



On Farm Connectivity Program beefs up AgTech adoption on Central Queensland cattle farm

Fresh from Beef Week, the Baralaba beef producer was struck by the innovative technology on show at the nation's premier beef event and sees the Federal Government's On Farm Connectivity Program as a timely way for farmers to boost their AgTech adoption.

Providing a 50 per cent rebate on the cost of eligible digital connectivity equipment, including installation and training, they utilised the On Farm Connectivity Program to install water level sensors on their cattle troughs, as well as a remote pump controller.

For the station owners, who run Brangus breeders on their 400-hectare central Queensland property, they first trialled the remote technology three years ago with the installation of two tank water level monitors.

"We had the tank monitors but wanted to be able to monitor their troughs,". "Because at that time, we could see what was in the tank, but we were never 100 per cent sure what was available for the cattle to drink."

Becoming aware of the On Farm Connectivity Program through the supplier, they jumped at the grant as a way to install remote water monitoring solutions across their farming enterprise.

"Our biggest limiting factor here is water," "We don't have any underground water, only a surface dam."

With conditions currently dry, and concerned about diminishing water levels, the ability to conserve on-farm water is key.

"The whole impetus of this remote monitoring is really the conservation of the water resource, and adjacent to that, animal welfare,". "We have to be able to conserve that resource, so it is not being wasted."

Living off-farm also extenuates the need for remote water technology.

“If we lived on-farm we would still have remote monitoring, it is that handy. But being two hours away, it is pretty stressful when you are worried about it all of the time and you don’t know what is going on.

“Whereas right now, we know we have cattle in three different paddocks, and we can see what is in their trough and know they have access to water. We can look after it from a distance.”

The “peace of mind” that comes with that, is huge.

“For them personally, it reduces the worry. We all worry about our animals and the last thing we want is to see them under duress. It is not good for your productivity, or your animals.”

The producers, who have integrated a number of digital technologies on their farm, sees the role of innovation and technology as the way forward.

“As compliance becomes more stringent, and there are more requirements on us as primary producers, we are increasingly reliant on technology to help us better manage those compliance issues”.

In light of this, they encourage other farmers to take up the Australian Government’s On Farm Connectivity Program as a way of lowering the cost barrier to adopting new technologies.

“We would not have considered being able to spend that much”. “But to have access to a program that tops up that fund to allow us to have better control of our business, is massive.

“We can only imagine what it is like in a larger scale operation, it would be a godsend.”

They said the connectivity solutions are already paying dividends on the farm they brought in 2020 to give their “children and grandchildren a connection to the land”.

“It is important for us because they remember what it was like riding around on a cattle property with their Granddad, so for them to now be able to give that to their children and grandchildren, there is nothing more satisfying.”