

Farm Management Plan

Southern Cross Road



Quality Information

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1 Introduction

[REDACTED] has prepared this Farm Management Plan on behalf of the landowner. This Farm Management Plan is to accompany a planning permit application which proposes the use and development of a dwelling on the subject site.

This plan outlines the current use and conditions of the land and the proposed agricultural enterprise that will be conducted on the subject site. The plan has been prepared to be suitable to be endorsed as part of the permit

This plan is to be implemented by the owner in addition to the existing agricultural uses on the land, the primary produce sales, and the proposed dwelling.

2 Site Context

2.1 Site description

The subject site is located at Southern Cross Road, Illowa and is identified by its relevant title details which are Lot 2 PS 904523C (Volume 12376 Folio 130).

The owner purchased the land in mid-2022 and has been improving the land since purchase, including through the provision of new fencing, landscaping, and the establishment of the horticulture use.



Figure 1: Subject Site

The Site is an irregular shape, comprising two larger areas to the north and south connected via a narrower section of land, with an area of 25.34 hectares.

The Site has a frontage of approximately 349 metres to Southern Cross Road to the east, a frontage of 210 metres to Bushfield - Tower Hill Road to the south, and a frontage of 1.2 kilometres to the Warrnambool – Port Fairy Rail Trail to the west.

The Site is undulating and rises up from Southern Cross Road towards higher land on the west and north of the Site. The northern portion of the Site is generally flat.

2.2 Infrastructure

The Site gains access from Southern Cross Road via an existing driveway and crossover. The perimeter of the Site is fenced with farm fencing. The Site has recently been re-fenced to provide a number of paddocks to be used in association with the agricultural use of the land. These paddocks range in size from approximately 1.12 hectares to 4.46 hectares.

One paddock has been ploughed and planted with potatoes, towards the Southern Cross frontage of the site (Paddock 6). New farm accessways have been constructed on the land. Part of the adjoining rail trail land is leased by the owner and used as farm access to the paddocks.

The Site has been landscaped with new avenue landscaping planted along the main farm access from Southern Cross Road, and along the common boundary with the adjoining land at 209 Southern Cross Road.

A small shipping container has been installed on the land near the existing crossover to Southern Cross Road, to provide for a 'primary produce sales' area to sell the potatoes grown on the Site. Minor earthworks to create a pad site for an agricultural shed (not part of this permit application) have been undertaken towards the western portion of the Site within Paddock 5. The agricultural shed will be used for the storage of tractors, quad bikes, and other machinery and infrastructure to support the farm and horticultural use.

Paddock 5 (the house paddock) is currently being used for the keeping of a small number of sheep whilst the north and southern paddocks (Paddocks 1 - 4 and Paddocks 7 - 9) are being prepared.

The site is not connected to reticulated sewerage. Power supply is available at the frontage of the Site. Water for troughs is provided at the south-western corner of the Site. A small existing dam has also been reinstated for water storage on the site.

2.3 Fauna and Flora

The site comprises one Ecological Vegetation Class: Plains Grassy Woodland. The site has mostly been cleared of any substantial vegetation, likely from historical grazing of the property. Two small shelter belt plantings using exotic species are located on the Site and are intended to be removed and replaced longer term with indigenous species. There is no evidence of any threatened fauna on the land.

3 Farm Management Plan

3.1 Proposal

The Landowners have recently bought the Site with the intent of consolidating their farming activities on the land. This will represent an increase the agricultural productivity of the Site from its previous recent uses.

The proposal seeks to support the establishment of a dwelling on the land for the Landowners, who have a long family association with potato growing in the rural areas surrounding Koroit for over 60 years. The Landowners currently lease paddocks around Koroit to grow potatoes, including on the adjacent land at 988 Tower Hill Road. In addition, the Landowners sell their potatoes at a number of roadside stalls including along the Princes Highway (at numbers 626 and 636 Princes Highway), as well as at local markets in Port Fairy and Warrnambool, and in local supermarkets and produce stores when stock allows.

The proposal seeks to use the land for horticulture and grazing animal production. Specifically, the land is to be used in a paddock rotation system to support the growing of potatoes, the keeping of sheep (ewes) and the growing of silage on the land.

A breakdown of the paddock structure and proposed farm methods is outlined below.

- Paddocks 1 - 4 comprise the northern-most paddocks. These paddocks are to be initially used for the growing of silage. Longer term, these Paddocks will be added to the paddock rotation system.
- Paddock 5 will comprise the house paddock, along with the future agricultural shed.
- Paddock 6 comprises the first paddock cultivated for potatoes. These have recently been planted on the land and are well established. The primary produce sales will also to occur from this Paddock.
- Paddocks 7 - 9 are to comprise sheep paddocks, for the keeping of ewes. Longer term, these Paddocks will be added to the paddock rotation system.

The proposed dwelling is intended to allow the Landowners to consolidate their farming activities on the land, and maximise the agricultural production of the land. The long-term vision for the site is to increase the number of ewes to 300 spread throughout the various paddocks, and increase the area used for growing potatoes (horticulture) to 6 hectares.

