



PPS Farmer Group responds to bushfire affected farms.

A local member organisation from the Project Platypus Upper Wimmera Landcare Network has been instrumental in aiding bushfire recovery efforts in Victoria and South Australia.

Perennial Pasture Systems (PPS), an independent farmers group, were quick to respond and assist fellow farmers affected by the 2020 summer bushfires.

Farmers in the Tatyoon district coordinated the first hay drive to affected areas with the hay and straw donated by PPS members. The initial donations went to East Gippsland as did more loads later in the summer.

Many PPS members understood the hardship endured by East Gippsland farmers as several had visited the region on the group's annual study tour in 2018. Having seen the impact of the prolonged drought in the region, many expected even the most resilient farmers to be tested by the fires.

PPS were pleased to be able to add to the enormous efforts in sending fodder to affected farmers. As well as using volunteer trucks, PPS were able to assist local businesses that struggled after the fires by utilising local Gippsland contractors.

A fire in the Lexton area where most PPS members are more closely located caused huge problems for local farmers. The members delivered hay and grain to impacted farms after the fire to assist in the management of stock.

Assistance was also given to farms on Kangaroo Island where more than half the island was severely affected. PPS members visited Kangaroo Island on the 2017 Annual Study Tour and were disappointed to learn that several of the farms visited lost stock, fences and infrastructure in the fires. The PPS delivered loads of straw to the study tour host farms and other properties affected by the fires, with the fodder going to sheep in containment areas.

While PPS Project Manager Rob Shea organised most of the recovery process, many members put in hours of voluntary time to assist the effort. Stuart Robinson from Lismore coordinated the Kangaroo Island fodder with assistance from Jason Benson from Benson Freight who donated his trucking service for the hay. Corey Price from Eversley also organised five semis to deliver donated hay for the second Gippsland effort in February.

PPS members also donated money to provide fencing material for farms on Kangaroo Island, assist with fuel costs and help support a local Lions Club near Lexton who catered for the bushfire recovery crew, Blaze Aid.

The response from Victorian farmers to help those in need was outstanding and the PPS group was proud to contribute to the effort.

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