JANUARY
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2019

The Australian Dairyfarmer

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The Australian Dairyfarmer

Vol 34, No.1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019

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Finding solutions to industry dilemmas

THE presentation at the Australian Dairy Industry Council's industry breakfast by consultant Earl Rattray sparked debate about the future direction of the industry.

It also exposed some of the factors behind the situation the industry now finds itself in — with production for season 2018/19 forecast to fall below 9 billion litres for the first time since 1996.

Hopefully, this debate will be part of the discussion that frames the new Australian Dairy Plan, which was also launched at the breakfast. The plan is being developed by the ADIC, Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Dairy Products Federation, Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation. You can read more about this on page 30 of this edition.

Mr Rattray flagged the possibility of Australia becoming a net importer of dairy products if the continuing production and consumption trends continue.

Part of this was a really good news story. Domestic consumption of dairy products continues to grow in Australia — and unlike many other developed parts of the world, dairy consumption per capita is still increasing.

But the other side of the equation was not so good. Australian production has declined.

Mr Rattray said when he looked at Victoria's milk supply profile, he found that although overall milk production had dropped 11 per cent since 2000, shoulder season milk production had actually increased by 10pc.

So there has been a huge flattening of the milk production profile.

And this has caused a big increase in feed costs for farmers — which the higher prices for the out-of-season milk have not really covered.

So it has squeezed profitability for many.

And Mr Rattray had some sobering news for those thinking that Australia being a domestic-focused market would mean less price volatility.

Research by the organisation he consults for has shown that price volatility affects all dairy markets around the world — regardless of how exposed they were to the traded export market. You can read more about Mr Rattray's address on page 24.

What this means is that the Australian dairy industry needs to have a mature discussion about where it sees itself in the future. And then it needs to discuss what that means for each part of the supply chain and how it will work together.

'What this means is that the Australian dairy industry needs to have a mature discussion about where it sees itself in the future.'

It needs to look at everything from efficiency in the processing sector to the pricing structures and farm production systems that will deliver decent returns to farmers.

It also needs to look at the relationships between the various parts of the chain: from farmers to processors to customers and consumers.

Dairy farmers need to get involved in this discussion. Consultations on the dairy plan are planned for all regions throughout Australia.

This isn't going to be easy. There's no simple solution — there is a complex web of relationships that extend well beyond the farmgate through to the world marketplace.

But if farmers don't get involved, we won't get the answers to solve this dilemma. D

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The Australian Dairyfarmer

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ADF looking forward

Key points

- ✔ Watershed year for Australian dairy industry
- ✔ ADF to continue to lead on number of emerging issues
- ✔ Dairy Plan and election priority policies key focus areas

IT was a watershed year for the Australian dairy industry, characterised by a turbulent debate over a code of practice, a brutal drought, renewed demands for supermarkets to end the practice of selling discounted dairy products, and the loss of iconic farmer co-op Murray Goulburn, which was sold in April to Canadian giant Saputo.

But with significant achievements, including outcomes to address skilled labour shortages and other policy priorities, the industry's peak farmer group is determined to look forward.

Australian Dairy Farmers enters 2019 with a firm agenda to focus on leadership and unity among dairy communities.

Recently re-elected ADF president Terry Richardson said the organisation would not rest on its laurels but continue to lead the dairy industry through a number of emerging issues.

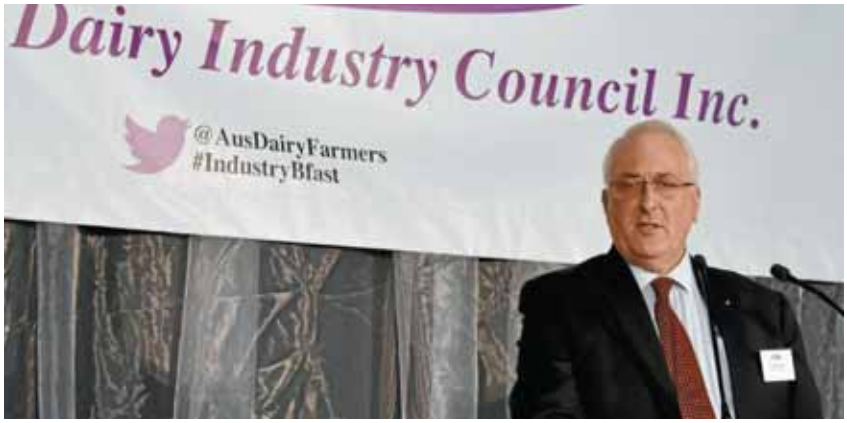
"ADF has maintained an active focus on key areas such as animal welfare, market access, biosecurity, and social licence, but the industry remains under intense pressure, and ADF must help our farmers overcome adversity and thrive in the long term," Mr Richardson said.

Mr Richardson said key to this approach was greater collaboration between ADF, its state members, and industry services body Dairy Australia.

"Farmer organisations and services bodies all have a role to play in leading the industry," he said.

"We are not in competition with one another at the farmgate, and our greatest advantage is to act together and build consensus in securing the long-term interest of farmers and the broader industry.

"ADF for our part will reassess our role and processes to maintain our position as effective advocates for farmer issues"



Australian Dairy Farmers president Terry Richardson launches the Dairy Plan at the Australian Dairy Industry Council breakfast in November.

The organisation's chief executive, David Inall, said ADF would turn its attention to strategic policy development to better inform its advocacy efforts.

"We are facing a federal election in the first half of the year, so analysing and advocating election platforms will be pivotal for ADF," Mr Inall said.

"More specifically, lowering energy costs and ensuring greater access to skilled labour are just two of many important priorities for ADF."

'ADF has maintained an active focus on key areas such as animal welfare, market access, biosecurity, and social licence, but the industry remains under intense pressure.'

Key to the future efforts of ADF is an industry-wide strategic plan, announced by Mr Richardson at November's Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) breakfast.

Mr Richardson said the Dairy Plan would provide farmers with an opportunity to assert more control over achievements and opportunities in the industry.

"The strategy will provide a chance for the industry — and particularly farmers — to create a narrative that takes account of the impact of some of the industry structural changes we are witnessing," he said.

"My expectation is that the strategy will help set a firm direction for ADF and other industry organisations."

Mr Inall said this was the first time in nearly 15 years that the dairy industry had built a plan that would have considerable input from dairy farmers, from the ground up. "This will be exciting because not since 2004 have we seen a dairy industry strategy with farmers getting directly engaged in the process," he said.

"Clearly farmers will be the some of the primary stakeholders in this plan, and with the industry changing at a rapid rate, we expect to create a number of new elements to the strategy."

Further information on the Australian Dairy Plan and consultation process, will be made available in early 2019.

ADF will unveil its election policy priorities at an industry breakfast in Canberra in February. D

Read more about the Australian Dairy Plan, page 30.

SW Vic plan to attract foreign workers

Key points

- ✔ Designated Area Migration Agreement program for South-West Victoria
- ✔ Help attract skilled workers to dairy and meat processing industries
- ✔ Could set precedent to roll out program in other dairy regions

Warrnambool City Council chief executive Bruce Anson, Victorian Skills Commissioner Neil Coulson and mayor Tony Herbert at the regional skills demand profile launch. The profile helped the area with its application to be part of the DAMA program.

FARMERS in South-West Victoria are being encouraged to take up a new program that will see foreign workers fill unwanted farming jobs under a special visa arrangement.

The five-year Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) program allows for 300 visa placements to the Great South Coast, with 70 per cent expected to supply the dairy and meat industries with skilled and semi-skilled labour.

Federal Member for Wannon Dan Tehan told the ABC workers would be provided with four years of work, relevant training and community support services and possible permanent residency.

"If they prove to be good community members, good workers, then there is that possibility of a permanent residency pathway," Mr Tehan said.

The Australian Dairyfarmer understands that each placement will be determined on a merit basis with case-by-case assessment with a requirement on employers to prove labour market testing.

South-West Victoria becomes the first region to implement the DAMA program outside the Northern Territory, which signed up to the agreement in 2015.

There is hope that the program will go some way to addressing skilled labour shortages plaguing agricultural industries.

Peak dairy farmer group Australian Dairy Farmers earlier this year called on the Federal Government to overhaul its visa classification system to ensure a consistent labour supply after research revealed dairy businesses were losing up to $364 million a year due to employee turnover.

"Australian dairy farmers have a reputation for running professional operations and paying above the award rate, but our industry will suffer if we can't recruit foreigners with either experience on dairy farms or tertiary qualifications in agriculture science from their home country," ADF president Terry Richardson said.

"Unfortunately, many of the locals who are being pushed into these jobs don't have the necessary skills to handle the roles.

"They find it difficult to satisfy food safety standards, administer animal husbandry requirements, operate technology or are generally unable to fulfil the obligations of a skilled dairy farm manager or leading hand."

'...our industry will suffer if we can't recruit foreigners with either experience on dairy farms or tertiary qualifications in agriculture science from their home country.'

Warrnambool City Council — the Regional Migration body responsible for rolling out the DAMA program — will work with the Department of Home Affairs to bring the initiative to fruition by the second quarter of 2019.

Mr Richardson advised farmers to take up the program to improve the possibility that it would be rolled out to other dairy regions experiencing labour shortages.

"Once this program is in place, it sets a precedent for further use of this instrument in other regions where skills shortages can be evidenced," he said.

Dairy is Australia's third largest agricultural industry, after beef and wheat, with a farm gate value of $3.7 billion in 2016-17 and a workforce of about 42,000.

ADF has lobbied the Federal Government to overhaul its occupation classification and visa systems to reflect the modern reality of the dairy industry, including providing skilled overseas workers access to longer visas and a pathway to permanent residency.

"Dairy farming is currently listed as a short-term skill, meaning anyone who comes out on a temporary skills shortage visa can only stay for up to two years, with the option of a two-year renewal," Mr Richardson said.

"Skilled migrants will only apply for these roles when they are guaranteed four, not two, years of employment and have a pathway to permanent residence.

"Dairy farmers need reliable access to skilled overseas workers and will continue to struggle to staff their businesses unless the government makes drastic changes to the visa classifications." D

Drought continues to create challenges

Key points

- ✔ Drought conditions likely to continue
- ✔ High feed and water prices
- ✔ Help is available from several sources

By Terry Richardson, ADF president

THIS season on my farm we are paying $470 a tonne for grain. Last year we paid about $280/t but that's a sign of how tough things are and how the current drought is affecting all farmers. Others I know are doing it tougher.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has toured drought-affected regions and convened a summit to talk tactics on getting through the current drought and preparing for the future.

Any opportunity to make drought preparedness a government priority cannot be squandered. We urgently need an agreement between Commonwealth and state governments to provide a national approach to drought preparation, response and recovery.

Unfortunately, there isn't much chance of this drought lifting, despite recent rainfall across some parts of the country. Australia just experienced the driest September on record and the Bureau of Meteorology is predicting a 70 per cent chance we will soon be hit with an El Niño event.

Fodder remains scarce and water prices have continued to surge. Farmers are now looking to secure new season hay for their livestock, which has pushed up demand. The result is near record price hikes.

Worryingly, prices will most likely rise further as demand for feed continues to come from across the country, outstripping supply. This means that securing long-term supplies of new season hay could be an issue.

Some farmers are resorting to alternative feeds such as sorghum stubble and cane tops. But with crops such as canola being cut for hay and silage, farmers should be cautious and get feed tests.

Water prices are also a point of concern. Both northern Victoria and Murray water prices are at record highs. In northern Victoria, prices have skyrocketed by 202pc since last year despite less water being traded, down 53,770 megalitres (ML). The average price reached $321/ML in September, the highest since 2009. Demand continues to grow as tight supply is driving the price up.

Unfortunately, drought conditions appear set to continue with the Bureau of Meteorology now indicating eastern Australia will likely remain dry.

'We're all praying for rain, but with no end to the drought in sight, we must be realistic about our options and talk seriously about safeguarding against future droughts.'

The Murray irrigation area has a similar position — the average price recorded in September was $351/ML, up 179pc from the same time last year, despite the amount of water being traded decreasing by 22pc. The current price trend is being driven by lack of rain and reduced inflows. Our main concern is that if all weather forecasts prevail, there will be no respite from the high prices.

There has been little rainfall, and drought conditions have only intensified. Unfortunately, this appears set to continue with the Bureau of Meteorology now indicating eastern Australia will likely remain dry.

Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, eastern South Australia and southern NSW are all expected to have below average rainfall, while Western Australia has about an equal chance of exceeding the median rainfall. The above-average temperatures are likely to remain until at least the end of 2018. These conditions will continue to pose challenges to producers currently affected by drought.

I would encourage farmers to use the different drought assistance packages being offered by state and federal governments. Information about all these initiatives is available on the relevant government websites.

Dairy Australia is also a valuable resource for information and advice on managing drought preparedness. The latest *Situation and Outlook* report painted a more complete picture of seasonal conditions and critical factors for farm performance.

Many are calling this the worst drought in living memory. We're all praying for rain, but with no end to the drought in sight, we must be realistic about our options and talk seriously about safeguarding against future droughts.

Dairy farmers aren't just part of a broad industry; we are a community. Don't be afraid to seek advice, talk with others and be aware of others who may need support. D

Dairy farmers value our rivers and support the improvements that have been made to the Murray Darling Basin. Photo Justin McManus.

Extra basin water take a last resort

Key points

- ✔ Dairy farmers support improvements made to Murray Darling Basin
- ✔ Taking extra 450GL water should only be done if no negative socio-economic impact
- ✔ Push proposed timeframe out from 2024 deadline

AUSTRALIA'S dairy industry is warning that any plan to drain an extra 450 gigalitres of water from the Murray Darling Basin for the environment must be viewed as a last resort, once the primary 2750GL target set by the Murray Darling Basin Plan has been secured and only if there were no negative socio-economic impacts.

Peak advocacy group the Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) has urged, in a submission to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources consultation on efficiency measures, for a stronger socio-economic test to assess the neutral or positive impacts of all efficiency projects, including a cost-benefit analysis and consideration of any future effects on communities.

The ADIC submission stated that there was "compelling evidence the loss of up to 450GL of water in the absence of a robust social and economic test would have severe impacts on milk production, processing and the viability of communities in the basin".

