

Sponsorship prospectus



MFS
MONARO FARMING SYSTEMS

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Introducing Monaro Farming Systems Inc.

The MFS group was established in 2007 by a progressive group of local innovative producers with Industry support with an aim to build capacity and continuous improvement in the Monaro grazing Industry and now includes 71 farm businesses which equates to over 200 individuals. With strong, professional leadership from the ground up it has been able to secure over \$1,500,000 in project funding covering several core focus areas which include soil management and fertility, pasture improvement, enterprise comparative analysis, genetic improvement, predictive modelling for seasonal tactical decision making and farm business growth.

The MFS group collectively manages 123,988 hectares on the Monaro and is responsible for approximately 45% of total production. Members run approximately 375,500 sheep and 25,000 head of cattle, produce on average 1,875,845kg of wool per year and turn off over 2,500,000 kg of sheep meat and 4,207,000 kg of beef annually.

About our members

The membership base runs several enterprises including wool (93% of members), beef (69%), meat sheep (52%), cereal (31%) and producers growing other crops (28%).

Common production aims for our members include:

- Understanding and addressing limitations and constraints to pasture growth by focusing on; legume persistence and production, species adaptability to the Monaro climate, soil nutrient targets, grazing strategies and innovative technology advances in the grazing Industry.
- Continuous improvements in labour efficiency on-farm, productivity gains in terms of gross margin per ha (kg lamb per ha, kg wool per ha) and enterprise mix.
- Developing resilient, productive and sustainable farm systems through optimising soil fertility and fertiliser inputs, improving pasture quality and animal genetics and adapting to seasonal variability.

In terms of business performance indicators:

- more than 90% of our members prepare annual financial budgets
- 45% have a written farm business plan
- 65% calculate cost of production (return per head and per ha)
- 65% apply fertiliser regularly
- 80% practise soil testing

Our aims

- provide members with proven, relevant and targeted information which improves knowledge and profitability
- provide a forum to focus on and manage research, development and extension on the Monaro
- provide opportunities for members to interact and exchange ideas
- be member owned and driven
- continue to develop partnerships by seeking the involvement of individuals and organisations in the pursuit of our objectives
- Improve the level of capability / capacity of the whole Monaro grazing community to lift performance and improvement

Our research focus

- MFS has identified six major production limiting issues facing producers on the Monaro. These issues provide the focus for our Research and Development Business Plan;
 - efficient and productive pasture finishing systems
 - soil fertility (targeted and strategic use of fertilisers, optimal soil nutrition, farm mapping)
 - comparative analysis of farm businesses
 - aligning stock performance with seasonal growth patterns (closing the winter feed gap)
 - enterprise mix
 - farm system risk management (seasonal forecasting modelling)



Existing partners

MFS has existing partnerships with agribusiness and other organisations including:

- University of Sydney
- CSIRO
- Boyce Chartered Accountants
- South East Local Land Services (SE LLS)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)
- Meridian Agriculture (formerly Mike Stephens & Associates)
- Holbrook Landcare Network
- Tablelands Farming Systems

Current sponsors

- Incitec Pivot
- Rabo Bank
- National Australia Bank
- Zoetis
- Cooma Rural
- Elders
- Landmark
- Telstra Country Wide
- Lambpro



Research Projects & Field Trials

Current Projects

- **Next Generation Pasture Growth Forecasting – 2018 to 2022 – Dept. of Agriculture \$512,480**
MFS recently secured funding through the NLP Smart Farming Grant Round for a joint project with partners Tablelands Farming Systems, South East LLS, Bookham Ag Bureau and CSIRO for a five year project titled *“Next Generation Forecasting - delivering dynamic data to optimise on-farm decision making”*.

This project aims to dynamically combine data gathered from existing local sensor-derived monitoring networks with proven predictive modelling systems, within a user-friendly platform to optimise on-farm decision making. Currently producers utilise seasonal forecasts typically prepared twice a year (Autumn and Spring) to make key enterprise decisions which impact on farm system profitability & the natural resource feed base. The increasingly volatile farming environment, climatically & market wise, means that twice-yearly forecasts are no longer sufficient for effective decision making. Dynamic, not seasonal, forecasting is required to ensure the long-term profitability of farming enterprises and the management of our landscape for next generation agriculture.

