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Funding for dried fruit innovators

Dried grape growers who have an idea to boost production or increase efficiency on the block can now apply for up to \$3,000 in funding.

Awarded annually, the Dried Fruits Australia (DFA) Innovation Grants recognise the creativity and ingenuity of growers.

DFA chairman Mark King said the organisation had contributed almost \$10,000 towards four innovative projects since launching the program in 2015.

“The projects are all very different, but they all have the potential to advance Australia’s dried grape industry,” Mr King said.

“Last year we awarded grants to two deserving projects. One went to John and Jennie Lory, who are trialling a new trellis system at their vineyard in Loxton. Larry Dichiera, who works in the industry, also received a grant to mechanise the labour-intensive process of shoot thinning.

“Two growers from Merbein, Stephen and Malcolm Bennett, received a grant for their autonomous vehicle project in 2016. They are passionate innovators and have been developing a robot to do jobs around the vineyard that are normally done with a tractor.”

The fourth round of Innovation Grants is open to growers, or groups of growers, who are members of DFA.

Grants are paid on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to a maximum of \$3,000. For example, a project expected to cost \$4,000 will be awarded a \$2,000 grant.

Projects must meet the following criteria:

- It may be in progress or have been completed in the past six months. New concepts will also be considered.
- It must be a new initiative or an improvement on an existing product.
- It must have demonstrated or show potential to be of significant benefit to the Australian dried grape industry.

Applications close 9 November 2018.

For more information, visit www.driedfruitsaustralia.org.au/innovation-grants or contact DFA on 03 5023 5174 or at admin@driedfruitsaustralia.org.au.

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