The Murray-Darling Basin is home to about 1405 dairy farms, producing more than 1.8 billion litres of milk, about 20 per cent of Australia's total milk pool.

'The Murray-Darling Basin is home to about 1405 dairy farms, producing more than 1.8 billion litres of milk.'

ADIC water taskforce chair Daryl Hoey said while the organisation supported the goal of achieving better environmental outcomes, there was little evidence that extracting 450GL of water out of the consumptive pool before first securing the Basin Plan's 2750GL target would benefit the environment.

"Dairy farmers value our rivers and support the improvements that have been made to the basin, but there may be more pain to industry with little gain for the environment if we try to take out an extra 450GL of water before we even reach the legislated target," Mr Hoey said.

"The Australian dairy industry is our third biggest agricultural industry, worth $4.3 billion at the farm gate, and we must cautiously assess the potential effects on farmers the broader basin communities."

The federal government previously compiled a report capturing feedback from basin communities regarding the current socio-economic neutrality test.

Mr Hoey said the ADIC was pushing the government to immediately release the report.

"All information and relevant reports need to be made available to ensure that industry, government and communities have an informed debate; this is only fair," he said.

The ADIC is also requesting that the proposed timeframe for constraints projects be pushed out from the mandated 2024 deadline, in line with a recommendation handed down by the Productivity Commission in its five-year review of the Basin Plan.

"We acknowledge there is a great degree of difficulty associated with assessing the impacts of projects on the viability of the connected irrigation system in the southern Basin," Mr Hoey said.

"It is necessary to review the original timeframe to accommodate the delivery of constraints projects." D

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Consultation a priority for dairy plan

By **David Nation**
Managing director
Dairy Australia

Key points

- ✔ Dairy Australia keen to help roll out dairy plan in new year
- ✔ High feed cost expected to last through to at least November
- ✔ Farmers encouraged to plan for second half of summer

High feed costs are expected to continue through to at least November.

AS we start a new year, I hope that the festive season has been a chance to enjoy time with family and friends, and for those that have been able to have holidays, that everything went smoothly while you were away. The holiday season and warmer weather gives all of us at Dairy Australia the chance to launch into 2019 with renewed enthusiasm. In particular, we are looking forward to helping to roll out the Australian Dairy Plan.

I would like to thank Australian Dairy Industry Council chair Terry Richardson for launching the plan at the 2018 Industry Leaders' Breakfast held at Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne in November. The announcement of the plan on behalf of farmers and processors has been met with positive feedback from the broader industry.

We are busy setting up for a big year of consultation and pulling together a plan that will shape the future of the industry. The comprehensive consultation process will begin in autumn and happen across Australia.

A cornerstone of the plan is the high priority on involving the many and varied voices we have in Australia's dairy industry. As our chair, Jeff Odgers said in his speech at our annual general meeting, "we will be listening and we will be listening hard."

'It is through the collective strength of all the dairy people who give their time to our dairy organisations that we can make powerful change.'

For this consultation to be as meaningful as it can be, we need to do it properly and that means not rushing the process. The most important component of the plan is the input that goes into it and we want quality conversations in every region.

One of the major strengths of the dairy plan is that it will be a national plan and will help the industry to speak with one voice. Our voice is strengthened when it is united.

The whole-of-industry plan that will encompass all our dairy regions is our chance to take a wider perspective and larger view of the interconnected issues that affect us all in the industry. It is through the collective strength of all the dairy people who give their time to our dairy organisations that we can make powerful change. Change that will make a real difference, sometimes straight away, and at other times through concerted effort for a year or more.

As you all know, it has been a challenging year that has passed and we expect high feed costs to continue through to at least November. I sincerely hope that you are coping well with these hotter months, and the plans that you made are working well for your business.

Dairy Australia is always here to assist you with business planning and our story on page 86, on feed budgeting and how to plan for the second half of the summer season is full of good advice, including what to do now for autumn cropping.

Dairy continues to have a central role in society, from providing basic nutrition through to joyful moments in life from eating and drinking dairy products. Next time you are milking cows, it is worth contemplating you are part of a global effort to milk over 363 million dairy cattle. That's a lot of cows!

I wish you all the best for the coming year. D

The truth behind $1 a litre milk

Key points

- ✔ $1 milk provides supermarkets with a powerful constant value message
- ✔ Processors supply it as they can negotiate to sell more of their other products in supermarkets
- ✔ Rise-and-fall clauses ineffective way of reflecting true cost of milk

By **Marian Macdonald**

IN a series of anonymous interviews, Australian dairy processors have lifted the veil of secrecy about the deals done with supermarkets behind closed doors. *Australian Dairyfarmer* asked six questions to address the big issues: why processors supply private label milk, how much it hurts Australian dairy and what needs to change.

Their answers to the six questions have been consolidated and summarised.

Question: Why do processors supply private label milk?

Answer: Private label accounts for huge volumes of milk, with equally massive trade-offs in profitability, efficiencies and negotiating power.

Filling these contracts ensures there is a buyer for all the milk produced by farmers. The volume also yields production efficiencies and drives down sourcing costs, such as the price of packaging.

While these savings are easy to quantify, there are other benefits to winning such large supermarket contracts.

"Smart processors seize the opportunity to negotiate up-ranging of branded product across their portfolio," one processor said.

Supermarkets use ranging grades to determine how many stores stock each product. For example, a product with a range grade of A might be in 900 stores while its range grade B competitor would be in just 560 stores.

A private label contract might include lifting the range grade of several products, having more products stocked or even the guaranteed ranging of a future product.

Question: How much has discounting cost the Australian dairy industry?

Answer: The private label milk price cuts affect branded products, too. A 2017 government report estimated annual losses of $227 million across supermarket milk lines.

Most consumers perceive few differences between branded and private label milk, making the higher prices of branded milk difficult to justify.

The science of store planograms and layouts make the dominance of private label a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At the same time, the science of store planograms and layouts make the dominance of private label "a self-fulfilling prophecy", processors said. "The more exposure, the greater the sales," one said.

The impact of supermarket discounting has also put a ceiling on prices for Australia's once-lucrative 600-million-litre food-service market. Processors say a large contract with one of the cafe chains to supply milk at $1 per litre has recently been signed, despite the added cold chain costs of servicing many small volume users.

"Taking the price of food-service milk from $1.30 down to $1 per litre has removed another $180 million from the dairy supply chain," one processor said.

Question: Why have supermarkets resisted pressure to increase the price of milk?

Answer: Milk is a target for discounting because it is in at least 90 per cent of shopping baskets. When consumers pay an extremely low price for a product that is constantly in use, the value message is constantly reinforced.

Question: The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission says that even if the retail price of milk increases, processors will not pass the benefit on to farmers. Does it have a point?

Answer: Equity of value throughout the supply chain is the ultimate goal, according to processors, with one representative pointing to the rapid changes since the dairy crisis erupted.

"Processors are not in a great position. Most are foreign-owned, Murray Goulburn is gone, Lion Dairy & Drinks is selling and many are under pressure," one said.

"Processors want a viable, profitable and healthy relationship with farmers and industry. It doesn't make sense to buy into an industry and bleed the source of our product," another said.

Question: Why don't processors invoke the rise-and-fall clauses in supermarket contracts when costs increase?

Answer: There is a delay of more than a year once a rise or fall is instigated, which processors say is not an effective way of reflecting the true cost of milk.

Instead, they advocate a cost index utilising real data from industry sources, which is reviewed quarterly with cost impacts going to farmers and processors. Such a model already exists for the fuel costs of transport companies.

A formal mechanism based on agreed data would help make the case for price increases, particularly following new purchasing behaviour by supermarkets, processors said.

"In the past, a processor could build a good relationship with the buyer, who had the authority to push price increases through but now that a central department is responsible for reviewing prices, there is less opportunity to create common ground based on a genuine understanding of industry pressures," one processor said.

Question: Why don't retail milk prices rise when supply is under pressure like the cost of bananas does?

Answer: When Cyclone Yasi hit in 2011, the price of bananas went to $14.99 a kilogram but there was a story behind it from the growers and the industry kept talking up the nutritional value.

In April 2016, consumers wanted to help dairy farmers but, unlike the banana industry, processors say the dairy industry confused consumers by arguing about which milk was the most ethical choice.

"The fractured dairy industry put up barriers — saying not to buy milk processed by foreign-owned companies, don't buy milk that returns less to farmers, and so on — for consumers who wanted to make 'good' decisions," a processor said.

"Eventually, consumers with no clear direction simply returned to their previous habit of buying private label milk.

"Farmers and processors missed the opportunity to unite and to tell consumers that simply buying branded milk would allow money to work its way through the supply chain." D

Genetics advocate honoured with award

Key points

- ✔ John Harlock recognised with Pat Rowley Oustanding Service Award
- ✔ Long-standing involvement in industry
- ✔ Positive belief in industry future

By **Carlene Dowie**

WESTERN Victorian dairy farmer John Harlock was recognised posthumously for his contributions to the Australian dairy industry at an industry breakfast in November.

Mr Harlock, who died in July, was awarded the Pat Rowley Award for Outstanding Service, which is presented annually by the Australian Dairy Industry Council to recognise those who have significantly shaped the industry.

ADIC director Simone Jolliffe, in announcing the award, said Mr Harlock had a strong passion and commitment for the herd improvement industry and had been a respected advocate for Australian genetics for more than 30 years.

Mr Harlock held numerous positions within the dairy industry, including on the Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme, Datagene, Genetics Australia, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter, the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Western Herd Improvement and Herd Improvement Victoria.

"Many of you know John lived by the motto 'if you are not involved, you are part of the problem'," Mrs Jolliffe said. "He held a deep love for the Australian dairy industry and for its people.

"He was a mentor to many including myself and was always available on the end of the phone and willing to provide assistance where he could."

ADIC director Simone Jolliffe with Shirley Harlock, who accepted the Pat Rowley Outstanding Service Award on behalf of her husband John.

Mr Harlock's wife, Shirley, who herself received the Outstanding Service Award in 2015, accepted the award.

"I could not be more proud to accept this distinguished award on John's behalf," she said. "He lived to farm and loved every minute of it."

Mrs Harlock said he would have been embarrassed to receive the award, being a humble person who never saw himself as special or better than others.

"John was always very proud to say he was a dairy farmer," she said. "He believed dairy had been good to him and his family, which it has, and the trials and tribulations along the way was the rent that you paid to stay in the game was his view."

Mrs Harlock said the couple started dairying from a modest base.

"But John was always a visionary, he certainly was a supreme optimist, a glass half full person," she said. "John loved people and took everyone at face value.

"Whilst seen by many as a mentor, he never saw himself in that role and always felt he benefitted far more from others than he ever gave.

"He gained enormous satisfaction from encouraging young farmers progressing through, be it from herd purchase, sharefarming, leasing to full out farm ownership."

Mrs Harlock said her husband's off-farm involvement emerged gradually due to his strong belief that people had "an obligation in some way to contribute back to our industry, not just be takers".

He also possessed a great thirst for learning and each farm he visited was an opportunity to learn something.

"Together John and I were a formidable team, just ask our sons, both sharing a common goal and a love of agriculture but every team needs a visionary leader to succeed and John certainly led the team at Fala Park with great passion, dignity and pride," Mrs Harlock said.

"I trust his commitment and contribution to this wonderful dairy industry of ours his fellow farmers and colleagues will leave a lasting legacy."

annual ryegrass

Annual ryegrass Forage EBVs
based on regional replicated trials

2019 Forage EBV Guide

Variety Maturity	ploidy	Variety or brand	Mean			Flowering Days from Tetila		ME MJ/kg DM	CP %	NDF %	Extra meat value $/ha	Extra milk value $/ha	no. of trials
			winter	spring	total	NSW	WA						
LATE FLOWERING (> +8 days)													
SF Speedyl	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**110**	**130**	**118**	**+12**	**+18**	**11.08**	**26.31**	**46.27**	**+$639**	**+$1093**	**41**
SF Adrenalin	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**110**	**124**	**116**	**+9**	**+16**	**11.08**	**23.95**	**45.88**	**+$622**	**+$1069**	**37**
SF Sultan	**diploid**	**variety**	**107**	**129**	**116**	**+10**	**+11**	**10.94**	**25.17**	**47.91**	**+$490**	**+$804**	**47**
Pinnacle	tetraploid	variety	109	129	118	+10	+18	10.87	26.78	48.05	+$457	+$755	16
Winter Star II	tetraploid	variety	103	122	112	+8		10.74	23.14	48.47	+$307	+$509	46
Arnie	diploid	variety	106	118	111	+7	+16	10.68	23.10	48.45	+$289	+$468	12
Mach 1	tetraploid	variety	101	119	109								11
Jivet	tetraploid	variety	96	119	106								4
MID FLOWERING (+5 to +8 days)													
SF Catalyst	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**105**	**107**	**107**	**+5**	**+7**	**10.66**	**21.47**	**45.24**	**+$346**	**+$636**	**14**
Tama	tetraploid	brand	104	116	110	+7		10.83	23.82	48.13	+$359	+$586	4
SF CatapulT	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**107**	**112**	**109**	**+6**	**+7**	**10.70**	**22.79**	**46.91**	**+$321**	**+$558**	**33**
Abundant	tetraploid	variety	108	108	107	+6	+11						12
Aristocrat 2	tetraploid	variety	104	101	105								4
Burst	tetraploid	variety	102	83	98								2
Progrow	diploid	variety	93	101	94								2
EARLY FLOWERING (-2 to +4 days)													
Winter Hawk	diploid	variety	111	110	110			10.86	23.16	47.45	+$412	+$676	5
SF Flyer	**diploid**	**variety**	**108**	**108**	**107**	**+1**	**0**	**10.84**	**23.57**	**46.64**	**+$360**	**+$623**	**39**
SF Sprinter	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**109**	**110**	**110**	**+4**		**10.66**	**23.66**	**48.32**	**+$171**	**+$417**	**44**
Sungrazer T	tetraploid	brand	101	104	101			10.64	25.17	49.46	+$70	+$128	18
Tetila	**tetraploid**	**brand**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**0**	**0**	**10.40**	**22.40**	**49.23**	**$0**	**$0**	**38**
Atomic	tetraploid	brand	109	101	104		+2						8
Rocket	tetraploid	brand	98	107	104								4
Grassmax	diploid	brand	104	107	102	-1	+9						6
Tetrone	tetraploid	brand	101	90	91								4
Double Crop	tetraploid	variety	100	89	91								3

Relative rankings have been undertaken by comparing all yields as a percentage of Tetila.
Yield data is hundredised means from a minimum of 2 and up to 47 trials per variety/brand.
Varieties ranked on potential value first, then total yield where no nutritive value information is available.

