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EP site unveiled for asparagopsis facility

Stock Journal, Adelaide

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EARTHWORKS are expected to begin on the new \$20-million asparagopsis-producing EcoPark at Louth Bay on the Eyre Peninsula next month, with the CH4 Global-owned facility set to be operational by the end of the year.

That's according to owners CH4 Global, whose mission is to impact climate change at scale, by developing gigatonne-scale greenhouse gas mitigation solutions for global industries.

The new processing site, about 23 kilometres north of Port Lincoln, will create an asparagopsis-based feed supplement for cattle, which drastically reduces methane emissions from cows by up to 90 per cent, according to studies by the CSIRO.

The EcoPark will contain a seedling hatchery, patented in-land growing approach for asparagopsis, and harvesting and drying technology.

It will be the first full-scale EcoPark built by the company and will aim to provide enough asparagopsis products to feed 30,000 cattle a day, according to CH4 Global founder and chief executive officer Steve Meller.

"Currently, we have pilot facilities in Arno Bay and in New Zealand that are both producing our product," he said.

"We then ship it to Lonsdale and we process it all to change it from what it is to a

much more stable product before it gets shipped out.

"Ultimately, that will all happen here at Louth Bay - it will be complete end-to-end production from growing it in tanks and propagating all the way through to processing, formulation, packaging and shipping."

The company has committed to eliminating one billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and reach 150 million cattle by 2030 through local and international partnerships with feedlots and farmers.

In line with the company's commitment to sustainability, Dr Meller said there were already talks about accessing solar power through the proposed 200 MWp solar power plant at Yadnarie,

about 130km north west of Louth Bay.

"The EcoPark will be built with power that's already on site," he said.

"But the world's biggest solar facility is being built just outside of Cleve and we're already in discussions with them about accessing power - for us it's about reducing the impact in every facet of what we do."

The company has also been working in with the local Barngala people as part of the development.

"We're working with the Barngala people to guide us in terms of what we're

doing for native vegetative restoration associated and to ensure we're doing what's right on their country," Dr Meller said.

Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey said the new site was a great opportunity for EP as the red seaweed was native to SA.

"We're in the box seat right now because of asparagopsis' natural habitat, but that doesn't mean it can't be done anywhere else in the world," he said.

"Governments need to remain committed, particularly when it comes to the approval processes.

"We can be world leaders here and we need to make

sure CH4 Global has the greenlight to keep it going."

Mr Ramsey said although some may question the uptake of the product, farmers were always evolving their practices.

"What we were doing in agriculture 20 years ago is vastly different to what we're doing now," he said.

"If you look at the low rainfall we had last year with the quality of crop we grew, you can see that.

"If we had the same rain 20 years ago, we'd have a different outcome and that's due to new technologies, cultivars and all the things we didn't have then.

"Farmers are very keen to



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pick up new technologies if it's in their best interest, so now they'll be looking at if there is a benefit in asparagopsis for them and how it might fit into their operations."

— KATIE JACKSON



A mock-up of the CH4 Global Louth Bay site was unveiled this week.



Bargala representative Emmalene Richards, CH4 Global CEO Steve Meller and Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey at the Louth Bay site. Pictures by Katie Jackson