SCHOOL EMBRACES AGRICULTURE

Timboon P-12 School is developing an agricultural precinct and integrating agriculture into its curriculum in a unique project that links students to local industry.

The school is developing the Timboon P-12 Agriculture Project (TAP) in conjunction with its school community, WestVic Dairy and the Gardiner Foundation.

The project aims to develop a greater understanding of the impact that agriculture, particularly dairy, has in the region, including its importance in the long-term sustainability of the community and how it relates to different facets of education.

It will highlight educational pathways for agricultural careers and aims to increase student awareness of careers in agriculture.

Assistant Principal Sean Fitzpatrick said work was underway in identifying opportunities to integrate agriculture into the delivery of each level of the school curriculum, as well as adding value to existing school projects.

“We are developing a scope and sequence agricultural program that will include outings and industry experiences for the Year 5-9 students with a heavy focus on science and maths,” Mr Fitzpatrick said.

An agricultural precinct incorporating a school oval and the Giblett Pavilion is being developed as part of the new project. It is being financially supported through a State Government Empowering Local Communities grant.

WestVic Dairy Project Coordinator Andrea Vallance said the project was not about developing a new generation of relief milkers.

“It is a real hands-on opportunity for students to learn about potential agricultural careers, not only as dairy farmers but in diverse areas such as agronomy, agribusiness, soil science, natural resource management and animal nutrition,” Andrea said.

It is hoped the project will improve retention rates.

WestVic Dairy has been funded by the Gardiner Foundation for scoping the first three years of an agriculture-focused partnership with the local community.

Timboon Year 9 students recently attended the Sungold Field Days where they picked up hints for the type of agricultural project they will develop at the school while also learning how service providers support the dairy industry and about the technical, processing and capital equipment decisions farmers have to make.

The school has already established community links to make the project a reality, with TG Drains of Colac upgrading the oval’s drainage over summer and Agrimac donating a 150-litre spot sprayer to help with the preparations.

The TAP includes activities such as connecting maths with mapping flood plains, equipment cost and spreading ratios, science with nutrition and animal welfare and also develops small business and food units.

BACK AT WORK

Jeff Hintum is happy to be back in the workforce as South West LLEN’s new finance and administration officer.

Jeff was previously head accountant at Midfield Meat in Warrnambool but was forced to take time out from work as his wife Rebecca battled cancer and then to care for their three children after her death in January 2011.

With their youngest child now starting Prep, Jeff has been able to return to work in a part-time capacity.

“This was a great opportunity to use my accounting skills while fitting in with my lifestyle needs,” Jeff said.

Jeff is a CPA qualified accountant.