Notes:
Feed quality data undertaken prior to all grazings from trials at Gundagai and Lismore (NSW) with hundredised means reported.
Feed quality analysis undertaken by NSW DPI Feed Quality Service at Wagga Wagga
Meat and milk values estimated using Seed Force's Animal Performance Calculator™ based on the following assumptions:

- Meat at 65% feed utilisation, based on 300kg steer with 44MJ for maintenance and 45MJ/kg lwg at $2.50/kg
- Milk at 75% feed utilisation, based on 600kg cow with 100MJ for maintenance/exercise/pregnancy and 5.5MJ/litre at $0.46 per litre

Based on seed prices and ASF seeds database as at 7.12.2018

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Helou admits to lying about prices

Key points

- ✔ Former Murray Goulburn chief executive officer fined
- ✔ Admitted to misleading claims on farmgate milk price
- ✔ Constraint on the court as law sets a maximum penalty

By **Mathew Dunckley and Andrew Miller**

THE former boss of one-time dairy giant Murray Goulburn has copped $200,000 in penalties after admitting the company lied about a likely payment to farmers for the 2016 season.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) late last year released a statement saying former Murray Goulburn managing director Gary Helou had agreed to pay $200,000 after admitting he was knowingly involved in the company's "false or misleading claims about the farmgate milk price it expected to pay dairy farmers during the 2015-16 milk season".

The maximum penalty for an individual under the Australian Consumer Law is $220,000 per contravention while companies can face up to $1.1 million per contravention.

The ACCC chose not to pursue a penalty against Murray Goulburn because, as a co-operative, the farmers who were harmed by the conduct would have ended up paying the fine.

"The penalty imposed against Mr Helou reflects his seniority at Murray Goulburn and involvement in misleading representations about the farmgate milk price," ACCC deputy chairman Mick Keogh said. "We were conscious not to seek penalty orders that would adversely affect farmers for the wrongs committed by Murray Goulburn, so we focused on obtaining appropriate orders against the individuals involved in the conduct."

Gary Helou has been fined $200,000 for contraventions under Australian Consumer Law.

Earlier in the year, Murray Goulburn paid a $650,000 penalty after admitting it breached continuous disclosure obligations in a court case brought by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

The company, which was bought by Canada's Saputo earlier this year, still faces the prospect of class actions.

In the ACCC case, Murray Goulburn admitted falsely telling farmers in Victoria, South Australia and southern NSW through the early part of 2016 that it could maintain the opening milk price of $5.60 per kg of milk solids.

"Murray Goulburn's misrepresentations meant farmers were not informed of the likelihood the final milk price would fall below the opening price," Mr Keogh said. "This was important information for farmers as it would have influenced the business decisions each farmer made.

"Farmers were denied the opportunity to plan for the impact of the reduced milk price on their businesses between February and April 2016, including implementing measures to reduce their exposure to a decrease in the milk price or shopping their milk around to other dairy processors."

Mr Helou has given an undertaking to the court that he will not be involved in the dairy industry for three years. ▶

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◀ In August, Murray Goulburn's former chief financial officer, Bradley Hingle, agreed to pay the ACCC's costs and also gave an undertaking he would not be involved in the dairy industry for three years.

Corporate misconduct laws

A leading corporate law expert said the angry reaction by farmers to the penalties imposed on Mr Helou were perfectly understandable.

But the University of Melbourne Centre for Corporate Law and Securities Regulation director Professor Ian Ramsay said laws governing corporate misconduct were currently being strengthened.

"At the same time, there is a significant constraint on the court that there is a maximum penalty per contravention," Prof Ramsay said.

"What people do need to understand is that this was a negotiated outcome between the ACCC and the two defendants being Gary Helou and Murray Goulburn.

"In that context, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission had the interests of dairy farmers to consider, when it said it didn't want to impose a penalty on the company."

The penalty was commensurate with similar cases where the defendant had admitted wrongdoing.

He said the penalty was imposed under Australian Consumer Law, but was similar to those under the Corporations Act. "Penalties imposed on directors under the Corporations Act have not increased for more than 20 years," he said.

The maximum penalty for an individual under the Australian Consumer Law is $220,000 per contravention.

"The court is never there to rubber stamp a joint submission that comes up," Prof Ramsay said. "The court's role is truly an independent one, it looks at the facts and whether the proposed penalty is appropriate, and that's certainly what it did here."

'Farmers were denied the opportunity to plan for the impact of the reduced milk price on their businesses between February and April 2016.'

Prof Ramsay said the Federal Government was now looking at increasing penalties, for similar offences. "I think, generally, there is a strong case for the penalty to be increased," he said.

"Given the Royal Commission into the banking industry, and enforcement action by the ACCC and Australian Securities and Investments Commission, there is quite an important debate about whether penalties are sufficient to provide deterrents," he said.

It was serious misconduct, which misled and disadvantaged farmers. "He held a most senior position at Murray Goulburn and was well remunerated," Prof Ramsay said.

"$200,000 looks modest, but at the same time a banning order has also been imposed."

He described the banning order as "unusual," as it specifically referred to the dairy industry."

"This one is quite tightly defined, but it's likely the defendant has no interest in re-engaging in the dairy industry," he said. The court also determined whether the penalty was sufficient to be a general deterrent to others.

Farmer anger

Crossley, Vic, dairy farmer Karinjeet Singh-Mahil argued the law did need to be changed, as the penalty was too low. "And the $200,000 doesn't go back to MG suppliers, it goes into government coffers," Ms Singh-Mahil said. "It's not commensurate with the damage he did; it needs to be changed to a percentage, or a sliding scale, of some sort.

"That money should have gone to MG to be distributed to the victims of all this, and that's the farmers. There are people out there who no longer farm as a result of what MG did, what about them?"

Others said while they were angry at the penalty imposed on Mr Helou, they had now moved on.

Maffra, Vic, farmer Raelene Hanratty said she was pleased Mr Helou had finally admitted his guilt; an admission for which suppliers had long been waiting. "You have to focus on your own business, and it's taken a bit of a whack," she said.

"He was dealt with according to the law regarding this investigation, but unfortunately the punishment does not represent the severity of the misconduct."

It was a shame other members involved in the "fiasco", with the exception of chief financial officer Brad Hingle, were not brought to account.

"Gary Helou, the board and executive management were instrumental in the eventual demise of a proud, farmer-owned co-operative Murray Goulburn," she said.

"These people have moved on. Some of them with their integrity unscathed.....you wouldn't even know their names. The farmers are still suffering the financial and mental burden of their decisions."

Cobram, Vic, dairy farmer Paul Mundy said "rightly or wrongly" farmers had moved on.

He described the penalty as "a token gesture" and a "slap on the wrist," given the amount of money Mr Helou had been paid.

Information courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald and Stock & Land

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Linda Whiting with children Cooper, Ellen and Olivia check out some of the high quality cows on the family's Simpson, Vic, property.

Farm records drive Simpson farm

Key points

- ✔ Detailed herd records kept for extended period
- ✔ Herd test monthly
- ✔ Analysis reveals contribution of high genetic merit animals

WESTERN Victorian dairy farmers Linda and Andrew Whiting have a long history of involvement in dairy industry genetics programs and a history of detailed farm records so it was no surprise when they were invited to be part of the ImProving Herds Project.

Over the years, the Whitings' 330-cow herd has been used in several industry research projects to develop and improve the accuracy of genomic selection. "We've been on this farm for 17 years and have always kept detailed herd records on a computer; previously with PC Farm and more recently with Mistro Farm," Mrs Whiting said. "I like keeping good records."

'A genomic profile adds value to the herd — if we were to sell cows to other dairy farmers then they would know exactly what they were getting.'

"We've been herd testing monthly for 20 years so we've always had a lot of information on individual cows."

The Whitings' herd was one of 27 dairy farms across Australia that recently underwent detailed analysis by the ImProving Herds project to investigate the contribution of genetics to dairy businesses.

The study identified the top and bottom 25 per cent of each herd, ranked on Balanced Performance Index (BPI), the genetic index for profit used by the Australian dairy industry, and compared their performance in terms of production, longevity and financial contribution to the farm business.

Ten years of historical performance

Table 1: Linda and Andrew Whiting, Simpson, Vic, farm stats (August 2018)

Herd size:	320 milkers
Breed:	Majority Holstein
Farm size:	125ha milking platform plus 125ha run-off block
Calving pattern:	Three times a year (February, May and September/October)
Dairy:	20-unit swing over
Staff:	Linda and Andrew
Feeding system:	Basic in-bail system average 2.5t/cow/year
Herd testing history	Monthly for the past 20 years

data, plus recent farm financial data from the herd records were analysed to look at the difference in contribution to the farm business between the top and bottom BPI groups.

The study found the top 25pc of the Whiting herd produced 483 more litres, 50 more kilograms of fat and 36 more kilograms of protein per cow per year than the bottom 25pc of the herd. The top 25pc also last six months longer in the herd.

The extra milk production from the Whitings' top cows resulted in an extra $330/cow/year in milk income after feed and herd costs compared with the bottom group.

The Whitings milk 320 cows, predominantly Holsteins, on 125 hectares at Simpson in Western Victoria and keep their young stock on a separate 125ha runoff block.

Their herd is milked through a 20-unit swingover dairy and fed in the bail with cows consuming about 2.5 tonnes of grain each per year.

The herd has three distinct calving periods — in equal groups of 100-120 cows — in February, May and September/October.

The Whitings use advice from World Wide Sires when it comes to choosing sires for the herd to minimise inbreeding, avoid genetic faults and for pedigree advice. "We're mindful of BPI and health traits," Mrs Whiting said.

"When we are looking at bulls for our sire list we want them to be in the top 50 to 100 for BPI so we can move forward with the industry. "

Emphasis is also placed on type, mastitis resistance and fertility as cows are generally culled from the herd for mastitis and failing to get in calf.

"We want good udders, capacity and feet," Mrs Whiting said. "We look at production and want a balance between volume and components.

"We always look at the *Good Bulls Guide* when it comes to choosing sires.

"When we classify the cows, we look at their lowest points and then look for sires who can lift them in those traits.

"Our figures are improving all the time and are on an upward trend."

The Whitings use a simple PG synchronisation system on the cows with conventional semen.

They aim to rear 90-100 heifer replacements a year and effectively replace a third of the mature cows of the herd each year.

Replacement heifers are genomically tested as two-year-olds, although Mrs Whiting may consider earlier genomic testing in the future.

"We've been genomic testing for more than eight years so have genomic results on every animal in the herd," she said.

"Having a genomic profile adds value to the herd — if we were to sell cows to other dairy farmers then they would know exactly what they were getting." D

Olivia and Andrew Whiting feed calves on the family farm.

Linda Whiting says the family has kept accurate herd records for more than 20 years and herd tests every month.

ImProving Herds pays dividends

IMPROVING Herds was a three-year project that studied the contribution of herd improvement to Australian dairy businesses.

At the heart of the project were 34 inspiring Focus Farmers who agreed to put their farm, herd and financial records under the spotlight.

Seven were Herd Test Focus Farmers and 27 were Genetics Focus Farmers.

This is one of a series of case studies about their experiences as ImProving Herds Focus Farmers.

ImProving Herds has shown that:

- The daughters of high Balanced Performance Index (BPI) bulls perform better under Australian conditions, across dairying regions and feeding systems.
- Cows in the top 25 per cent for BPI in a herd outperform cows in the bottom 25pc for production, fertility, longevity and contributed on average an extra $300 income over feed and herd costs.
- The benefits of using genomic breeding values to guide heifer selection decisions were demonstrated on the Focus Farms, where the performance of genotyped heifers aligned with their genomic breeding values.
- Information from herd testing gave Focus Farmers confidence to make data-driven decisions for routine management and to respond to high pressure events.