- **Adapting to seasonal variability – on-going**

GrassGro® is a process-driven model of grazed pasture systems which helps producers to analyse farm management and enterprise options in the context of climate variability and risk. The GrassGro® model provides a key extension tool for improving grazing management decisions on the Monaro.

Providing regular “seasonal outlooks” at critical decision making times of the year namely Autumn, Spring and early Summer, has been a long-term core project for MFS.

Four farm systems have been set up integrating soil moisture probe data, climate data and soil characterisations to form the basis of these predictive modelling forecasts.

The “seasonal outlook” reports are short term (generally 3 month) tactical projections based on Monaro “farm systems” for both a native and improved pasture enterprise.

Understanding the likely projection of pasture growth and animal performance whether good or bad is useful to the proactive management of your farm business in order to take advantage of opportunities and minimise the “downside” to poorer seasons. These “outlooks” are delivered by Doug Alcock, GrazProphet Consulting using the GrassGro® software tool developed by CSIRO to assist producers to manage climate variability and to make opportunistic business gains.

MFS has received FarmReady and Woolworths/Landcare Australia funds as well as funding from SE Local Land Services to support this initiative.

MFS currently has **4 Moisture Probes (1 LLS, 4 MFS)**

- **Soil Club – on-going**

This club meets regularly to develop whole-farm soil fertility management plans specifically looking at targeting phosphorus investment and linking soil fertility with the value of fertiliser use as well as stocking rate. The club has focused on integrating soil test information and innovative decision support tools such as the “P-Tool” to set management targets for soil fertility and assess fertiliser investment against productivity gains to get the balance right. This club now has a data base of over 2500 soil tests collected over eight years and has engaged over 98 farmers and tested 1602 paddocks. The data base initiated by MFS and created by CSIRO, is now also shared with other farming groups such as Table Lands Farming Systems and Holbrook Landcare Network as well as Jim Virgona, Graminus Consulting.

Flow on activities have included fertiliser on-farm trials on the three main Monaro soil types (basalt, shale, granite) as well as another project partnering with CSIRO which is exploring the issue of sulphur deficiencies on the Monaro (see below).

- **Solving the Sulphur Story – MDC Producer Fast track Funding – 2018 to 2019 - \$54,000**

Data from the Monaro Farming Systems ‘Soils Club’ indicates that ~80% of the surface soils across all soil types in the Monaro region are deficient in sulphur (S). This project aims to understand where S is sitting in soil profiles, whether topsoil soil S tests in the Monaro region are indicative of a pasture response to S application, and to quantify the soil test response to S application to aid fertiliser decisions

- **Monaro Benchmarking Group – on-going – self-funded**

Monaro Farming Systems has formed a group of approximately 15 farm businesses to benchmark their business performance to help identify potential to increase overall farm productivity. This opportunity allows participants to explore the strengths and weaknesses of their business which leads to more informed decision making to make improvements in business goals, human resource management and environmental targets.

MFS sees benchmarking as a key long-term initiative that will help decide directions for future projects and help establish key performance indicators for healthy, productive agriculture on the Monaro.

- **Finishing Systems**

- **Lamb – 2017 to 2019 – MLA Producer Demonstration Site \$56,314**

MFS has been successful with a lamb finishing Producer Demonstration Site through MLA. Commencing in 2017, the funding will be used over three years to ground truth the modelling work for six “lamb finishing” pasture systems. These will include two brassica pastures, a plantain, lucerne, and grass-based pastures including phalaris, legume and fescue. This project will give us very useful information on the dry matter production, feed quality, and lamb growth rate performance achievable on various finishing pasture options.

