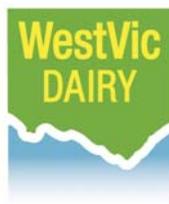




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## CLEARING THE SOIL FOG

Farmers will have an opportunity to 'clear the fog' about alternative fertilisers - including some biological products - at a series of workshops during May.

The program will start at DemoDAIRY at Terang on May 8 and continue at Heathmere Hall on May 9 and Ballarat City Oval on May 10.

The workshops have been arranged to address concerns raised by farmers during the WestVic Dairy Focus Farm program.

WestVic Dairy Focus Farm facilitator Peter Wearne, who has organised the workshops, said they would help farmers to make better fertiliser and soil health decisions.

"Farmers in our Focus Farm group wanted to find out more about the various alternative fertilisers that are on the market," Mr Wearne said.

"They were keen to get information of independent analysis of the products so they don't have to rely solely on what the manufacturers claim."

The results of independent trials on eight different alternative fertilisers will be outlined by Cam Nicholson from Nicon Rural Services.

Mr Wearne said farmers were keen to improve their soil health and there was growing interest in biological farming.

"However, claims by some commercial enterprises that their products can help soil quality are not always backed by scientific research," he said.

Mr Nicholson is carrying out independent trials on products that companies have provided to compare against a control site.

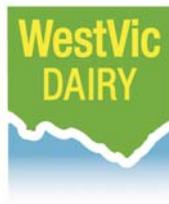
"The results show which products improve soil health and productivity under Western District conditions and will be a good guideline for local farmers," Mr Wearne said.

"To give farmers more knowledge to improve management of their soil health will help every local farmer."



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The sessions will increase farmers' soil health knowledge to help them make more informed decisions in matching fertiliser applications to soils and pastures.

Mr Nicholson will also outline results of lime application trials conducted over 10 years to address soil acidification problems.

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Bega Cheese are sponsoring the workshops with funding from Caring for our Country.

All sessions run from 10.30am-3pm and include a free luncheon and information pack.

Contact Marni Teal at DemoDAIRY on 55 922199 to register.