

Pipeline wait for expansion

Charlton feedlot is eagerly waiting for the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline to provide a secure water supply so it can expand operations.

Manager Steve Reynolds said the feedlot had operated hand-to-mouth for the past four years waiting for an unknown amount of water to arrive out of the channel.

He said the region's run of dry years had created an uncertain existence for the feedlot because it was hard to predict how much water it would receive from year to year. This had hindered planning for the future and created many uncertainties with marketing and customers.

"We are looking forward to the pipeline," he said. "Anything which can provide us with a secure water supply."

The feedlot has an annual water entitlement of about 500 megalitres which comes via a channel and is pumped into storages.

By the time the channel run reaches the feedlot and after evaporation the feedlot can only use 400 megalitres of this allocation.

Mr Reynolds said the feedlot was looking forward to a piped supply when a 500-megalitre allocation would actually mean a 'usable' 500 megalitres.



Industry eagerly awaits a secure water supply, including Charlton Feedlot manager Steve Reynolds. Mr Reynolds said completion of the pipeline project would allow the feedlot to expand operations. Photo by David Fletcher for GWMWater

"It will give us an opportunity for expansion and market development. A piped supply saving water throughout the region might also mean extra water is available for us to buy so we can pursue further expansion," he said.

Mr Reynolds said the feedlot was in the process of investigating the opportunities that would result from having access to a piped water supply.

"Planning has already started because the licensing process for an expanded feedlot would take a long time," he said. "We want to be ready to use the piped water as soon as it is available."

Mr Reynolds said the feedlot would feel pressure from reduced water entitlements this year but had enough water in storage to manage through this year, although possibly at a reduced production level.

"When the pipeline arrives, the region will never stare down the barrel of another disaster with sparse water supplies as they have this year," he said.

"We would love to see the pipeline come through next year, and although this won't happen - at least we can see a light at the end of the tunnel for future water supplies."

Further information is available by contacting the Horsham Piping It Office on 1300 659 961 or dropping into the office at 42-44 Kalkee Road.

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