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## VFF welcomes progress on virtual fencing but calls for drought support to boost adoption

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed the Allan Labor Government's announcement of draft regulations to enable the legal use of virtual fencing in Victoria, following years of advocacy by the VFF and the broader farming community.

However, the organisation says more must be done to ensure farmers can access and implement the technology, particularly in the face of deepening drought conditions.

The draft regulations, now open for consultation, would pave the way for the use of GPS-enabled virtual fencing collars for livestock, which are already legal and widely used in other Australian states to support productivity, animal welfare and improved land management.

VFF President Brett Hosking said the announcement was a long-overdue recognition of the need to modernise Victoria's outdated rules.

"This is a win for common sense and a testament to the advocacy efforts of the VFF and our members," Mr Hosking said.

"Virtual fencing is already proving its worth in other states. It's time Victorian farmers had the same opportunities to improve livestock management and reduce pressure on our land."

The VFF and United Dairyfarmers of Victoria (UDV) have worked closely with manufacturers, researchers and regulators to support the responsible rollout of the technology. UDV President Bernie Free noted the technology's potential to transform operations for dairy producers.

"Dairy farmers have been ready to adopt virtual fencing for years. We've done the groundwork, and while this announcement is welcome, we can't afford to wait much longer," Mr Free said.

While recognising this as a positive step, the VFF is urging the Victorian Government to make existing drought and preparedness funding eligible for virtual fencing and stock containment infrastructure once the regulations are finalised.

"The timing of these changes is critical," Mr Hosking said. "We're in the middle of a challenging season, and farmers need every tool available to manage feed, protect soil, and rotate stock efficiently. Virtual fencing is one of those tools."

"Once regulations are in place, we want to see support made available, not just through words, but with practical funding that helps farmers adopt this technology where it's most urgently needed."

The VFF also reiterated its disappointment over recent policy decisions, such as the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund levy, which has added pressure to rural communities already managing severe cost and climate pressures.

"We won't forget the government's decision to ignore rural voices on the unfair levy. But we'll always support policies that help farmers do their jobs better and virtual fencing is one of them," Mr Hosking said.

The VFF will continue to work closely with the government and industry to ensure the final virtual fencing framework is safe, practical, and aligned with the needs of Victorian producers.

**ENDS**

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