- **Steer – 2018 to 2020 - MLA Producer Demonstration Site \$41,264**

MFS GrassGro® modelling work has quantified the relative profitability (\$/ha) of retaining steer weaners through a second spring, either on pasture or winter forage crop, compared to a baseline system of selling at weaning equating to a 20% GM increase and a 58% GM increase above the traditional weaner production system.

The aim of this project is to demonstrate whether high quality forage crop and perennial pasture systems can be utilised to meet target weights for finishing steers on the Monaro and increase overall farm profit relative to the traditional base selling enterprise system.

Seven (7) producer demonstration sites will validate / ground truth the modelling projections demonstrating the relative profitability of seven (7) finishing pasture systems (improved grass pasture, cereal crops) in beef enterprises.

- **The Sense in Supplementation – 2019 to 2021 - MLA Producer Demonstration Site \$27,282**

We are seeking to better quantify the financial returns from addition of supplementary feed to finishing pasture systems, and the sensitivity of the system to both lamb and grain prices.

The economic benefits of using feeders, even on high quality finishing pastures, is the most striking message to date to come out of our lamb finishing PDS. Results from this project will allow us to deliver hard data around this practice giving producers field-based evidence to underpin astute decision making

- **Worm Club**

MFS initiated a Worm Club in April 2016 in response to growing worm burdens adversely affecting weaner survival, wool production and sheep welfare as well as a reduced effectiveness of some chemical drench groups. The project aims to increase the effectiveness of worm and fluke control in sheep grazing enterprises on the Monaro by developing a district profile of worm populations for early warning alerts, to tailor better worm control programs, and to document resistance status.

The MFS group now has a total of **573 worm test results** and engages **50 farm businesses**. MFS has invested in providing a dashboard on the MFS home page in which worm test results are automatically displayed in a live graphic as they are entered into the database giving producers a snapshot of the current worm population status in local flocks.

- **Phosphorus Efficient Pastures – 2016 to 2020 – MFS allocation \$28,000**

Funding body - Commonwealth Government, MLA, Dairy Australia and AWI. Our two sites based at Redcliff and Glenfinnan are a small part of a National Project.

The project research work is being led by CSIRO (Dr Richard Simpson) and NSW DPI (Richard Hayes) staff working alongside eight producer groups in Victoria, NSW and WA.

This project aims to identify more phosphorus (P) efficient legumes and is evaluating alternative legume species, such as Yellow and French (pink) serradellas to see if they can establish and persist in our Monaro soil types and perennial pasture grazing systems. The most relevant issue for Monaro producers which the current work is assessing is whether high-yielding serradella varieties will be persistent enough to justify their use in permanent pastures.



Past Projects

- Spring sown cereal variety evaluation trial (funded by GRDC)
- Economic comparative analysis of merino versus fat lamb enterprises on the Monaro
- Merino genetic comparison trial (2012 – 2014)
- Building resilience and business returns within the family farm business
- Soil Carbon Project
- Establishing persistent, productive new legumes
- Solving the Sulphur Story
- Traineeship program (2012 to 2018)
- Waging the War on Worms (2017 to 2019)

Events and activities

The MFS annual program of events and activities includes:

- **Several events/field days per year** with a flexible program. In 2018 / 2019, issues targeted included comparative analysis (benchmarking tour), soil fertility mapping, Sulphur profiles, Grassgro® modelling seasonal outlooks, alternative legumes (P Efficient varieties), worm club development / drench resistance, legume nodulation status, lamb finishing systems and farm transition strategies.
- **Four newsletters** are prepared annually to members, sponsors and other interested parties. The newsletters ensure members receive regular updates on current projects, event opportunities and industry information.
- **Visits by key speakers at various events. A list of some of our speakers include:**
 - Rob Napier (Director of Napier Agrifutures)
 - Mick Keogh (Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute)
 - Brian van Rooyen (AWI Board member, formerly Chairman)
 - Dr Jeff Baldock (CSIRO)
 - Prof. Ian Plimer (University of Adelaide)
 - Sandy McEachern (Holmes & Sackett),
 - David Sackett (Growth Farms Australia)
 - Hamish Dickson (Productive Nutrition)
 - Dr John Webware (Mackinnon Project, Faculty of Vet science, University of Melbourne)
 - Hon Dr Mike Kelly MP
 - Dr Richard Simpson (CSIRO Soil Scientist)
 - Prof. Ross Garnaut (advisor to Australian Government)
 - Ian Page (Commonwealth Bank Risk Executive)
 - Dr Susan Orgill (Soil Scientist NSW DPI)
 - Lyn Sykes (Communication Specialist, High Resolutions)
 - Georgia Twomey, Commodity Analyst and Matt Costello, Animal Proteins Analyst from Rabobank.
 - Basil Doonan (Principal Consultant, Macquarie Franklin)
 - Dr Matt Playford (Veterinarian, Dawbuts Pty Ltd)
 - Fiona Leech (NSW DPI)
 - Dr Richard Culvenor (CSIRO)
- **Event highlights for 2017/18/19** included two Farm Asset Transition Forums with a panel of local and inter-state professionals which attracted 150 participants and three Monaro group benchmarking / comparative analysis sessions attracting over 45 participants.

MFS has been seen by Government, funding bodies, industries groups and companies as a credible organisation to invest in. MFS has received over **\$1,500,000** in the last ten years to deliver projects on the Monaro.

Sponsorship packages

Monaro Farming Systems invites you to consider a sponsorship opportunity with our organisation. All sponsorship packages can be tailored to meet your specific organisational objectives, we have included an outline of the potential benefits and agreements below:

Tailored Sponsorship Packages - \$1,000 pa (plus GST) - \$10,000 pa (plus GST)

Potential Benefits:

- full membership entitlement (usually worth \$400 pa)
- access to all events
- inclusion of your logo as a sponsor on all material issued to members (when applicable) for the duration of the sponsorship
- inclusion of your logo on the MFS website sponsorship banner
- signage at selected events
- advertising space in our newsletters throughout the year (4)
- sponsorship opportunity at selected events throughout the year at the Boards discretion i.e. product displays or speaking rights

One-off event sponsor

MFS is also happy to explore opportunities to provide one-off sponsorship support for a particular event or research project. This may take the form of a combination of cash or merchandise and in-kind support. MFS is also happy to discuss the development of an MoU with any prospective partners.

To discuss ways your organisation can work with MFS please contact **Mandy Horton**, Producer and Board Director 02 6458 7293 / 0427 587 293 / quinburra@gmail.com OR **Zoe Rolfe**, Executive Officer 0434 510 099 / Executive@monarofs.com.au

The People Behind MFS

The team are committed to the grazing Industry and passionate about developing and providing increased knowledge to farmers for the benefit of individual businesses, the rural sector and the wider community.

Board members

John Murdoch, Chairman CA GAICD (B. Comm, ANU) (G. dip Accounting, ICAA). John is a joint owner and operator of a family wool, beef and lamb producing enterprise on the Southern Monaro NSW. John also sits on the Sheep Connect NSW project advisory panel which oversees AWI's industry extension within NSW. Prior to operating a primary production enterprise, John worked for KPMG specialising in private enterprise and government body governance, performance and compliance. John is graduate member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia, and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. John has a depth of experience in pasture-based livestock finishing systems and sustainable livestock grazing enterprises.

Richard Taylor (B. V. Sc., MVS). Richard Taylor graduated from Sydney University with a 1st class honours degree in Veterinary Science in 1987. He spent two years working with the Mackinnon Project, a farm advisory service based at Melbourne University, during which time he completed a Masters in Veterinary Studies, with a focus on livestock production and genetics.

Since 1990 he has been managing the family agricultural business on the Monaro, in conjunction with his father and brother. This operation has nearly tripled in scale over the period, and now runs over 40,000 sheep and 3,600 beef cattle on the Monaro and South West Slopes, on land owned by the business. In addition, 18,000 sheep and 1,200 cattle are run on leased properties.