The project, funded by the Gardiner Dairy Foundation, was a collaboration of Dairy Australia, Agriculture Victoria, DataGene, Holstein Australia and the National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA).

italian ryegrass

Italian ryegrass Forage EBVs based on regional replicated trials

2019 Forage EBV Guide

Variety Maturity	ploidy	Variety or brand	Mean				Flowering Days from Tetila		ME MJ/kg DM	CP %	NDF %	Extra meat value $/ha	Extra milk value $/ha	no. of trials
			winter	spring	summer	total	NSW	WA						
LATE MATURITY														
Momentum	diploid	variety	96	104	107	101	+14		11.39	22.82	43.70	+$238	+$422	24
SF Indulgence	**diploid**	**variety**	**98**	**105**	**102**	**101**	**+14**	**+21**	**11.35**	**21.87**	**43.45**	**+$226**	**+$411**	**40**
SF Emmerson	**tetraploid**	**variety**	**97**	**105**	**99**	**100**	**+13**	**+18**	**11.33**	**22.50**	**44.00**	**+$151**	**+$297**	**36**
Asset AR37	diploid	variety	105	104	109	104			11.32	24.67	45.34	+$167	+$294	5
Nourish	tetraploid	variety	100	103	98	101	+14		11.23	20.55	44.23	+$112	+$232	22
Feast II	tetraploid	variety	101	103	102	102	+12		11.20	22.51	44.44	+$112	+$228	33
SF Accelerate	**diploid**	**variety**	**102**	**107**	**113**	**105**	**+12**	**+21**	**11.07**	**21.65**	**45.39**	**+$115**	**+$183**	**40**
SF Tonuss	**diploid**	**variety**	**100**	**104**	**110**	**102**	**+15**		**11.22**	**23.85**	**45.77**	**+$99**	**+$162**	**22**
Maverick GII	diploid	variety	94	103	106	100	+14		11.14	22.05	44.95	+$45	+$103	26
Jeanne	tetraploid	variety	92	97	81	94	+14		11.26	20.65	44.12	$0	+$54	15
Hulk	diploid	variety	100	99	100	99	+12		11.09	21.49	45.15	+$23	+$50	36
Crusader	**diploid**	**variety**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**+12**	**+18**	**11.10**	**22.29**	**46.08**	**$0**	**$0**	**40**
Icon	diploid	variety	82	105	93	97	+11		11.02	21.31	45.44	**-$61**	**-$82**	2
Aston	tetraploid	variety	100	94	86	96		+18	11.22	22.74	45.14	**-$3**	**-$33**	5
Concord 2	diploid	variety	104	103	102	103			10.91	20.11	46.91	**-$63**	**-$121**	4
Knight	diploid	variety	106	102	92	104			10.83	20.94	47.64	**-$108**	**-$211**	5
MID MATURITY														
Sonik	diploid	variety	102	101	90	101	+10		11.03	23.45	45.98	**-$4**	**-$8**	17
Diplex	diploid	brand	107	98	85	101	+7		10.85	24.65	46.50	-$40	-$96	11
Charger	diploid	variety	106	96	70	97	+7		10.78	21.00	47.28	**-$255**	**-$465**	7
YIELD DATA ONLY AT THIS STAGE														
SF Accelerate 2	**diploid**	**variety**	**116**	**107**	**105**	**111**	**+12**							**7**
Thumpa	tetraploid	variety	105	107	105	105								2
Asset	diploid	variety	104	102	85	102								5
Eclipse Select	diploid	variety	101	96	52	98								3
Lush AR37	tetraploid	variety	103	98	144	97								3
Turbo	diploid	variety	97	94	104	95								3
Amass	tetraploid	variety	96	99	108	95								2
Awesome	diploid	brand	97	88	94	93								2
Achieve	diploid	variety	111	91	96	92								2
Surge	diploid	variety	89	92		91								2
Denver	tetraploid	brand	88	81		84								2

Relative rankings have been undertaken by comparing all yields as a percentage of Crusader.
Yield data is hundredised means from a minimum of 2 and up to 47 trials per variety/brand.
Varieties ranked on potential value first, then total yield where no nutritive value information is available.
Notes:
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Meat and milk values estimated using Seed Force's Animal Performance Calculator™ based on the following assumptions:
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Milk at 75% feed utilisation, based on 600kg cow with 100MJ for maintenance/exercise/pregnancy and 5.5MJ/litre at $0.46 per litre
Based on seed prices and ASF seeds database as at 7.12.2018

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Farmers taking action on Q fever

Key points

- ✔ Q fever spreads to humans from animals such as cows
- ✔ Can lead to ongoing health problems
- ✔ Vaccination available
- ✔ Employers responsible for ensuring safety of staff

AUSTRALIAN dairy farmers are taking action to ensure their teams are tested and vaccinated for Q fever ahead of autumn calving.

Q fever is a disease spread to humans from animals such as dairy cows and causing severe flu-like illness lasting up to six weeks. Q fever can also lead to fatigue, hepatitis, pneumonia, chronic infections or heart problems.

Farm workers are more at risk of contracting Q fever when dealing directly with animals, particularly calving down cows. Before autumn is the best time to make sure farm teams are safe, tested and vaccinated.

Farm workers and visitors can be infected with Q fever by breathing in bacteria carried in dust.

Dairy Australia program manager Sarah Thompson said farmers were increasingly concerned by the risks associated with Q fever.

"We have seen a major increase in farmers contacting Dairy Australia to request information about Q fever, especially in northern regions such as Queensland and NSW," Ms Thompson said.

"Everyone on farm is at risk of Q fever, but we are lucky that Australia is the only country to have a human vaccine available.

"Every farmer and manager should see the New Year as a chance to refresh their knowledge of how to manage the risk of Q fever being contracted on their farm."

New workers should be tested for Q fever before their first day on farm, even if they have been employed on a farm before.

Fifth-generation Murray Dairy region dairy farmer Peter Middlebrook knows firsthand how even the most experienced farmers are at risk, after he contracted Q fever on his 450-cow farm near Finley, NSW.

As he attempted to rescue a cow which had become stuck in a paddock, Mr Middlebrook was bucked and suffered a wound to his hand.

Anyone over 15 years of age should be vaccinated against Q fever if they're spending time on farm.

'Farm workers are highly susceptible to Q fever — having any contact with an infected animal puts you at risk.'

After being hospitalised with Q fever, Mr Middlebrook was told he would be unable to return to work for at least 10 days.

"I was young and thought I was bulletproof, but I wish I'd been vaccinated before it happened," he said.

"It really knocks you around and it took me a long time to get over it."

Mr Middlebrooknow ensures his four farm workers are tested regularly.

NSW district vet Dr Lyndell Stone said nothing prevented Q fever as effectively as vaccination.

"Farm workers are highly susceptible to Q fever — having any contact with an infected animal puts you at risk," Dr Stone said.

"Calving cows is especially risky, as bacteria is shared in faeces, urine, blood, uterine and foetal fluids.

"The period before autumn calving is a good opportunity to go to your GP and assess your risk, and get vaccinated if necessary.

"Anyone over 15 years of age should be vaccinated if they're spending time on farm — whether it's farmers, managers, staff, families or visitors."

In Australia, it is an employer's responsibility to ensure the safety of their staff, including from both physical risks and the risk of contracting bacterial infections.

Dairy Australia's Farm Safety Manual provides a comprehensive guide for farmers looking to improve the safety system on their farm, including tips on working with livestock. D

To access the Farm Safety Manual, visit <www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/farm-safety/manual>.

Ministers hail historic Basin agreement

Key points

- ✔ Agreement to guarantee positive or neutral socio-economic outcomes
- ✔ Three states and Commonwealth governments reach agreement
- ✔ Irrigation communities stage protests outside meeting

By **Andrew Miller and Mike Foley**

AUSTRALIA'S Water ministers reached agreement at a meeting in Melbourne in mid-December on a new test, guaranteeing positive, or neutral, socio-economic outcomes for any further recovery of Murray Darling Basin environmental water.

The deal means efficiency projects will contribute to the plan's 450 gigalitres environmental 'upwater', which will include lining irrigation channels, reducing water leaks in Basin cities and installing meters.

Federal Water Minister David Littleproud hailed the latest Water Minister's Council meeting in Melbourne in December as a historic moment in the nation's history.

"For the first time since Federation, all Basin states and the Commonwealth have agreed on the management of Murray Basin system," Mr Littleproud said. "Today's agreement on a neutrality test guarantees all water recovered towards the 450GL will create positive or neutral socio-economic outcomes."

Ministers from Victoria, NSW and South Australia had taken the politics out of the Basin Plan.

Protesters burn a copy of the Water Act.

"No one is shirking their responsibility; we will apply the test the Parliament of Australia asked us to apply," Mr Littleproud said. "We have been able to agree on the parameters of that."

Mr Littleproud said it was the last major piece in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan puzzle. "This will protect both jobs and production and will be applied at a local, regional and state level," he said.

Politics had clouded the Basin Plan for many years. "We have risen above that," Mr Littleproud said.

MinCo protests

During the meeting, about 300 protests from NSW Murray River and Victorian Goulburn Murray Irrigation District communities stood outside the Park Hyatt, where the meeting was being held, holding placards and chanting.

Chanting "no water, no food", they dispersed shortly before the meeting broke up.

One of the protest organisers, Shelley Scoullar, Deniliquin, NSW, said farmers and community members made the trip because their towns were being devastated by a plan that hugely underestimated the job losses, social impacts, mental health and lost prosperity in rural towns. "We want to be heard. We want the ministers to listen to our concerns and understand that we are hurting," Ms Scoullar, from the Speak Up Campaign, said.

"We also want to talk to them about ways we can help build a plan that protects the environment, as well as our communities."

Speak Up for Water spokesperson Tom Chesson said the rhetoric was positive, but the "devil is in the detail". "Until we see the fine detail, it's hard to see what was signed up to," Mr Chesson said.

It was disappointing an agenda had not been released before the meeting. "I think they could be far more open and transparent and we'd like to see that, before the next meeting," he said.

"It appears regional communities dodged a bullet, but it will now be absolutely critical for the states to follow through and ensure these projects are socially and economically neutral, and there are no dodgy deals done in the future."

Strong message

Victorian Water Minister Lisa Neville said communities had sent ministers a strong message, through the consulta-

tion process, that the issue needed to be resolved.

"I think we have struck the right balance," Ms Neville said. "One of the really critical things people were concerned about was the additional water that needs to be provided under the plan.

"Can we deliver it, in a socially and economically neutral way, or better?

"Today, we have all agreed on what that criteria are. We will each be applying the same criteria to every single project to ensure only those projects that are neutral or have better socio-economic outcomes will be approved through this process."

Ms Neville said that gave certainty to communities. "They know we've got their backs," she said. "This is a historic day, and it really is the start of the implementation of the plan."

Ms Neville said the states had signed an agreement with the Commonwealth for the first funding for major infrastructure works aimed at saving water and getting better environmental outcomes. "We have also agreed to ensure that every single project is subject to a robust and rigorous socio-economic assessment, one the community has seen and supported," she said.

Adelaide's contribution

The ministers agreed to further "significant" Commonwealth funding for the Coorong in South Australia, while South Australian Water Minister David Speirs said his government would look at using the Adelaide desalination plant to return water to the environment.

South Australia agreed to a provision pushed for by NSW and Victoria that bars voluntary buybacks of irrigation water licences to boost environmental flows unless a "robust" assessment of socio-economic factors demonstrates it would have a neutral or positive impact on socio-economic factors.

Mr Speirs said the government made it very clear it was "back at the table, not screaming from the sidelines", and negotiating on the plan.

"That's what I have done as South Australia's Environment and Water Minister, reach out to my fellow ministers, of different political persuasions, and negotiate with them, in a respectful way," Mr Speirs said.

"The agreement we have reached today is truly historic."

He said the socio-economic test was "fair and balanced" and would lead to many projects, which would deliver the further 450GL for the Murray River.

"At the same time, we have said we will begin an investigation into Adelaide's desalination plant," he said.

Victorian Water Minister Lisa Neville, Commonwealth Water Minister David Littleproud and NSW Water Minister Niall Blair described the Ministerial Council meeting as historic.

The plant had been a "white elephant" in Adelaide's southern suburbs for too long but the government wanted to see if it could be activated in a way that could contribute to returning water to the Murray River.

"It's early days, but we want to do that in good faith, and I am pleased that we have been able to receive funding towards a study as to how that desalination plant could connect with the Murray as an offset," he said.

The government anticipated doing the study relatively quickly. "That's the commitment I made," Mr Speirs said.

"That study will be completed in the coming months; we know the plant can be cranked up to any level, within its capacity, within a matter of days.

"If that study shows that it's a viable option to turn on, and there's an appropriate funding package that goes alongside that, we can get that to happen very quickly."

But he said the plant would not be turned on if it had a negative impact on household and business water bills, "unless we have a form of financial assistance, to support that action".

"We want to get a good handle on how much water we can produce form the plant; it still has to act as a drought relief and water supply strategy, within the Adelaide precinct," he said.

Good news

NSW Water minister Niall Blair hailed the outcome as "very good news" for all Basin states. "It was the day that the dealing was finalised and now we can move to implementation," Mr Blair said.

"We always said, in NSW, we signed up to a plan, but not a plan at all costs."

He said uncertainty was causing hardship, in many NSW communities.

"Now we have certainty, we have cut a deal, politics was left at the door, and now we have a plan we can all move forward on." D

Milk supply falls as farms face squeeze

Key points

- ✔ Australian milk supply declined overall but shoulder season production up
- ✔ Increasingly domestic supply focused
- ✔ Trend towards becoming net importer of products

By **Carlene Dowie**

THE flattening of the milk production supply curve in Victoria had left its dairy industry more exposed to feed costs and led to a fall in Australia's total milk production, a global dairy researcher told the Australian Dairy Industry Council industry breakfast in November.

This, combined with increasing domestic consumption of dairy, meant Australia was heading to becoming a net importer of dairy products, Earl Rattray said.

Mr Rattray, who has had roles as an adviser to the Reserve Bank of NZ, a director of Fonterra and a director of the New Zealand Dairy Board, is a consultant with Gira, a European-based strategic food consultancy, specialising in dairy, meat and food service industries.

Ben Van Delden and Earl Rattray spoke at the Australian Dairy Industry Council industry breakfast.

He said the decline in Australian exports was occurring at the same time as demand for dairy was growing rapidly in the region, particularly in South East Asia and China. But this demand was increasingly likely to be filled by the European Union and the United States.

Mr Rattray said an examination of Victoria's milk supply profile revealed one of the reasons for the decline in dairy commodity exports from Australia.

"What we find is Victoria's milk production has dropped by 11 per cent since 2000," he said. "But it has cut season milk supply while its shoulder season supply has actually increased by 10pc. The milk production profile has flattened hugely."

Mr Rattray said this had caused an increase in feed costs as a percentage of total farm costs.

Farmers had been getting "some pretty good signals to produce milk out of season" but that meant buying in more feed. "And we've actually had a squeeze on profitability as a result of that flattening curve," he said.

But the shift to a more domestic-market focused industry would not mean farmers were less exposed to price volatility.

Research by Gira staff comparing farmgate milk prices around the world showed little difference in volatility between those countries with small expo-

sure to commodity markets and those with large exposure.

Mr Rattray said everybody in the supply chain had to be profitable.

It was vital to get profitability back into farming in Australia through developing hedging tools for feed costs but also by not losing sight of the value of pasture in producing milk at an internationally competitive cost.

The trend in Australia was absolutely clear — flat production with Australia consuming more of what it produced.

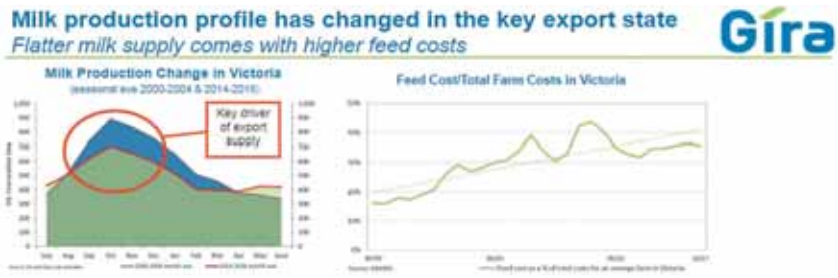
"It's starting to look like a picture if something doesn't change here, Australia will become a net importer of dairy products," Mr Rattray said.

