**Communications plan**

**NB2 Pilot – 2021-23**

**Background**

The Northern Breeding Business strategic RDE&A partnership (NB2) will address three key issues that threaten the long-term viability and sustainability of the northern beef industry. These have been identified as; 1) the level of calf wastage in northern breeding herds, 2) the low level of profitability of many northern beef enterprises, and 3) the low level of adoption of proven management practices and technologies.

Through its three RDE&A pillars of Herd, Feedbase and Environment, supported by integrated extension and adoption activities, NB2 will, by 2027, deliver an estimated $20M in net benefits per annum to 250 northern beef enterprises. This is projected to be achieved through the increased production of 10M kg live weight of sale cattle (a five times return on investment) while operating at a level of production and profit that is sustainable in the long-term, by adopting proven management practices and new technologies, and using objective data to inform business decisions.

NB2 will primarily be based on the foundation of peer-to-peer learning groups, to help individual beef producers who want to make informed decisions. This will be achieved by groups understanding their baseline data and together selecting management intervention/s to train in and implement on individual properties. As such, from the start of 2021, NB2 will run a pilot program to provide a proof-of-concept to ground truth the peer-to-peer training framework. Six groups, of five – ten producers per group, will be established across northern WA, NT and Qld, and will receive ongoing support from MLA, NABRC and the NB2 facilitators to achieve the common goal of improved productivity and profitability in the north. The program is planned to run through to 2027, with the two-year projects program commencing in 2021.

By the end of the pilot, it will be clear:

* what modifications to the existing peer-to-peer learning model will be required to complete the remainder of the NB2 program
* which MLA adoption programs that are not yet fully adopted in the north will have definitive benefit (e.g. PDS, PGS, EDGE, integrated PDS, and immersive learning platforms)
* the value of data and knowledge regarding what data to collect and how to analyse this data to make informed decisions
* what type of ongoing extension and adoption support network (e.g DAFF, MLA and private consultants) that will be required in the long term for the north
* what overarching challenges are hindering adoption in the north (e.g. social, connectivity, unclear ROI) and possible solutions to address these.

Once the pilot is complete, a clear, comprehensive and multifaceted communications plan will be required to help get northern producers and industry stakeholders excited about, and involved in, the program.

This communications plan is designed to support the **pilot program.**

**Objectives of the communications plan:**

* To raise awareness of the NB2 program as a means of helping northern producers improve the efficiency, productivity and profitability of their breeding herds.
* To encourage producers to participate in the wider program by clearly articulating the net benefits to them and their industry.
* To distinguish NB2 from other programs/projects that exist in northern Australia, e.g. producer driven, focus on adoption, relates to many facets of the breeding enterprise.
* To ensure interested producers understand both their own and MLA’s commitment (cash & in-kind) and expectations before being part of NB2.
* To maintain communication with participants and the wider industry about the ongoing progress of the pilot to encourage adoption of the NB2 program after the pilot has ceased.

**Target audience**

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| --- | --- |
| **Who** | **Why** |
| All NB2 stakeholders | To keep a single source of truth of updated information |
| Pilot producers | Keep them on track during the pilot and provide them the support they need |
| Northern Producers – driving growth segment | Keep them informed of where the pilot is at and demonstrate the ongoing benefits that come out of the pilot |
| DAFF staff (north), NT and WA DPI’s | need to stay up-to-date on the information required to guide the pilot producers |
| Livestock advisors | need to stay up-to-date on the information required to guide the pilot producers |
| NABRC and RBRC’s | address their specific challenges or opportunities – keep them informed of progress |
| NB2 team | Keep the NB2 team up-to-date on relevant adoption programs that could benefit the pilot |
| Industry media | a useful source of communicating relevant information to a wider audience in a structured way |
| Researchers/research organisations | interested in new R&D and collaboration opportunities |
| RMAC, MLA Board, PICs | will be interested in the progress of the pilot as a major industry investment, share progress and highlights |
| MLA staff (internal) | Should be aware of the initiative as a major investment under new Strategic Plan |

