

## **Farm Household Allowance – Farmers day transcript**

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[Music]

**Narrator:**

Those on the land are wondering what they can do as the drought tightens its grip.

Even for those lucky enough to be in irrigation areas, the drought is casting its shadow.

**Lisa Menhenett, Murray Dairy – Industry Organisation:**

“We’re now in a year of significantly lower rainfall, no-one knows what next year’s going to be like, so people are looking at uncertainty for next year’s water availability and rainfalls. So, that’s going to have an added cost. People’s resilience is starting to wane.”

**Narrator:**

The Australian Government is aware of the farmer’s plight. That’s why they constantly update their Farm Household Allowance – assistance to get farmers through the crisis.

Across Australia, Centrelink offices are opening their doors on a Saturday to host just farmers, with no one else around.

**Megan Williams, Camel Dairy Farmer:**

“For us particularly on our farm we have some weekend workers, so that’s why it’s been able to help me and it’s easier, we’ve got young children as well, so I was easily able to ask family to have them on a Saturday as well.”

**Narrator:**

In an area where traditional dairy farming is predominant, Meagan is running a new niche business, a Camel dairy.

**Megan:**

“We’re just like any other farmer, so we still need to grow crops, we still need to purchase water to irrigate those crops, camels still need to eat.”

**Narrator:**

With water and hay costs trebling, Meagan came in to begin the process of applying for the Farm Household Allowance, getting help with the paperwork.

**Megan:**

“It’s a step further to being helpful so getting wind of the Farm Household Allowance and looking at all the criteria and that’s quite overwhelming when I don’t have time at the best of times to do this, but I don’t have time not to do it either.”

**Narrator:**

Farming families are coming in, seeking advice and assistance to keep their families and their farms going through the current crisis.

**Ali Alizadah, Farmer:**

“It’s been very helpful for me. I got to meet some people and they gave me quite information to help me with our new business which is the farms here.”

**Narrator:**

When they come in, they not only access Centrelink staff and Farm Household Case officers, but also specialists from other organisations with farmers’ interests at heart.

There is, of course, regular country hospitality, but it’s all about accessibility and support.

**Mark Georgiou, DHS Service Centre Manager:**

“Clearly today with the response we’ve had, we’ve had a number of people that have not claimed previously for Farm Household Allowance, so clearly there’s an ongoing need for farmers to go and test their eligibility for some of that, so very worthwhile.”

**Narrator:**

And as for staff working on the Saturday, it’s as much about passion as a job.

**Chris Howard, Rural Financial Counsellor:**

“I think that’s what I love about my job and the people I work with, that they are motivated by people, motivated by helping people. So, yes, it’s a Saturday and part of our job but the truth is we love the aspect we’re helping people to improve their position or their situation.”

**Narrator:**

To find out about Farm Household Allowance and information sessions, go to [humanservices.gov.au/farmhouseholdallowance](https://humanservices.gov.au/farmhouseholdallowance)

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