Gira was forecasting world dairy consumption to increase by 126 billion litres in the next five years, but with a lot of that happening in south Asia, principally India, which already had the biggest dairy industry in the world and was largely self-sufficient.

But even in the free-traded world, consumption was expected to leap, up 31.5 billion litres by 2023.

"The world is consuming more dairy," Mr Rattray said. "We lose track of just how big dairy is globally."

The biggest driver of growth would continue to be China, which in the past decade had "shifted the dial on dairy demand".



The charts Earl Rattray presented explaining the impact of the change in Victoria's milk supply curve.

The trend for growing demand was definitely there but that did not mean there would be no fluctuations in prices. Mr Rattray pointed to the recent milk market history as evidence of this.

A milk shortage in 2012-13 caused a spike in prices that prompted a 12 billion litre increase in worldwide milk production in 2014.

The price then crashed and the EU and US stockpiled skim milk powder.

The industry was still living with the consequences of that with the equivalent of 3.5 billion litres of milk still sitting in stores.

Mr Rattray said the SMP stockpile had also caused the spike in butter prices. "Butter prices have gone through the roof," he said.

But typically the prices of the different dairy commodities did not diverge much.

"We've never seen a spread like we've seen recently between the product groups, namely fat and protein," he said.

This was because the SMP stockpiles forced the price of SMP down, meaning manufacturers made less skim milk powder and therefore also made less butter, causing its price to increase.

As the SMP stocks have started being sold, production is rising again and hence so was butter production and those prices "were coming off". D

Code vital to stop unfair contracts: Keogh

Key points

- ✔ Code would mean penalties for breaches
- ✔ Would allow ACCC to take action more quickly
- ✔ Should not result in higher compliance costs

By **Carlene Dowie**

A DAIRY industry mandatory code is essential to prevent processors from reinstating unfair terms into their contracts, according to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission deputy chairman Mick Keogh.

Mr Keogh told a Dairy Connect 'Dairy Needs' Panel Session in Sydney in December there was nothing at present stopping processors from rewriting terms back into their contracts that the ACCC had this year forced them to remove.

But if a mandatory code was in place, the ACCC could take immediate action and there would be penalties for a breach.

Mick Keogh: Contracts have become more and more complicated and more opaque.

Without the code, the ACCC would need to identify that the contract terms were unfair and then take the processor to court to have them changed.

The work done on identifying unfair contract terms confirmed that in the absence of a code, issues would be ongoing.

Mr Keogh also identified the complicated nature of contracts as an ongoing issue, not just for the dairy sector but across a wide range of consumer and business sectors. "Contracts have become more and more complicated and more opaque," he said.

"Getting plain-English, easy-to-understand contracts and one you can compare between different processors is difficult."

One of the recommendations from the ACCC inquiry into the dairy industry that had not been picked up was to have standard profiles (eg 300-cow seasonal farm) against which contracts between different processors could be compared.

Cost of code

Mr Keogh said he struggled to understand the concern being expressed at mandatory code consultations about it creating increased farm costs.

This had not been the case in the horticultural industry, which had had a mandatory code for six years.

If the paperwork was already in place, it would simply be a matter of ensuring it complied with the code.

Mr Keogh also dismissed sugges-

tions raised at code meetings that it be extended to supermarkets.

The supermarkets and their suppliers (such as the processors) were already subject to the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct, and it would not work to have two codes overlapping, he said.

The ACCC was not involved in the mandatory code consultations, which were being conducted by the federal government, but it anticipated being asked to comment on a draft of the code early this year.

Contract changes

Mr Keogh said it had taken the ACCC a year to work through the contracts of major dairy processors (with some having more than a dozen different standard contracts) and then to negotiate the changes required.

Discussions were ongoing with Saputo and Bega, "but they are broadly in line with where we wanted them to be".

The changes had come about as a result of unfair contract legislation introduced in November 2016, which required standard-form contracts between large businesses and small businesses to not contain unbalanced terms.

The legislation required the ACCC to identify unfair terms that were not essential to the contract.

Mr Keogh said three main types of breaches were identified in dairy contracts.

The first was unilateral price variation clauses, particularly in multi-year contracts, that allowed a processor to impose a penalty on someone breaking a contract but also gave the processor the right to change the price offered in the contract.

Most processors had agreed to a 30-day notice provision of a change in price, allowing the farmer to exit the contract without penalty in that period.

The second breach was terms giving processors the right to make unilateral variations to conditions other than price.

Written contracts were often subject to the requirements in the supplier handbook, which could be changed by a processor whenever they wanted.

These had been deemed unfair and now changed, with a couple of processors still working through the detail on this.

The third breach was terms requiring unreasonable extended notice of termination — some up to 12 months.

"We've generally had those changed," Mr Keogh said.

The exception in Western Australia, where the notice period applied to both the supplier and the processor, so was balanced.

The other was a reworking of the contract condition that limited the ability of a supplier to lease or sell the farm while they remained a supplier. D

Processors change contract terms

FIVE dairy processors have changed contract terms after bowing to pressure from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

The ACCC said Brownes Food Operations, Lion Dairy & Drinks, Norco Co-operative Limited, Parmalat Australia and Fonterra Australia have each agreed to amend specific terms in their milk supply agreements to address the ACCC's concerns these terms were unfair to dairy farmers.

The ACCC said it had been working with dairy processors for the past year to ensure that terms in the contracts they offered farmers complied with the business-to-business unfair contract terms law enacted by the Australian Government in November 2016.

"Farmers should be getting a fair deal when they contract to supply milk to dairy processors," ACCC deputy chair Mick Keogh said. "Assessing unfair contract terms in the dairy industry is complex and requires careful consideration.

"Our work focused on terms in milk supply contracts that have the potential to cause the greatest harm to farmers. Most processors have agreed to provide dairy farmers with the right to terminate their contract if the processor varies supply terms such as price or quality requirements, placing the farmer in a worse position.

"The ACCC also raised concerns with some processors about lengthy notice periods for farmers to terminate their contracts, one-sided termination rights, broad indemnities, and terms that restrict a farmer's ability to lease a farm or sell their cattle."

The ACCC worked with each processor individually to ensure amendments did not disadvantage farmers," Mr Keogh said. "Where we raised concerns, most processors worked with us to find a solution to better balance farmers' rights under the contracts."

The ACCC conducted an inquiry into the competitiveness, trading practices, and transparency of the Australian dairy industry. The ACCC submitted its final report to the Treasurer on April 30.

The report included a recommendation to improve contracting practices that dairy processors and farmers implement a mandatory code of conduct.

Gippsland farmer new UDV head

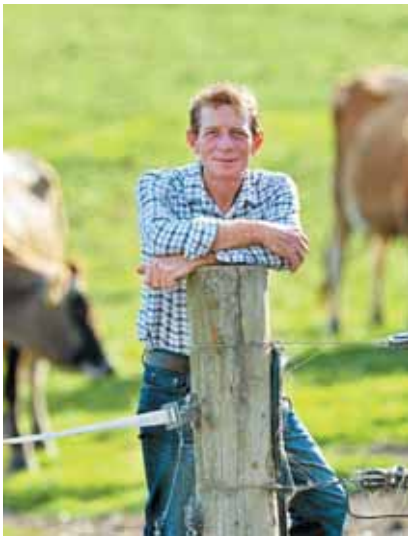
By **Andrew Miller**

A GIPPSLAND dairy farmer has been appointed United Dairyfarmers of Victoria president. Mr Mumford was appointed as president, and John Keely vice president, at its policy council meeting in December.

"Victorian farmers need to have a strong voice through improved and more sustainable representation," Mr Mumford said. "I look forward to working with the UDV council, staff team and members to deliver a more unified and collaborative approach that achieves outcomes for farmers.

"We must build our communication with dairy farmers to understand their concerns; provide professional policy, support and advocacy; and engage on their behalf with decision-makers and the broader agriculture sector. I am ready for a new challenge and I take this role very seriously.

"I will be open and honest and follow due process, and at the end of the day, my core role is to fight for farmers."



New UDV president Paul Mumford on his Won Wron, Vic, farm, where he dairies with his wife Lisa.

The council appointed Mr Mumford until its annual meeting in May. "The UDV Policy Council has appointed me until the annual meeting in May, at which time the members will have the opportunity to cast their vote," he said.

Mr Muford takes over from Adam Jenkins, who stepped down, in November.

Mr Mumford said he was looking forward to the challenge. "It's an interesting industry, and hopefully I can get outcomes for all dairy farmers," Mr Mumford said.

"I want change and action; I'm not a person who sits back and allows others to speak on my behalf.

"You need to sit at the table and have your voice heard and, if I want something to be achieved, I have to put my hand up."

The former UDV vice-president, Mr Mumford said he had no aspirations of doing anything "but delivering for dairy farmers.

"I have no political ambitions, I'm a farmer, first and foremost and I love ▶

Jenkins quits as UDV president

UNITED Dairyfarmers of Victoria president Adam Jenkins has resigned.

In a letter to members in November, Mr Jenkins said the decision came with mixed emotions and was not made lightly.

"It is important that the organisation and its members come first, and I feel this change will ensure UDV has a fresh approach and the energetic leadership required to tackle issues and represent members, heading into 2019," Mr Jenkins said.

He has been in the role for four years.

"I have had the tremendous opportunity to travel this great state of ours," Mr Jenkins said. "We have such diverse dairy regions, across Victoria, and I am truly amazed by the skill, strength and tenacity all of you have shown through some very interesting and challenging times, dealing with both seasonality and market volatility."

Mr Jenkins called for greater unity in the industry, saying farmers need to reflect on how they debate contentious issues.

"You are always going to have criticism," Mr Jenkins said. "If you are going into a role like this, you have to be prepared for robust discussion, but we do need to reflect on how we treat the people we elect to these positions."

Adam Jenkins: this change will ensure UDV has a fresh approach.

He called for the industry to engage in debate in a "responsible" manner.

"There's an element that seems to want to cut people off at the knees, and I think that's very disappointing," he said.

The sector needed to be more united. "The more united we are, the stronger, and better, we are in the long term — we need to ponder how we do that much better, long-term," he said.

"Governments and others like it when we are completely splintered, it makes it easier for them to pick us off."

Mr Jenkins said one of the UDV's finest achievements, during his presidency, was achieving a greater cut of the Port of Melbourne lease sale. Along with the other Victorian Farmers Federation commodity groups, farmers "went toe to toe" with Treasurer Tim Pallas to increase the spend on agriculture from $200 million to $900 million."

The new president would have to look at pricing structures, as well as resources in terms of health and wellbeing and financial counselling.

"The dairy industry is not out of the woods," Mr Jenkins said. "We know the world wants fat and protein, but at what price?

"What is our comparative advantage and how good can we do that?

"We have to have some serious, mature conversations around the dairy industry as to what it looks like. It can't be the same old, same old; it's not going to work."

◀ the industry we are in," he said. "I want to protect it, make it grow and advance it for our children."

Mr Mumford, and his wife Lisa, have a 333-hectare dryland farm, at Won Wron, Vic, milking up to 450 cows.

The family cut back its milking herd numbers to 360 in spring, due to dry conditions.

"We have a dairy platform of 193ha; the rest is bush conservation area and outblock," Mr Mumford said.

He said one of his main aims was to unify dairy farmers to work for the common good.

"The big ticket item is the mandatory code and what that might look like," he said. "The UDV has taken a strong stance on that.

"We need to negotiate the best outcomes on anything that's going to affect our farmers and members; we have to navigate through that."

Mr Mumford also nominated the plight of northern Victorian farmers hit by high feed and water prices.

"That's starting to unravel, with a very dramatic drop in milk production in that area," he said.

Mr Mumford said he was also keen to increase UDV membership, particularly among younger producers. D

Article courtesy of Stock & Land

Australian Dairy Plan

Dairy to join forces to set agenda

Key points

- ✔ Australian Dairy Plan launched at ADIC 2018 Industry Leaders' Breakfast
- ✔ Cornerstone of plan is meaningful nationwide consultation
- ✔ Farmers and the broader industry encouraged to provide input

THERE is no doubt the industry has come up against challenges over a number of years — rising production costs, price competition in domestic and international markets, tough seasons and market volatility.

To work through this, there is a clear need for the industry to work together and create a positive future for dairy.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council's (ADIC) 2018 Industry Leaders' Breakfast, on November 30 in Melbourne saw the launch of the Australian Dairy Plan.

The dairy plan aims to be a driving force that rallies the industry to set a clear vision and purpose for the next five years and beyond.

ADIC chair Terry Richardson announced at the breakfast, that the whole-of-industry plan would be developed to drive the direction of the industry.

Farmers, processors and the broader dairy community will have an opportunity to have their say in dairy's future through a nationwide consultation process. "The industry needs to be strong and united, with farmers, processors and broader industry working together," Mr Richardson said.

The dairy plan aims to be a driving force that rallies the industry to set a clear vision and purpose for the next five years and beyond.

'One of the core strengths of the dairy industry is the ability for the whole supply chain to work together.'

"By speaking as one, the dairy industry will be stronger and more confident."

Mr Richardson announced the launch of the Australian Dairy Plan on behalf of the ADIC, Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Dairy Products Federation, Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation.

At Dairy Australia's annual general meeting following the launch, chair Jeff Odgers said the plan positioned the various parts of dairy to operate within an overarching whole-of-industry strategy, with a renewed sense of purpose and agreed direction.

Australian Dairy Products Federation president Grant Crothers supported Mr Odgers's comments and further highlighted the importance of the whole industry joining forces to define its future.

"One of the core strengths of the dairy industry is the ability for the whole supply chain to work together," Mr Crothers said.

Everyone is encouraged to participate and be part of the conversation during consultations that will be held across Australia, starting in autumn 2019.