**Key messages for the primary target audience (producers)**

* Beef producers are encouraged to get involved in a new industry initiative, Northern Breeding Businesses (NB2), which is tackling the ‘big industry issues’ of calf mortality and reproductive performance for extensive breeding herds.
* The objective of NB2 is to return $20M in net benefits per annum to the northern beef industry by 2027, through an increase in production of 10 million kg live weight of sale cattle.
* Ultimately, success will be a 5% increase in weaning rate, a 1% decrease in herd mortality rate and a 10kg increase in sale weight of cattle (at the same age), while operating at a level of productivity which is financially viable, whilst maintaining or improving the forage base (ie. improving land condition and/or LTCC).
* NB2 will promote and facilitate:
  + increased and diverse investment in RDE&A for the northern beef industry
  + sustainable increases in productivity and profitability from northern rangeland systems
  + increased adoption of relevant R&D
  + inform business decisions and practice change resulting in long term sustainable and profitable enterprises in the north.
* The program will be delivered through producer-led, peer to peer learning groups under the guidance of a trained facilitator and group producer mentor. The producers will work together to determine training and practices that will help to address the challenges resulting in a breeding management plan.
* NB2 will create a framework for northern breeding enterprises that can be used by participants as a reference point to make informed decisions and adopt best practise.
* From 2020/21, NB2 will run six pilot groups to ground truth the peer-to-peer training framework. Six groups, of five – ten producers, will be established across northern WA, NT and Qld, and will receive ongoing support from MLA, NABRC and the NB2 facilitators to achieve the common goal of improved productivity and profitability in the north.
* To stay up to date on the NB2 program and its initiatives, stakeholders can visit the NB2 website and contact any of the staff detailed on the website for further information, or fill in the EOI form.

**Channel matrix**

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| **Communications tactics (e.g. written producer case study, video)** | **Communications channel**  **(e.g. Feedback magazine, media release)** | **Messages** |
| Update the NB2 website | MLA website | Include updated info regarding the committee and any changes from the Discovery Sprint |
| Update the NB2 flyer to include value proposition/ business case for producers to be involved | To be used whenever promo/handout material is required throughout the pilot | The importance/value of NB2 for producers, how to get involved and the value of what producers commit to and receive by participating |
| News article | Friday Feedback  Social media | Promote the upcoming FutureBeef webinar |
| Media release | Media release pitched especially to Qld Country Life, North Qld Register, Farm Weekly, The Countryman  Friday Feedback  Social media | Excitement around pilot and emphasis on producer involvement/developing the project from the ground-up (can also use this article to mention committee, with producer representation  Proven benefits of NB2 to get the rest of the 250 involved |
| Summary of the NB2 pilot + committee announcement incl. member profiles + infographic that shows where the pilot groups are and what they plan to achieve | Friday Feedback  Social media (and tagging influencers)  FutureBeef e-newsletter | Overview of NB2 and the pilot |
| Create stock PPT slides to promote NB2 – add to the NB2 PPT template that RL has already created | Webinars  Events | Overview of NB2 and the pilot  Value proposition |
| Info packs | BeefUp forums  RBRC’s  Feedback Magazine | Flyer  Value proposition |
| Update ‘newsletter’ for NABRC, advisors etc (project summary, progress and next steps | Email  FutureBeef e-newsletter | Any new adoption activities available and update on events  Update on the progress of NB2  Any important information key stakeholders need to know |
| Case studies | Friday Feedback  Feedback magazine  MLA website  Social media | Overview of the producer involved and the benefits they are getting from the pilot |
| Pilot group profiles | March-April Feedback Magazine | Overview of pilot groups, why they’re doing it and the progress they’ve made |
| Overview/update email sent from the MLA NB2 staff to all NB2 stakeholders and interested parties | Email | Provides info of events and possible collaborations/programs available to the pilot producers – keeps them, their advisors and facilitators up to date with all of the important information they need to stay on track |
| Podcasts inc NB2 updates, producer case studies and EOI for future groups | Multiple | Overview of pilot groups, why they’re doing it and the progress they’ve made |
| Webinars |  | Update on the progress of the NB2 pilot  Info on how to get involved |

**Further information**

For further information on NB2 pilot program communications, or if you would like to be involved in any of the communication activities, please email [content@mla.com.au](mailto:content@mla.com.au).