

The nbn[®] network – empowering Australian farms

Robert Hardie, Executive Manager – Health and Agriculture, nbn

- Connectivity solutions to support Australian agriculture are available almost anywhere
- The nbn[®] network is one part of the solution
- Prioritise and invest first in the things that keep you awake at night
- Help is available

There is no doubt about it – the rapid pace of change in telecommunications technologies, types and availability is enough to leave even techsperts in a head spin. For farmers looking for more technologically-advanced solutions for their businesses, understanding the connectivity options available is just the first step.

Getting connected, or having access to a connection, is a requirement to support the adoption of the devices, widgets, platforms, systems, automations and robotics that many farms are considering. And despite some misconceptions, there's a solution available to connect almost anyone almost anywhere, thanks to the availability and reach of the nbn[®] network, as well as other satellite and terrestrial solutions.

Mapping your journey

Connectivity enables the possible, and while this can be daunting, knowing the right connectivity to operate the right devices, and achieve the right outcome, is critical.

Fully digitising a farm can be expensive, so it's wise to prioritise.

One tip is to think about the things on farm that keep you awake at night – pumps running out of water, pipes breaking, refrigeration systems not quite right – and seeking a solution for those problems first. Can a sensor alert you to a problem as soon as it happens? If the alert can save a day's hard work, has it paid its way? Once these 'mission critical' issues have been resolved, you can then move on to the next order of challenges you have on your farm.

While no two farms are the same, the challenges faced and the solutions available likely means someone has found a way to fix the most common problems.

A data hungry nation needs a data ready network

With data use across regional Australia expected to grow by 300 per cent over the next decade, having a fit-for-purpose telecommunications network is essential. nbn is embracing technology advancement and evolving the nbn network through multi-billion-dollar investments and upgrades as part of our mission to lift the digital capability of Australia.

These investments are likely to have a direct benefit to berry growers, other farmers and the wider supply chain across Australia.

We're pushing fibre connections deeper into regional communities with the intention that, by the end of 2025, around 1.4 million more homes and businesses will be eligible to order a full fibre connection via their chosen nbn provider.¹

In rural and remote Australia, we're extending the coverage and capabilities of our nbn Fixed Wireless and satellite networks through a \$750 million co-investment with the Australian Government. Thanks to the upgrades, the introduction of new higher speed tiers on the nbn Fixed Wireless network are aimed at enabling wholesale download speeds up to four times faster than what's currently available.^{2,3}

Satellite customers can right now enjoy more flexibility and freedom when using the internet with uncapped data usage⁴ plans, offered at a choice of speeds and price points to help suit different needs and budgets.²

As a wholesale provider, access to the nbn network is available from a variety of retail service providers; equipment is professionally installed, with no charge



Photo credit: nbn®

by **nbn** to providers for a standard installation⁵. We encourage customers to check with different providers about their plans, service and support to ensure that you receive the product that best meets you and your business' needs.

Connectivity – sorted. Now what?

Once your premise is connected, making it available where you need it most is essential - whether at your house, shed or out across the farm. Having a separate data network, which could be connected to the **nbn** network, and investing in infrastructure needed to extend the reach and range of a data network and a separate phone signal, may be one way to improve the quality and consistency of on-farm connectivity.²

There are many cost-effective solutions that can be purchased off the shelf, as well as tailored options from third-party providers for more complex situations.

The Australian Government's On Farm Connectivity Grants may be one way to help. Subject to eligibility, up to \$30,000 is available to support a matched investment in equipment to extend the reach and range of connectivity on-farm. These funds can support the purchase of antennas, extenders, cabling or other systems which can

then enable remote sensors, cameras, monitors or other systems to support enhanced on-farm productivity.

No mobile signal, no worries

Importantly, a lack of mobile phone signal doesn't mean that your AgTech journey is over before it's begun – with a bit of know-how, it is likely you can find broadband connectivity to suit help your business needs.²

Dandy Produce is an avocado farm near Bundaberg that sits in an area of weak mobile phone signal. Under a trial funded by the Hinkler AgTech Initiative, the farm has created an on-farm network that allows staff to be more contactable when out and about on the farm, and water to be switched on and off remotely.

The farm uses **nbn** Fixed Wireless backhaul technology to enable remote monitoring of water pumps and improved connectivity in green houses and in farm vehicles thanks to a ZetiRover system developed by Wagga Wagga-based connectivity provider, Zetifi.

Still unsure? There's help available!

If you're still not sure and looking for more help navigating the AgTech world, start by downloading a copy of the free **On Farm Connectivity Guide**,



Photo credit: nbn®

developed by **nbn** and the National Farmers' Federation, which includes a glossary of nearly 100 commonly used AgTech and connectivity phrases.

Another free and handy resource is the **Regional Tech Hub**, an Australian Government-funded help desk for support on getting and staying connected. Their AgTech specialist can help you understand on-farm connectivity options available at your home or property. The service is free.

Find out more:

nbn Check Your Address:

Check your address
nbn (nbnc0.com.au)

On Farm Connectivity Grants:

On Farm Connectivity Program
business.gov.au

On Farm Connectivity Guide:

nbn Regional and remote Australia

Regional Tech Hub:

Regional Tech Hub

Disclaimers

1. Conditions, eligibility criteria and costs will apply – please speak with your preferred provider. Eligibility criteria includes among other things, being designated by nbn as a simple premises and placing an order for an nbn powered plan based on an eligible wholesale speed tier. Additional costs may apply to providers, who may choose to pass this charge onto their customers.
2. Your experience, including the speeds actually achieved over the nbn network, depends on the nbn access technology and configuration over which services are delivered to your premises, whether you are using the internet during the busy period, and some factors outside of nbn's control (like your equipment quality, software, chosen broadband plan or how your provider designs its network).
3. For nbn Fixed Wireless, speeds may also be impacted by the number of concurrent users on the nbn Fixed Wireless network, including during busy periods.
4. Subject to fair use policy and shaping.
5. nbn will assess whether an installation is standard, because practical and optimal installations differ at different locations. End customers should contact their preferred internet service provider to ask about the retail prices they charge.