Gardiner Foundation chair Dr Bruce Kefford said: "We agree it is now time for broad participation in setting the future direction, and we see enormous value in a single industry plan that provides guidance for all."

Keep informed about the Australian Dairy Plan and consultation by visiting <www.dairyplan.com.au>.

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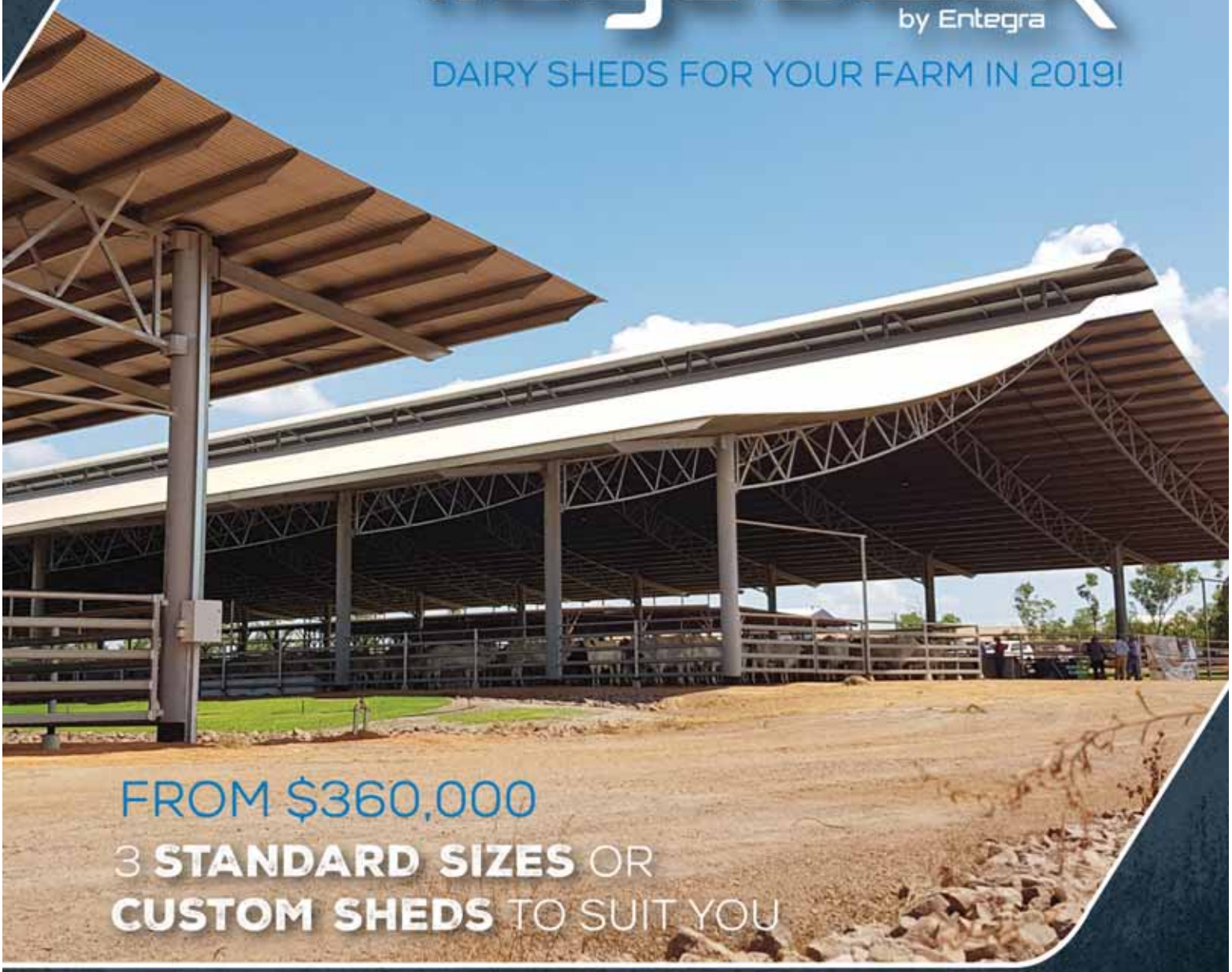

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Sallie Jones and son Max. Sallie and dairy farmer Steve Ronalds founded Gippsland Jersey and have built kindness and fairness into their business model.

Leading change with a dash of kindness

Key points

- ✔ Building kindness and fairness into the business model
- ✔ Leadership through encouraging others to step up
- ✔ Sharing stories of suicide and mental health to take away stigma

By **Corinna Boldiston**

IN life's big and unassuming moments, Sallie Jones thrives on creating positive change with kindness.

From fostering community pride to empowering rural women and inspiring dairy farmers to nurture their mental health, Ms Jones's generosity of spirit anchors her personal life and business.

Home-schooled until Year 6, the former Gippsland Grammar school captain has long had a knack for making good things happen — and inspiring a band of helpers.

As a mother-of-three and businesswoman, Ms Jones's people-centric and collaborative nature brings her "outside of the box ideas" to fruition to enhance her dairy community.

"I think I just naturally like joining the dots and putting things together," Ms Jones said. "I like to add value wherever I can to make this world a better place. You can't just sit around waiting for a good community to happen, you have to take a role."

For Ms Jones, this means being a "yes" person, sharing contacts with Warragul, Vic, locals while shopping; leading committees on unconventional initiatives; and finding and inspiring ways to overcome life's challenges.

After the devasting suicide of her father during the 2016 milk crisis, Ms Jones and dairy farmer Steve Ronalds founded Gippsland Jersey. Sharing the

same values, they built kindness and fairness into their business model.

Their small milk brand offers district farmers fair milk prices and shines a light on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of farmers.

Tackling the stigma of suicide took courage and exposing vulnerabilities: Ms Jones shared the story of her father Michael Bowen, a Lakes Entrance dairy farmer and ice-cream businessman. In doing so, other dairy farmers also published their mental health journeys on a calendar aimed at suicide prevention.

Distributed to 1400 Gippsland dairy farms, the calendar promotes conversation about mental health and lists support services.

"We set aside one cent a litre for random acts of kindness," Ms Jones said of another not-for-profit initiative.

"It might be a voucher for dinner or for a hair appointment, a float therapy session, ride on a camel with the kids at the beach, or a counselling session.

"It's to say to those people that someone cares about you: this little bit of kindness can be a circuit-breaker for where they are at with their mental health and wellbeing."

Whether random or thoughtfully planned gestures or a courageous response, Ms Jones role-models "seeking to understand and responding with kindness" as a catalyst to positive change.

This trait — and bravery — were shown on a morning jog, when she encountered a scene of domestic violence on a residential street.

Choosing "to come in with kindness to disarm the situation", Ms Jones gently tried to engage the angry man into a reasoned conversation; after police arrived, she offered a safe haven and friendship to the young mum who knew no one in the community.

"I said, 'You have a choice. I will take you and your daughter back to my home right now; and I will network you into creating a new life'."

While her offer was not accepted, Ms Jones hoped the gesture showed people cared, and when the young woman was ready, help was available.

Ms Jones life was "already at capacity" when she applied for the six-month Gippsland Community Leadership Program (GCLP), sponsored by the Gardiner Dairy Foundation.

Busy parenting two primary schoolers and a pre-schooler with dairy farmer husband Pete, she was on numerous committees; supporting her mother as a calming influence for her autistic brother; and establishing Gippsland Jersey.

'It's to say to those people that someone cares about you: this little bit of kindness can be a circuit-breaker for where they are at with their mental health and wellbeing.'

But rallying "a village of helpers" and using technology to multi-task, she joined the 2017 cohort. "It was an incredible opportunity to gain an enhanced understanding of the history, opportunities and challenges facing the Gippsland region," Ms Jones said.

She learnt to understand and enhance her leadership style of influencing employees and community volunteers to step up to the plate, whatever their skills.

Her syndicate project #Proud Gippslandian, helped raise the region's profile and residents' pride despite local challenges, such as unfair milk pricing, closure of sawmills and the Hazelwood power station. Ms Jones's syndicate created media opportunities to share a new, positive perspective of the region.

"We thought, 'Why should it only be the not-so-great stories that get the media limelight? It's time to make Gippslandians proud of who they are, and where they are from," she said.

Ms Jones has a lot more energy to give her dairy region and broader community.

Whether with Women in Gippsland (a collaborative of women who "make big and little things happen"), as Warragul Farmers' Market manager, school council member or creating educational paddock-to-plate videos — she is sure to inspire others to enrich their community. D

Sallie's Gippsland Community Leadership project, #ProudGippslandian, helped raise the region's profile and residents' pride.

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Day One – depart Canberra 7.30am. Moxey Farms including one hour on-site farm tour followed by presentation and Moxey Farms story. Dinner at Nanima Homestead (Moxey Farms). Overnight at Cowra.

Day Two – Colin Thompson (2018 ADC presenter) at Cowra will share his story on-site navigating his dairy herd through drought with the use of free stall barns for young stock. Lunch before heading back to Canberra by 4.30pm.

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Industry needs ‘to get closer together’

Key points

- ✔ Tough times make some question future in industry
- ✔ But Australian dairy still has great opportunity
- ✔ Needs to work more closely together to exploit market position

By **Carlene Dowie**

DAIRY Australia chairman Jeff Odgers has made an impassioned plea for the dairy industry to better work together to meet the challenges it faces.

Addressing the organisation’s annual general meeting in November, Mr Odgers acknowledged that some farmers were questioning their future in the industry.

“Australia’s dairy industry is going through an especially difficult period,” he said.

Increased market and climate volatility had impacted farm performance. “Given these events, some are questioning their future and industry momentum,” Mr Odger said.

But the industry still had great opportunity.

To achieve this, it was going to have to adapt to an increasingly rapidly changing world. “We as an industry are facing a new era,” he said.

The industry needed to understand and better navigate the opportunities and new environment in which it operated.

Mr Odgers pointed to the proposed

Jeff Odgers: This industry needs to get closer together.

Dairy Plan, launched earlier in the day by Australian Dairy Industry Council chair Terry Richardson, as vital to the industry’s future.

The Dairy Plan was bigger than any one industry body, he said.

‘Australia’s dairy industry is going through an especially difficult period.’

The plan would provide an opportunity to develop a whole-of-industry overarching strategy.

It needed to represent views of everyone involved in the industry — and Dairy Australia was committed to ensuring farmers in all regions had input.

The plan would enable the industry to think through the issues that really mattered and then get aligned on who took responsibility for dealing with those issues.

“This industry needs to get closer together,” he said. Mr Odgers said he recognised the challenges.

“I can see why some of you are asking ‘why stay’,” he said. “I know why I stay.”

Mr Odgers said he loved owning his own business, working beside the next generation and being part of a vital regional community.

Australia also offered many advantages to dairy farmers. “Where else would you want to be,” he said.

Australia had a temperate climate, cheap land relative to its productive capacity, a range of feed options, usually (though not this year) at a reasonable cost, and low cost of capital.

It also had a stable economy and an industry and farmers who supported one another.

In many regions, there were options around who to supply and real competition for milk, with processors now seeking an extra billion litres of milk.

But farmers needed to find ways to work with processors, Mr Odgers said.

Australia had a real opportunity to occupy the space in the world dairy industry between pure grazing dairy systems and fully housed total mixed ration systems.

Australia must deliver advantages in that space. “That’s our place,” he said.

Mr Odgers said the dairy industry’s new Dairy Feedbase project would play a key part in achieving that goal by helping farmers to optimise home-grown feed and to learn how to integrate supplements to get real improved animal performance. D

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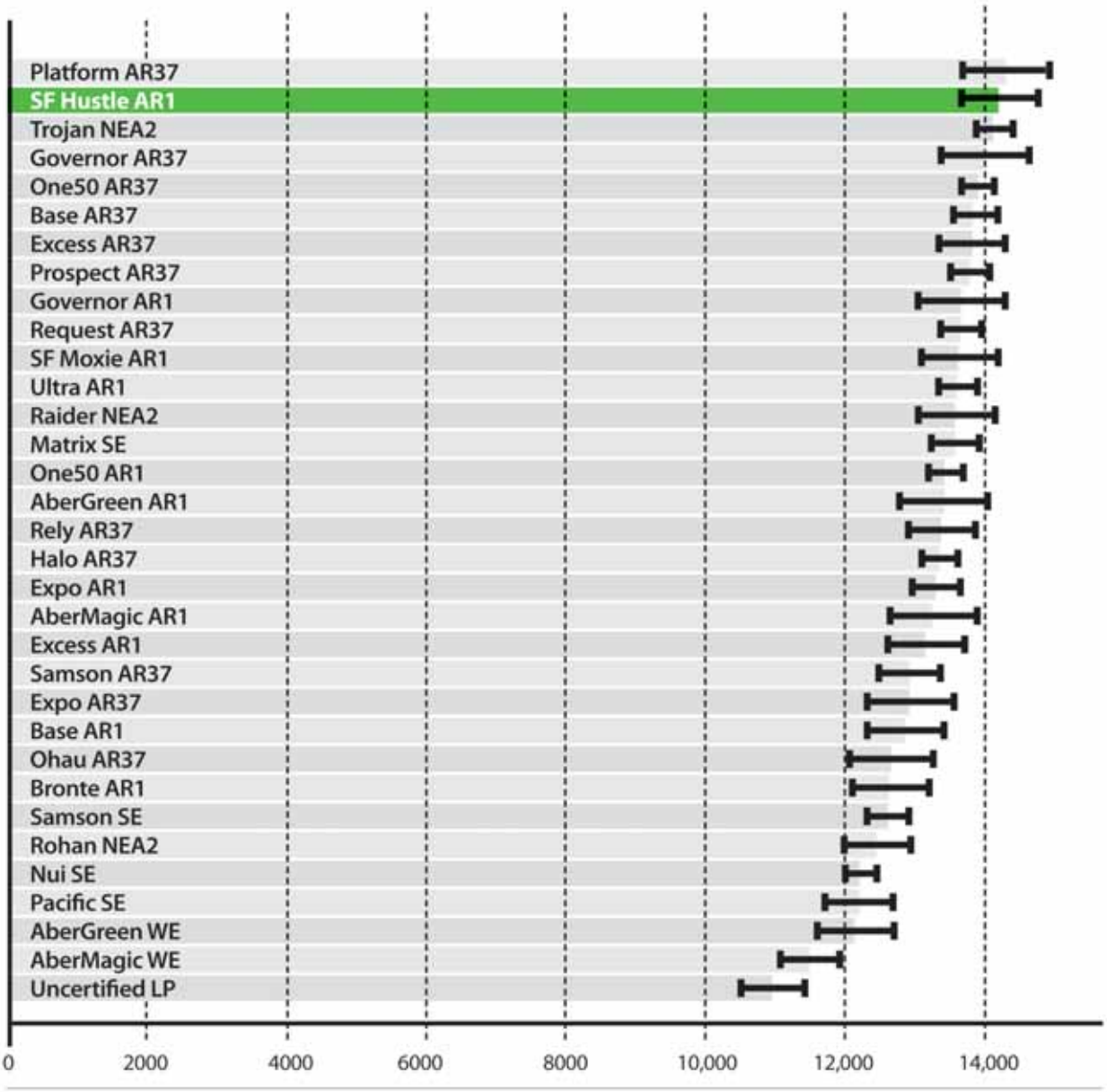

Ryegrass yield; kilograms of dry matter per hectare

NFVT Summary 1991 - 2018 (August 2018)

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Dairy improves heart and bone health

Key points

- ✔ Dairy foods improve a Mediterranean diet
- ✔ High-quality scientific research shows value of consuming more dairy

THE latest Dairy Australia-funded research has found adding extra dairy foods to a Mediterranean diet significantly improves heart health and leads to lower blood pressure.