Richard was the founding director of Growth Farms, a farm management company which now manages over \$380 million worth of rural properties in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. He is now the Managing Director of MH Premium Farms, a business that has 13 large farms under management with enterprises including dryland and irrigated grain and cotton, sheep, cattle and sugar.

Mandy Horton. Mandy owns and manages a family farm with her husband Ron near Delegate on the Southern Monaro. After graduating with an Associate Diploma in Farm Secretarial Studies, she worked as a free-lance farm administrator and finance manager around the Monaro, giving her an in-depth knowledge of this region's wide variety of farming businesses. Mandy has always been involved in the management and everyday operation of the family farming business, which focuses on a self-replacing merino enterprise with some prime lambs and trading cattle. Her skills and knowledge are primarily in this area of farm management, especially farm financial management and livestock production systems.

Bea Litchfield (B Sc Agr Hon). Bea holds a degree in Agricultural Science (Honours) majoring in Livestock Production and has worked in a cooperate agriculture company as well as having spent time working in the US. Bea is currently immersed in the family business at Hazeldean as stud stock manager for their Angus and Merino studs resulting in her being involved in breeding decisions, management, marketing and production.

Owen Smith. Owen holds a Bachelor of Management in Farm Business (The University of Sydney). He is a farm manager based in Corowa NSW. He works for a family owned company that operate mixed farms spread through Southern NSW and Victoria. With the help of his family, Owen also owns and operates a wool and beef enterprise south-east Adaminaby, on the Monaro.

Jonathan (Jono) Forrest, Invited Industry Director (Chartered Accountant – FCA). Jono is a Chartered Accountant and has been in the profession for 18 years. He is also a director of Boyce Chartered Accountants, the largest regional accounting firm in Australia. Jono is passionate about agriculture and his professional experience involves working with clients of Boyce closely on their management accounting, tax, succession/estate planning and other needs in business. Jono was raised on a dairy and grazing family farm in South Australia and then spent four years working near Wagga for a family with multiple grazing properties before completing his tertiary education.

Phil Graham, Invited Industry Director (B Sc Agr (Uni of Sydney), Dip Farm Forestry (McMillian Centre). Phil Graham works for NSW Industry & Investment. He is a pasture & livestock technical specialist based at Yass. Phil's working career has included time in the cotton, dairy and textile industries with the last 23 years spent with the NSW Department Primary Industries. Since 2005 he has filled the role as technical specialist grazing systems covering NSW. A current project Phil manages is looking at the impacts of potential changes in our weather on livestock systems.

Warwick Badgery, Invited Industry Director (B Wool & Pasture Science Hon (Uni of NSW), PhD (Uni of Sydney). Dr Warwick Badgery is the Rangelands and Tropical Pastures research leader with NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI). He has worked with DPI for 13 years conducting research on grazing management, farming systems, pasture agronomy, soil carbon and weed management. Warwick is currently the Program Leader of the Feed base theme for the National Livestock Productivity Partnership. Previously he was the site leader for the Orange EverGraze Proof site and has worked on an ACIAR project examining the sustainable development of grazing systems in Western China. He is passionate about improving farm management practices to enhance profitability and address environmental issues.

Support team

Zoe Rolfe, Executive Officer (B Ed Honours (Uni of Wollongong), M Arts (QUT) Zoe has a strong background in Education having moved to Cooma in 2013 to establish and open the Cooma Universities Centre. She is married to a local producer and has two young children, Daisy and Jack, who are the 8th generation of Rolfe's on the family farm. Zoe is passionate about innovation and education with a background in primary teaching and other project management and is working towards a more active role on the family farm and working with the committee and members of MFS to continue the progressive and innovative research and work that is done by the organisation.

Rebecca Kading, Administrative Officer. Rebecca lives in Delegate and her family has a long history of farming in the area. She is an experienced administrator and is currently working towards her Certificate IV in Bookkeeping. Rebecca works in several different roles, in both administration and hospitality. She volunteers as the treasurer of the Delegate R.S.L sub-Branch and has two young children to keep her busy.