process it into a high quality stormwater drainage pipes, reducing waste going to landfill and providing an end to end solution in the circular economy.
- Raffa Fields at Tooradin in Victoria, which will install climate-controlled polytunnel growing structures to extend the growing season for asparagus in Victoria and replace imports at a time when locally-grown asparagus is not available.
- Ky D-Pak at Kyabram in Victoria, which will apply Voen all-weather covers to cherries to protect crops from bird and weather damage, provide greater surety of supply in the face of adverse weather, reduce water usage and improve fruit quality.
- The Georgopoulos family at Shepparton East in Victoria, which will plant a novel orchard using entirely organic principles with trellising, environmental netting and irrigation.
- Newton Orchards at Manjimup in Western Australia, which will install large scale netting over its apple trees to reduce waste, improve pome fruit quality, water use efficiency and sustainably manage endangered bird species damage.
- Not A Trace at Mordialloc in Victoria, which will build an additional bakery production line 100% dedicated to gluten-free and nut-free savoury snacks and crackers.
- Spring Gully Foods at Adelaide in South Australia, which will acquire a new pasteuriser to reduce water usage and improve efficiency for the manufacture of condiments and preserved vegetable products.
- The Ieraci family at Brunswick in Western Australia, which will store and re-use dairy effluent in a way that minimises the impact to groundwater and the environment, and benefits crops and pastures.
- Kintore Pastoral at Korumburra South in Victoria, which will build a best practice shelter for dairy cows to improve herd health, reduce nutrient run off, protect soils and result in quality organic fertiliser going back onto pastures.
- Glenbank Farm run by three female dairy farmers in Tocumwal NSW, which will build compost-bedded, solar-powered loafing sheds to provide a sheltered area where cows are protected from extreme heat in summer and wet mud in winter.
- That Spirited Lot Distillers in Seaford, Victoria, which will expand its manufacturing capacity to increase its production of a line of spirits and support the use of solar energy and recycled wine waste material.
- The Caithness family at Koonwarra in Victoria, which will use a combination of genomics, ultrasound scanning, breed plan and artificial insemination in its commercial herd to improve eating quality, productivity and profitability.
- Mt Boothby Pastoral at Tintinara in South Australia, which will reduce its carbon footprint by installing solar energy systems and helping to close the loop within a diversified and integrated agricultural production system.

National Farmers Federation CEO Tony Mahar said: "Australian farmers are amongst the most innovative in the world and the 14 recipients in the 2021 Coles Nurture Fund are at the cutting edge of ingenuity."

"These farmers are not only working to increase the productivity of their own businesses they are contributing to a more sustainable Australian agriculture."

"The NFF commends Coles for continuing to invest and 'nurture' the very best of Australian farming. Coles commitment to the Nurture Fund is an important part in agriculture's journey to be Australia's next \$100 billion industry."

For further information, contact Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or media.relations@coles.com.au



The Nuhn Self Propelled Alley Vac which NSW agricultural business, Sawmill Circuit, will purchase with support from the Coles Nurture Fund.