The research was aimed at investigating the impact on heart health of a Mediterranean diet that includes additional serves of dairy foods to meet Australian recommendations for dairy and calcium intake.

The research has again confirmed the value of keeping dairy on the menu, supporting the inclusion of at least three daily serves of dairy in more plant-based diets.

While most Mediterranean diets are high in fruits and vegetables, olive oil and cereals, they do not meet recommended Australian dairy and calcium intakes.

Dairy Australia nutrition science and research program manager Dr Anita Lawrence said the study was good news for dairy.

"This is yet more high-quality scientific evidence demonstrating the health benefits of including three to four daily serves of dairy foods within a healthy diet," Dr Lawrence said. "There is a lot of information out there about the health impacts of dairy, and we need to make sure there is high-quality scientific research into the health effects of dairy foods.

A Mediterranean-style meal featuring serves of yoghurt and cheese.

'We need to make sure there is high-quality scientific research into the health effects of dairy foods.'

"This study will be of particular interest to healthcare professionals who wish to recommend a diet that both benefits cardiovascular health and contains the recommended amount of calcium and dairy foods for bone health."

Lead researcher Dr Karen Murphy said the dairy-rich Mediterranean diet led to important changes in indicators of heart health.

"This was a randomised, controlled trial conducted on participants aged between 45 and 75 years who were at risk of cardiovascular disease," Dr Murphy said.

"With the dairy-rich Mediterranean diet, we saw significantly lower blood pressure, lower heart rates, and beneficial changes in blood lipid profiles."

Despite participants consuming significantly more dairy foods — a mixture of regular fat and reduced-fat products — there were no detrimental changes to cholesterol levels.

Usually, a Mediterranean diet will only include small amounts of dairy foods, resulting in people failing to meet their recommended daily calcium and dairy intakes.

By including three to four daily serves of dairy, most people met their calcium and dairy food group recommendations.

The study has been published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, a leading peer-reviewed journal in nutrition and dietetics that publishes the latest research in nutrition from across the globe.

For more information about the value of dairy in the diet, visit <legendairy.com.au>.

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Nutrition expert flags research gaps

Key points

- ✔ World-renowned researcher highlights lack of scientific evidence around Mediterranean diet and bone and muscle health
- ✔ Mediterranean diet plant-based and low to moderate in dairy
- ✔ Further research required to determine effects of the diet

VISITING international nutrition expert Professor Ailsa Welch demonstrated that more studies are needed to better understand the relationship between the Mediterranean diet and musculoskeletal health.

Professor Welch stressed the importance of having good scientific evidence when making dietary recommendations, and highlighted the lack of strong scientific evidence relating to the impact of the Mediterranean diet on bone and muscle health.

The Mediterranean diet is a more plant-based diet that is rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and olive oil, low to moderate in dairy and low in meat.

While there is much interest in the Mediterranean diet, more studies are needed to determine if a Mediterranean diet, which is lower in dairy than current Australian dietary recommendations, is beneficial or detrimental to bone and muscle health.

Professor Welch was in Canberra in November, presenting at the 42nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Nutrition Society of Australia. The conference brings together more than 270 delegates working across nutrition, public health, policy, animal and science.

The 2018 conference theme was 'Nutrition Science: The Nexus Between Health Policy and Practice' and it highlighted opportunities and challenges currently being faced in nutrition.

Ailsa Welch is a professor of nutritional epidemiology at Norwich Medical School, The University of East Anglia, and a top one per cent world researcher.

During the conference, Professor Welch shared the latest thinking on nutrition for healthy ageing, particularly in relation to bone and muscle health.

Professor Ailsa Welch discussed her review 'Relationship between the Mediterranean Dietary Pattern and Musculoskeletal Health in Children, Adolescents, and Adults', which was funded by Dairy Australia.

'Life expectancy is lengthening in Australia and the need to maintain bone and muscle mass... is more important than ever.'

Life expectancy is lengthening in Australia and the need to maintain bone and muscle mass, and minimise the risk of developing osteoporosis and sarcopenia, is more important than ever.

Professor Welch discussed her review 'Relationship between the Mediterranean Dietary Pattern and Musculoskeletal Health in Children, Adolescents, and Adults,' which was funded by Dairy Australia.

With plant-based diets growing in popularity, the Mediterranean diet is associated with several beneficial health outcomes, however, the impact on bone and muscle health is unknown.

"All around the world, the Mediterranean diet has become well researched for cardiovascular health however, there are many facets to the diet which make it variable across different countries and we do not know yet how this would affect bone and muscle health," Professor Welch said.

"What we've found from our systematic review of the Mediterranean diet and musculoskeletal health is that not enough good quality studies have been done yet, and we need more studies to know if there would be a beneficial impact on bone health and risk of fractures."

The Nutrition Society of Australia aims to bring to the fore and communicate the scientific value and relevance of nutrition science and related disciplines in Australia. To achieve this, the society has formal linkages with international and national organisations and has active groups in every state and territory.

While visiting Australia, Professor Welch discussed her research in the webinar, Mediterranean diet and musculoskeletal health — latest findings and solutions, and it is available at <https://dietitianconnection.com/product/mediterranean-diet-and-musculoskeletal-health/>.

Information about how to maintain healthy bones is available at <http://www.healthybones.com.au>.

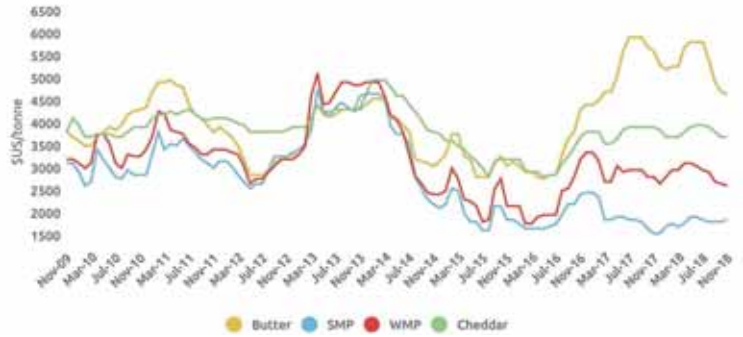
Price, production to dance as dry hits

By **John Droppert**
Senior industry analyst
Dairy Australia

Key points

- ✔ With high input costs a virtual certainty, milk price and milk production will be key variables in 2019
- ✔ Markets have weakened in the second half of 2018, but mixed signals suggest the downside is limited
- ✔ As spring feed runs out, further culling is expected to weigh on Australian milk production

Figure 1: Global dairy commodity prices



AS the calendar year wraps up, markets are moving into a relatively benign phase that will likely persist until this publication hits mailboxes around the country in 2019.

Regardless of weather, high feed costs are expected to remain in 2019, but other influences such as milk price and milk production are less certain. Yet how these two key drivers emerge from this period will likely set the scene for the remainder of 2018/19.

Firstly, the commodity market, which remained steady to slightly weaker through November, as strong New Zealand milk production continuing to weigh on prices. The GlobalDairyTrade (GDT) auction platform delivered only the second overall increase in its headline price index this season in November.

This arrested a string of declines that have, in turn, reduced Fonterra's New Zealand farmgate milk price forecast from its initial $NZ7 a kilogram milk solids (about $A6.81/kg MS) to a range of $NZ6-$NZ6.30/kg MS ($A5.84-$A6.13/kg MS). Although NZ farmgate price forecasts have eased, seasonal conditions remain favourable. This means the current supply pressure is likely to be maintained at least as far as autumn, when strong 2017/18 comparables will come into play.

After a big hit on GDT in early November, butter prices have fallen sharply across global indicators. Actions to reduce offer volumes did see some of the ground made back at the subsequent auction, but have yet to make an impact on the broader market.

Australia's situation remains unique, with the domestic market soaking up local product and continuing to support price quotations averaging $US4850/tonne, versus the most recent GDT average of $US3637/tonne. The spread in AMF quotations is almost as wide, with event 224 producing an average of $US4577/tonne against limited Australian volumes averaging $US5300/tonne.

In something of a reversal from recent years, skim milk powder (SMP) prices have bucked the trend and increased modestly in November. A combination of progress in reducing the European Commission's stockpile (now about 110,000 tonnes) and tighter supplies of fresh (versus two-to-three-year-old intervention stock) product have provided some support to the fresh market, albeit modestly. While the 'straight line' projections of clearing the stockpile by April may not come to pass, the steady reductions of late have seen some life return to SMP pricing, after a long trough.

Prices for whole milk powder (WMP) slipped in November, as availability continued to increase and GDT prices eased. Lower fat prices have improved the economics for WMP compared with a fat/SMP stream, and another month of favourable milk production conditions in New Zealand has been a major driver.

Lower prices have prompted an upturn in buyer activity in the last month, even as a slowdown had been feared. Algeria remains active and Chinese buyers are also continuing to cover relatively tight stocks.

Cheese prices have been mixed. Maintaining cheddar prices into Japan has become more challenging, and cream cheese values have slipped on lower fat prices. Competitive pressure has also re-emerged in these markets, with discounting by some players keeping pencils sharp across the board.

Pricing of whey protein concentrates has offered one positive development, with small increases noted on the back of firm demand for nutritionals.

In short, market developments have been mixed; but generally prices have held at higher levels than many had expected. This is supportive for Australian farmgate prices, together with a modestly weaker exchange rate (about 5 per cent lower than the end of 2017). Whether this is enough to materially improve profitability remains the question.

The second key driver, Australian milk production, is currently 4pc below 2017/18 levels for the 2018/19 season to October. This is a smaller decrease than the current Dairy Australia forecast range of 5pc to 7pc, but current expectations allow for a likely resurgence in culling as spring feed runs out and farmers adjust their herds for the shoulder period of the season.

Timely rainfall in some regions has helped stretch the period of feed availability, but dry conditions are virtually inevitable. Just like market direction, the level of milk production through the second half of 2018/19 will remain highly uncertain until those decisions are made and their impacts tallied.

From there, we may yet move into a period in which these two influences interact even more than usual, as pricing signals drive production decisions, which in turn prompt responsive pricing decisions from the processing sector. A constrained milk pool will heighten this interaction. As with many years preceding it, 2019 will be far from boring. D

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IDW attracts international exhibitors

Key points
- ✔ What: International Dairy Week
- ✔ Where: Tatura, Vic
- ✔ When: Saturday, January 19, to Thursday, January 24

By **Carlene Dowie**

INTERNATIONAL Dairy Week this year has attracted international exhibitors, event manager Robyn Barber said.

Frank and Di Borba, from the United States, who have exhibited previously ,will exhibit a Holstein that is being prepared by Michaela Thompson, Sunrise Holsteins, Rochester, Vic, while an exhibitor from the United Arab Emirates will show an animal being prepared by Jess and Brad Gavenlock, Tallygaroopna, Vic.

This year's IDW will be held from January 19-24 at Tatura, Vic.

Ms Barber said overall entries were down for the event, but by less than the organisers had expected. "We are down a little bit but we had anticipated that ... with the dry conditions, particularly in NSW," she said.

Organisers had budgeted for 720 entries but had ended up with 869 entries, which will see 710 head of cattle in the show ring throughout the week.

'Friendships are vital at this time and IDW provides a critical platform for friends to come together.'

The total number of exhibitors is 156 with 102 from Victoria, 35 from NSW, 15 from South Australia and two from Queensland, as well as the international exhibitors.

The Holstein Show has 256 entries, the Youth Show 198, Jerseys 191, Ayrshires 82, Brown Swiss 49, Illawarras 47 and Guernseys 46.

"It is higher than what we thought we would be looking at," Ms Barber said. "So we are pleasantly surprised."

The Holstein Show for the first time will include a Red and White classes, which will compete in their own championship classes during the Holstein Show and be awarded separate prizes.

Ms Barber said this was introduced in response to exhibitor feedback, driven in part by the success of the Red and White Show held as part of the Victorian Winter Fair.

Last year's International Dairy Week grand champion Elmar Goldwyn Jessica 11, with owners Kelsie, Deanne, Steve, Marty and Brady Hore, Elmar Holsteins, Leitchville, Vic. Jessica 11 won't be back for this year's event, but the Hores will again have a team.

The event will again offer a range of seminars and a machinery show. Two machinery exhibitors are bringing personnel from China and some groups of New Zealanders are also expected to attend as many dairy shows in that country have been cancelled, in the wake of the mycoplasma outbreak.

Although organisers were expecting that with the tough seasonal conditions visitor numbers might be down a little on previous years, they are encouraging people to view the event as an opportunity to take a break.

"We believe the 2019 event will be a chance for the industry to come together and get away from the pressures of drought," Ms Barber said.

"IDW is not just about rewarding success in breeding it is also about giving people in the industry a chance to think about things other than the day-to-day life on the farm.

