

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD —
DIGITAL FARM GRANTS PROGRAM AND ECONNECTED GRAINBELT PROGRAM

226. Hon Colin de Grussa to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the Digital Farm Grains Program and the eConnected Grainbelt Program election commitments, and I ask:

- (a) what has been the investment to date for the following financial years:
 - (i) 2017–18;
 - (ii) 2018–19;
 - (iii) 2019–20; and
 - (iv) 2020–21;
- (b) what projects are currently underway as part of the commitment and what has been the expenditure to the end of the 2020–21 financial year;
- (c) what investment and projects are planned for the 2021–22 financial year; and
- (d) how is the funding allocated across the forward estimates?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

The Digital Farm Grants Program and the eConnected Grainbelt Program are not election commitments. The programs were developed and/or funded prior to the 2021 election.

- (a) Expenditure to date for the following financial years is:

	Financial Year	Digital Farm Grants Program	eConnected Grainbelt Program
(i)	2017–18	\$149,508	\$2,125,879
(ii)	2018–19	\$677,961	\$2,186,550
(iii)	2019–20	\$1,696,813	\$1,524,914
(iv)	2020–21	\$1,351,257	\$1,457,224
	Total	\$3,875,539	\$7,294,567

- (b) The Digital Farm Grants program provides funding for last-mile solutions for agribusinesses in agricultural and pastoral regions that lie outside the current or planned NBN fixed wireless and fixed line footprint.

By the end of 2021, it is expected that extended services will be available to over 2,000 WA farming businesses across 110,000 square kilometres through parts of the Kimberley, Gascoyne, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Peel, South West and Great Southern regions.

The projects currently underway for the Digital Farm Grants Program include:

Fixed Wireless Projects

- North Midlands
- Chapman Valley
- Mt Barker
- Wickepin
- Goodlands (Mobile Tower)
- Great Southern Region
- Kununurra Central
- Kununurra North
- Williams
- Wagerup/Boddington
- Capel/Busselton
- Dandaragan
- Geraldton to Mullewa
- Carnarvon Horticultural Network

Merredin to Bruce Rock
Esperance Digital Farm Network
Expansion of the NEWROC Network
Central and Far Eastern Wheatbelt Expansion
Dumbleyung Digital Connectivity
Wireless Wheatbelt – Avon East

The eConnected Grainbelt Project promotes the availability of information and ag-tech tools across the WA grains industry. The eConnected team assists WA growers and consultants to improve their technological skill levels enabling growers to make more profitable decisions tailored to their farm businesses.

The projects currently underway for the eConnected Grainbelt Program include:

the eConnect Data Exchange Platform
the Weather 3G Station Upgrade and Regional Support.

2020–21 expenditure is included in answer to part (a).

(c)–(d) The funding allocated across the forward estimates is:

Financial Year	Digital Farm Grants Program	eConnected Grainbelt Program
2021–22	\$7.063m	\$2.313m
2022–23	\$3.25m	\$2.03m
2023–24		\$2.411m
2024–25		\$2.069m