

# FEEDBASE ADVANTAGE

## Who we are:



Our group was formed in 2019 consisting of five mixed-grazing businesses operating in southwest Victoria. Meridian Agriculture initiated the group following a trial of FARMAX decision support software in 2018. Having trialled the New Zealand based software, Meridian Agriculture was convinced of its potential value for grazing businesses in Australia and approached a number of businesses to form the farm management group (now known as Feedbase Advantage).

Group members share a passion for productivity from pastures and the management of these systems. Members were initially attracted to the group for several reasons:

- A desire to quantify the amount of pasture being produced in their grazing operations.
- Improve understanding of how well pasture is being converted into product and how they compare with other businesses (production efficiency).
- Increase awareness of tactical and strategic business opportunities (e.g. livestock trading, fodder conservation, pasture development, risk mitigation).
- Improve pasture forecasting, feed budgeting and feed base decision making.
- A like-minded group where farm management decision options and opportunities could be discussed and shared openly for the benefit of all members.

## What we do:



As part of the group each business has an annual subscription to FARMAX Advantage. With Meridian Ag's support farm data is updated on a monthly basis for each business, including livestock purchases and sales, pasture quantity assessments and livestock performance data (e.g. weight gain, pregnancy scanning rates).

Following data updates, members receive a monthly Production Benchmarking Report. The report details latest average FOO (Feed On Offer) levels, forecast FOO, pasture growth rates (monthly actual and forecast) and pasture consumption metrics for each business. Intended supplementary feeding programs and fodder crops for grazing and conservation are also reported and replaced with actual data as the season progresses.

The monthly Production Benchmarking Reports provide a great opportunity for members to compare production metrics within the group, as a point-in-time 'snap shot' and from an overall production system perspective. Information in monthly reports prompt numerous items for group discussion. Members discuss their views on what the data is saying about their business and what decisions they intend to make on the back of this information. Members are encouraged to challenge each other on business options and management decision logic.

The group wishes to attract more likeminded businesses to join the group in 2020. As a new participating business you would be involved in all group member activities and discussions led by Meridian Ag Farm Business and Livestock Consultant, James Whale. New businesses will be offered a 1-year 'Introductory Package' involving additional FARMAX technical support and pasture assessment training.



### Producer testimonials:

*“Gives a clearer picture of how much grass you do grow, how much your stock consume and how to get that balance correct... a great way to learn from others and see how other people do things... also a great way to bounce ideas off each other.”* **Mark Bunge, wool and beef, Coleraine.**

*“The program allows us to put some sound decision making and forecasts around the biggest variable in our business, which is pasture growth... Other groups have a focus on animal management or financial management, when the core of all those groups is pasture and grass growth. To me this is the first group that has really zeroed down on the thing that makes graziers the most money”.* **Anthony Close, commercial and seed stock sheep and beef, Harrow.**

*“Different land classes and pasture types are being grazed more intensively now we have the confidence in the growth numbers. Knowing exactly how much grass you have and an accurate forecast has enabled the business to support a higher stocking rate more confidently.”* **James Knight, beef breeding and backgrounding, The Sisters.**

*Reassurance on stocking policies. Helped us make decisions on stocking numbers... We purchased 200 steers six weeks before we would have... it gives you knowledge on what your potential is”* **David Merrin, beef breeding and trading, Peshurst.**

To find out more about the program contact James Whale on 0428 374 046 or [jwhale@meridian-ag.com.au](mailto:jwhale@meridian-ag.com.au)

### Feedbase Advantage – Introductory Package



- Farm data collection and data entry support (up to 15hrs)
- In paddock pasture assessment training
- Monthly FARMAX Production Benchmarking report (requires essential monthly farm data to be submitted by client)
- FARMAX file review and QA report provided on monthly basis over 12 months
- Participation in all group member discussion meetings run on Zoom video conferencing platform (held on monthly basis).
- Invitation to annual FARMAX event and seasonal field days provided to all Feedbase Advantage members.
- Includes annual subscription to FARMAX Advantage valued at \$2,000 NZD (exc. GST)
- Total cost \$7,500 +GST