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Fund breathes life into innovative ideas

A new fund is ensuring central Queensland is at the forefront of progressive practices including natural sequence farming, sequential cropping, subsurface drip irrigation, and biological farming.

Nine projects have been developed to examine new and cutting-edge land management practices through the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc (FBA) Innovation Fund.

FBA Chief Executive Officer Suzie Christensen said the successful projects shared in funding of more than \$650,000 to conduct innovative trials, hold field days and develop new technology.

"We were impressed by quality and variety of the applications we received and believe the projects chosen will provide real insight and stimulus for the local agricultural community," Ms Christensen said.

"Many landholders are interested in the potential of new practices and technologies but need more evidence or information on how it can be applied in the local area."

Funding was provided for projects to:

- Trial sequential cropping in the Dawson area.
- Organise a field trip to examine natural sequence farming (NSF) techniques.
- Support a trial of automated subsurface drip irrigation, chemigation and fertigation in pineapples near Yeppoon.
- Promote precision agriculture and remote sensing technologies.
- Investigate the potential of pasture cropping and biological farming (e.g. compost teas and extracts) and soil carbon sequestration.
- Investigate how central Queensland can prepare for climate change.
- Hold a series of webinars on agricultural issues.
- Hold a community forum in 2009 to share innovative ideas.

Ms Christensen said the Innovation Fund was created specifically to support 'out of the box' ideas that would not fit into normal funding streams.

"Some great ideas never get off the ground because no-one is willing to back them – so we wanted to provide a pool of money that catered to untried project ideas we might not normally fund," she said.

"We have an open mind about the outcomes of the projects, because it's all about expanding our knowledge and we can learn from both successes and failures."

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