3.2 Paddock rotation

To support this increased agricultural productivity, a paddock rotation system is to be implemented. Paddocks are to be rotated as shown in Figure 2 overleaf.

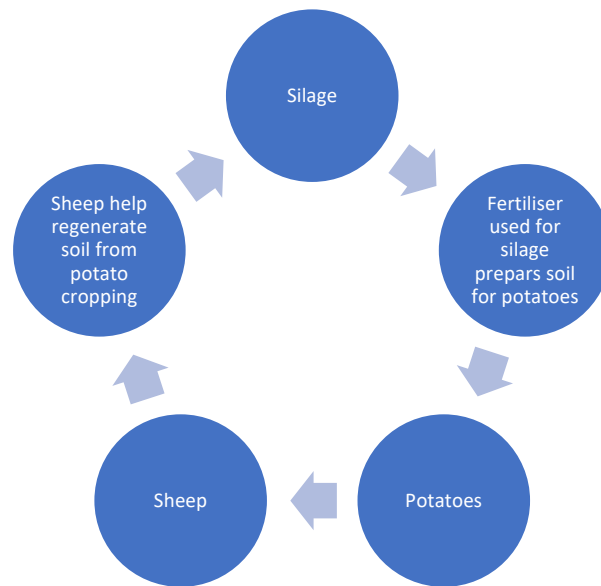


Figure 2 Paddock Rotation System

Pot ash and urea fertiliser are added to the soil to promote silage growth. In turn, this prepares the soil for the cultivation of potatoes. Following the growing of potatoes, the paddocks are then used for the keeping of sheep. The sheep help repair and regenerate the soil ready for future silage.

The paddocks are intended to be rotated once a year, with the potatoes to be returned to any paddock over a 5-year cycle. This type of rotation system is current best practice for potato growing.

3.3 Horticulture (Potato Growing)

Potato species intended to be grown on the land include Red Pontiac and White Stars varieties. Daily activities associated with the growing of potatoes include moving the irrigation system manually and watering (generally at night).

Typically, the potatoes harvesting season is during October - May. The Site does not experience frost events, due to the specific micro-climate of the Site. Due to this Site feature, it is the Landowners intention to grow and harvest potatoes all year around. During harvesting, a machine is used to lift and loosen the potatoes, but all potatoes are picked by hand. It is anticipated that 1200 x 10kg bags of potatoes will be produce per acre.

3.4 Grazing Animal Production (Sheep)

There are certain basic needs of sheep. These include:

- Accessible water and food to maintain health;
- Appropriate areas for exercise;
- Appropriate weather protection through vegetation shelters;
- Social contact with other sheep;
- Isolation areas for breeding (as required);
- Protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth and parasite control;
- Rapid identification and treatment of ticks, lice, injury and disease;

- Medical treatment;
- Protection from theft;
- Protection from predation or disturbance from feral animals and wild and domestic dogs.

The proposed dwelling will allow an on-site presence to allow for increased number of sheep to be kept on the site, with the long-term vision to have up to 300 ewes on the land. The keeping of sheep and incorporation into the paddock rotation system will assist with the increased horticultural use of the land.

Additional food and water for sheep will be provided on an as needs basis depending on individual requirements and the time of year. Water supply, fencing and paddocks will continue to be inspected daily.

Food for the sheep will comprise a balanced diet, with normal grazing practices in the paddocks with supplemented foods provided on an individual or as needs basis. Supplementary feeding of hay and other fodders may be required.

The existing established landscaping around the perimeter of the site will continue to provide screening and weather protection for the sheep.

3.5 Justification for Dwelling

The justification for a dwelling on the land to support the agricultural use is as follows:

- On-site presence will allow further investment in the land and an increase in the number of sheep able to be kept on the land.
- Monitor all sheep for illness or injury.
- Ensure adequate access to clean water and access to feed.
- Security and theft are a major concern in rural areas, especially with expensive items at the property such as farm equipment.
- Increased ability to manage horticultural products.

3.6 Daily Farm Management Routine

The Daily Farm management routine is as follows

Morning

- Move irrigation sprinklers, as required
- Picking and bagging of potatoes
- Feed sheep and ensure access to water
- Check sheep for injury / illness
- Check pregnant ewes and new lambs seasonally

Late afternoon

- Watering of potatoes and picking and bagging as required.
- Any maintenance issues attended to on a daily basis as needed. Examples – fencing, track maintenance.
- Wildfire risk prevention/response - Living in a dwelling on the property site means being more alert to any surrounding fire risk and more responsive. Sheep can be monitored and relocating them in a timely manner is of most importance for their health, safety and wellbeing.

4 Conclusion

The Landowners intend to continue investing and improving the agricultural productivity of the Site, as the paddock rotation system is established. The approval of a dwelling will support the ongoing investment into the horticultural and animal production uses on the land.

5 Review and Management

This plan will be reviewed periodically and information within this plan will be maintained and updated on an as-needs basis.

