



# Media Release

Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013

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Topics at next month's Small Farms Field Day at Lilydale will be as varied as the audience it aims to attract.

The field day on Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, is being organised by NRM North and Lilydale Landcare.

The free event will feature displays, speakers and demonstrations on topics including chainsaw maintenance, beekeeping, fencing, weed management, stock handling and grazing management for smallholders.

NRM North's Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said the field day was part of the organisation's new Small Farm Living Program which aimed to support smallholders to look after the natural values on their land and make the most of their acreage.

"The program includes property planning assistance tailored to smallholders, local workshops and field days on relevant topics, and small grants for activities such as protecting native bush and planting native windbreaks.

"We want to make it easier for smallholders to find information and advice which is relevant to them and as part of this approach, we plan to launch a new website soon which is specifically tailored to smallholders." Mr McKee said.

NRM North's Biodiversity Coordinator, Kate Thorn, said there were around five thousand smallholders in the NRM North region alone, making it an important group to engage.

"There is no hard and fast definition of a smallholder. We are talking about bush blocks and hobby farms, through to small commercial operations and specialty producers.

"Loosely we have said a smallholding is two to 50 hectares, but really it's anyone who defines themselves as a smallholder.

"We have teamed up with Lilydale Landcare because many of their members are smallholders. They have told us what interests them and what their needs are, and that has largely dictated the topics to be covered." Ms Thorn said.

Andrew Bailey from the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture will cover sheep health, nutrition and handling, while NRM North's Adrian James will discuss some of the challenges for small farmers in maintaining soil health and productive pastures.

Practical demonstrations will include fencing with Matt Cook from MJ Cook Rural Supplies, and Chainsaw safety and maintenance with Nick Purcell from the Polytechnic.

For those who really want to diversify, there will also be presentations on home brewing and beekeeping.

NRM North staff will be on hand to answer questions on weeds and other natural resource management issues.

The field day is funded by the Australian Government through the Regional Landcare Facilitator Initiative and Biodiversity Fund.

NRM North's Small Farm Living Program will be officially launched at the field day.

Gates open at 11am, entry is free, and there will be a BBQ plus children's activities available.

Ends

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