



Forming or joining an Action Group is a great way for farmers to put their ideas into action, make positive changes on farm and improve their business' productivity and profitability.

Developed with input from sheep and beef farmers and rural professionals as part of the Red Meat Profit Partnership (RMPP), the approach has been proven to support farmers to make changes in a range of areas such as farm systems and the environment.

B+LNZ has adopted the Action Group extension and adoption model to ensure all sheep and beef farmers have the opportunity to benefit from the success of this small group learning approach, and this is an integral part of our Farming Excellence Strategy.

The principles of the Action Group model have also been used to support farmers setting up Catchment Communities groups.

Each Action Group is eligible for kick-start funding of \$2,000 per group to pay the group facilitator to help the group develop their extension plan to ensure it will achieve the group's goals.

Why form an Action Group?

Action Groups enable farm businesses to work together with like-minded farmers to learn from experts and from other farmers, focusing on the topics and expertise that are most relevant to their businesses.

The small group setting and facilitator support helps build trust and confidence, providing members with the opportunity to ask questions, learn new information and skills specific to their farm business and put real change into practice to improve productivity and sustainability.

Action Groups enable farmers, rural professionals and the sector to adapt to changes in government regulations, help farmers to better tell their stories and meet the changing views of consumers and the wider public.

Farm businesses committed to an Action Group can expect:

- A professionally-facilitated, results-focused small group supporting their business through change
- Less risk to the farm business with kick-start funding and external support
- Help finding solutions to support the farm business in a changing world
- Connection to trusted and independent expertise
- Access to B+LNZ resources, tools, and expertise
- To tap into the knowledge and experience of other farmers

The Action Group structure

Action Groups are made up of seven to nine farm businesses who have a shared area of focus. It could be a broad topic, such as breeding and genetics, or something specific to the needs of the individuals. Often several members may attend from each business – such as farming couples or farm managers. Farmers are at the core of the Action Group model.

Farmer members:

- Decide which trained facilitator they would like to use and appoint a lead farmer.
- Determine the structure and rules of their individual action group and decide how the group spends its funds.
- Identify farm business opportunities that are of benefit to their group and include these in the group's extension plan.



The role of the facilitator

The facilitator will help the group form and work effectively together, guiding farmer members in deciding how they want to run their Action Group while ensuring it remains farmer led. This will include as guided by the groups extension plan:

- Organising and running activities on behalf of the group
- Arranging meetings and venues
- Sourcing and booking experts to present on topics
- Making connections and ensuring all members get the opportunity to participate in discussions and expert presentations
- Working with members to review the group's extension plan to help ensure the groups objectives are met.

The role of the lead farmer

Lead farmers are like the 'captain' of a sports team. They represent the Action Group and are responsible for being the point of contact between the facilitator, the Action Group and B+LNZ.

They are also responsible for submitting the Extension Plan and coordinating group finances.



Existing Action Groups

Having been involved in RMPP Action Network Action Group, you have now transitioned over to being part of a B+LNZ Action Group. The B+LNZ Action Group model is an integral part of our Farming Excellence strategy. As an Action Group member, you will:

- have access to our online system and all of B+LNZ's tools and resources
- have access to our regional team to support you and your group. This may be to find new members, join a new group or connect you with a facilitator
- increased visibility of groups in your region, across the country and an ability to connect with these groups through the regional team
- the ability to share your action group stories to support other farmers
- receive targeted communications on events and resources that may be of interest to your group
- continued support for facilitators through regular Action Hub meetings
- ongoing funding of \$2,000/group on submission of an approved extension plan and completion of an annual evaluation survey (on 10 month anniversary)



How is an Action Group formed?

Farmers can connect with other farmers interested in forming an Action Group in various ways. Several farmers may get together to form an Action Group, they may already be part of a discussion group which they turn into an Action Group, or they may be approached by a rural professional who is pulling together a group.

How it works:

- An idea, opportunity or challenge is identified.
- Farmers are connected.
- The Action Group is formed and facilitator appointed
- A Group extension plan is drawn up
- The extension plan is approved by a B+LNZ Extension Manager
- Planned activities/expert presentations occur
- The group extension plan is reviewed
- Actions on farm

For more information

Connect with your local B+LNZ Extension Manager

Contact B+LNZ Action Group Customer Support on **0800 733 632**

Email actiongroupinfo@beeflambnz.com