"Friendships are vital at this time and IDW provides a critical platform for friends to come together."

"With a range of seminars, machinery and products and cattle to view there is something for everyone in the industry.

"It's a great opportunity to get off the farm or out of your business for the day and celebrate all things dairy."

The chosen charity for the 2019 event is Dolly's Dream. Dolly's Dream was set up in memory of Amy 'Dolly' Everett, aged 14, who took her own life after an extended period of bullying and cyberbullying. Dolly left behind her parents Tick and Kate and her sister Meg, who are now focused on using the money that has been donated by the community to help prevent other families from going through the same devastating experience.

International Dairy Week is a great family event. Waiting for the start of the Guernsey judging last year were this crew of youngsters: Cohan and Preston Hall, Tallygaroopna, Vic, with Bayden and Rhylan Russell, Bega, NSW.

Event director Brian Leslie said it was a privilege to run an event such as IDW. "I feel that the social importance of this event is one that cannot be under-estimated and first and foremost we at IDW look forward to creating a week where you can catch up with old friends and make new ones," he said. "As in previous years, there will be a full week of activities and I hope you will join with us in showcasing the best in Australian dairy cattle," he said. D

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** All orders placed at IDW will go into the draw to win a free Moo Call.*
IDW offer is valid from the 10th December 2018 to 31st January or while stocks last. Semen must be delivered prior to March 31st, 2019.

2019 program of events

Saturday, January 19

9.00am Children's Activities — Jumping Castle, Face Painting etc
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

1.30pm Coaching Session for Youth on Leading Show Animals
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

1.30pm Coaching Session for Youth on Preparing Show Animals
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

Sunday, January 20

9.30am Non-Denominational Church Service and Morning Tea
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

12.00pm Holstein Australia Victoria Youth Challenge Trials
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

3.00pm VASA State Junior Judging Final
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

6.00pm Exhibitor barbecue
Wilson Hall

Monday, January 21

8.00am ABS Australia/Ridley All Breeds National Youth Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

3.00pm The IDW Youth Showmanship Classes
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

Tuesday, January 22

8.00am Australia's National Ayrshire Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

9.00am Australia's National Illawarra Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

9.00am IDW Dairy Farm & Machinery Field Days Open
Main Oval

9.30am IDW Seminars Commence
Tennis Club Rooms

1.30pm Australia's National Guernsey Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

1.30pm Australia's National Brown Swiss Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

7.00pm Power of Women in Dairying Function
Wilson Hall

Wednesday, January 23

8.30am Australia's National Jersey Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

9.00am IDW Dairy Farm & Machinery Field Days Open
Main Oval

9.30am IDW Seminars Commence
Tennis Club Rooms

11.30am IDW Jersey Showcase Sale
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

12.30pm Jersey Australia Futurity
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

1.00pm National Jersey Show Continues
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

7.30pm IDW World Wide Sires Evolution Sale
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

Thursday, January 24

8.00am Australia's National Holstein Show
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

8.00am Dairy Industry Leaders Breakfast
The Ballantyne Complex

9.00am IDW Dairy Farm & Machinery Field Days Open
Main Oval

11.30am IDW Interbreed - Junior Champion Presentation
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

12.00pm The MaxCare Challenge
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

1.00pm National Holstein Show Continues
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

2.00pm Presentation of Lex Bunn Memorial Award
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

3.30pm IDW Interbreed - Intermediate Champion Presentation
Blackmore & Leslie Complex

5.30pm Presentation of Australia's Grand Champion
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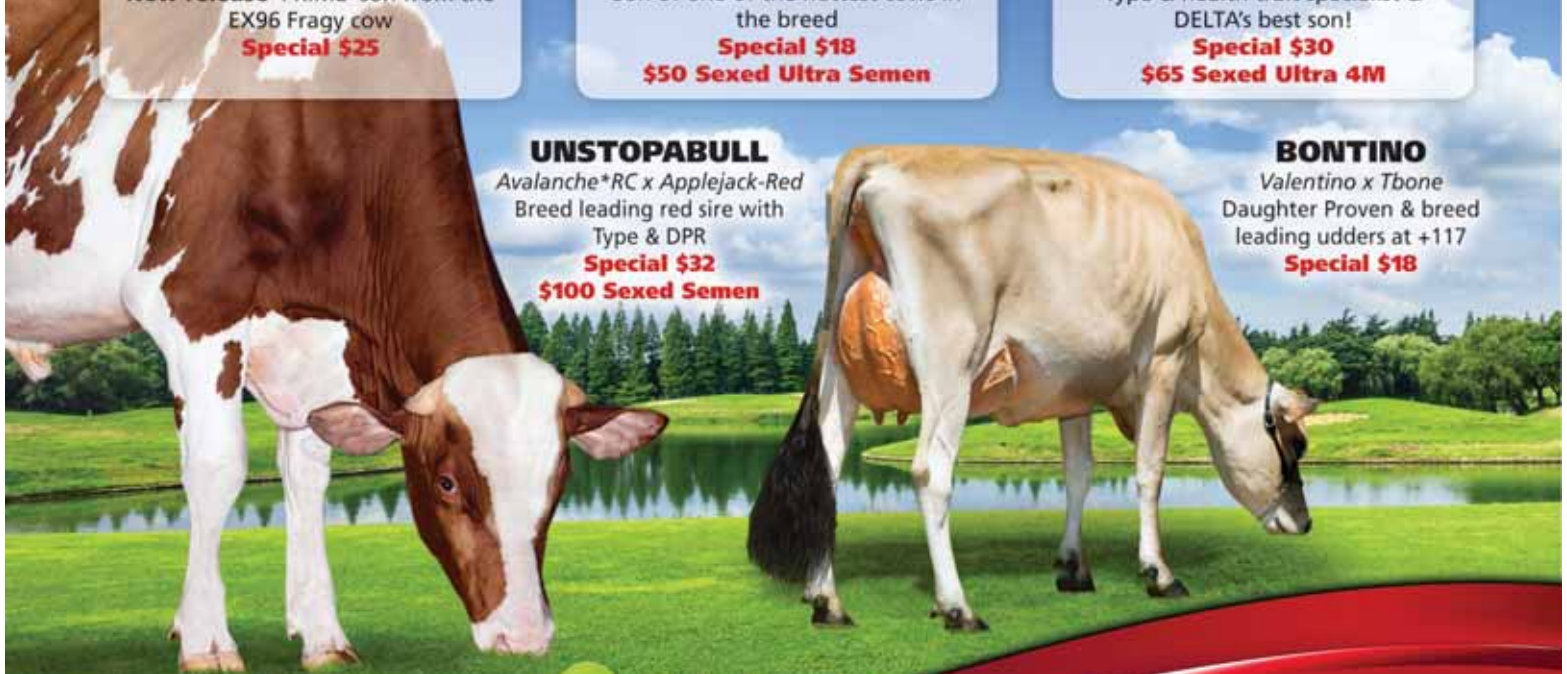

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Range of informative seminars

Key points
- ✔ Seminars to be held on three days
- ✔ Feature wide range of subjects
- ✔ Quality speakers from around the world

INTERNATIONAL Dairy Week will again feature a wide range of informative seminars. All seminars will be presented at the Ballantyne Centre at Tatura Park.

Tuesday, January 22

9.30am: The benefits of probiotics in Calf Rearing

Presented by: Daviesway Dasco

Vet Dr Robyn Plunkett BVSc graduated in 1982 from the University of Queensland. Since graduating she has gained years of experience with dairy cattle. Having a passion for cow health and interest in preventative medicine has led to extensive work with probiotics. Dr Plunkett will speak on the role and benefits of probiotics during the milk feeding phase.

10.15am: Think differently about preweaning nutrition

Presented by: MaxCare

Renown ruminant nutritionist Ian Sawyer will challenge the traditional model of early calf nutrition. This discussion will focus on the importance of getting the early nutrition right in pre-weaned calves to deliver significant whole-of-life production benefits in the herd.

1.30pm: The Future of Farming

Presented by: Lely Dairy Australia

Lely has a firm belief in the power of progress and improvement. Ever since the company was founded, it has generated new ideas to make the lives of farmers easier, the business more successful, and the future of agriculture brighter. The barn and shed solutions are all centred around free cow traffic. This benefits dairy farmers by providing more flexibility in day-to-day activities. Management systems link several business processes, such as milking and feeding, together. This results in real-time information on the animals, placing quick and efficient decision making within easy reach. Gert Aerts has years extensive knowledge of dairy farming and practical experience and research results that, combined, allow the company to offer accurate management advice for successful automatic milking and grazing.

Wednesday, January 23

9.30am Managing Cryptosporidium Parvum in Calves

Presented by: ProviCo

Cryptosporidiosis is common; a recent study of dairy farms in Australia demonstrated that it was contributing to calf scours on nearly 60 per cent of dairy farms. In this seminar, Adjunct Professor Ian Lean provides a review of Crypto and best management practices including innovations in the prevention and control of Crypto in calves.

10.45am: Chromosomal Mating — The Science in Geneticsm: the Art of Mating — creating the most profitable herd

Presented by: Stgenetics

Chromosomal mating is a well-established science in a modern, efficient, flexible new suite. Today's genomic mating programs are rapidly growing in popularity as they provide the most accurate information. Chromosomal mating is a multi-functional program to meet the needs of markets in different countries and regions optimising whole herd profitability, managing recessive disorders in the herd, maximising herds genomic Estimated Breeding Value and the frequencies of beneficial haplotypes or genomic regions and accounts for the impact of inbreeding. Expand the selection intensity and accuracy of selection of the herd with sexed semen and genomic testing. Maximise all of the above with selection of high ranking Eco Feed sires.

1.30pm: Dairy Hygiene Best Practice

Presented by: Daviesway Dasco

With milk quality such an important part of any dairy business, Hamish Hunt will speak on good dairy hygiene practices in all types of dairy parlours. Mr Hunt has a keen interest in precision agriculture for dairy and is a chemical process designer specialising in applications for dairy, chemical and biopharmaceutical industries for 30 years.

2.45pm Biosecurity and why it matters

Presented by: Murray Dairy

Let's talk about biosecurity — what does it mean to the Australian dairy industry? From border security to vaccination and signs on the gate, join Sarah-Chaplin to understand how this all fits together to protect the dairy industry and the farm business. Find out what farmers need to do to manage biosecurity on their farm, and how best to spend their time and money. Presented by Dr Sarah Chaplin

Thursday, January 24

11.30am: Virtual Farm Tour and Luncheon with Blondin Sires

Presented by: Agri-Gene

More than six years ago Dann Brady began with Ferme Blondin to develop their elite genetics and embryo business. Blondin is not a "traditional farm", with 5-10 flushes every week and new animals being genomic tested all the time. Two years ago Ferme Blondin made the decision to begin its own artificial insemination company that focuses on high genomic type combined with great pedigrees, production and health traits. Come and listen to Mr Brady talk about the unique challenges of each day. D

POW presents 'Year of the Farmer'

AN acclaimed Australian writer will be one of the guest speakers at the Power of Women event to be held as part of International Dairy Week. Rosalie Ham, author of the sensational bestseller *The Dressmaker*, which is now an award-winning film, will talk at the event. Ms Ham was born and raised in Jerilderie, NSW, where her family still farm. She now lives in Melbourne, where she teaches literature. Ms Ham has just released her third book *The Year of the Farmer*.

The other speaker will be Clare Modra, who was awarded the Power of Women in Dairying scholarship in 2017. She has returned from her trip of a lifetime to World Dairy Expo, with the trip made possible through the scholarship. Mrs Modra will present a brief overview of the highlights of her trip.

The Bette Hall Power of Women in Dairy Excellence Award will also be presented at the event, which is raising funds for the next POW scholarship.

Tickets are $10 per person, which includes ribbon sandwiches, nibbles and champagne/soft drink. Tickets are available online only at www.trybooking.com/YTHK. The event will be held at Wilson Hall, Tatura Park, from 7pm to 9.30pm on January 22. For more details contact Jade Sieben, phone 0407 377 114, or Robyn Barber, phone 0418 656 082.

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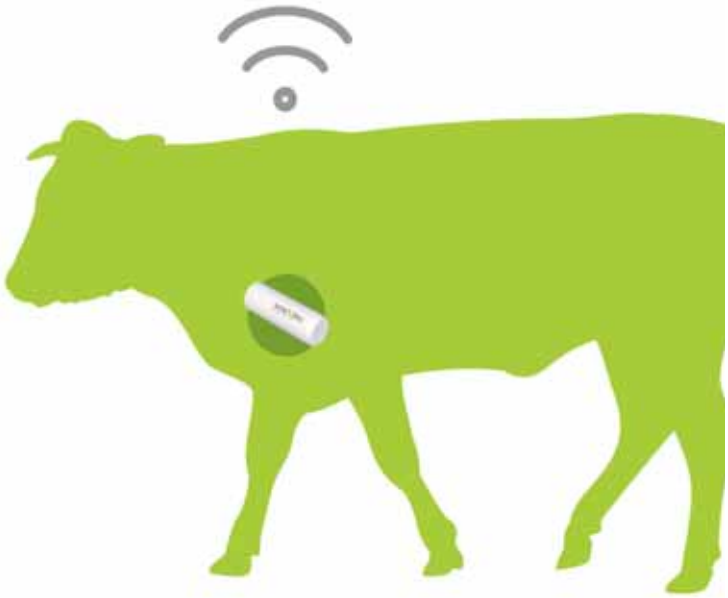

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Quality judges for dairy shows

INTERNATIONAL Dairy Week has again attracted a line up of high-quality judges from around the world.

ABS Australia/Ridley All Breeds National Youth Show

Brent Walker from Canada is no stranger to the ring at International Dairy Week, having previously judged the Holsteins back in the days under the big gum tree and the Jerseys in 2010.

At the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, Canada, Mr Walker has judged the Hays Classic — the largest youth show in Canada as well as the Holsteins in 1998, Jerseys in 1999 and again in 2017. In Australia he has also judged the Jerseys twice at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Residing in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, Mr Walker is an owner in the family-owned, multi-livestock enterprise Walkerbrae Farms, with his father Jim, brother Scott, son James and nephew Tyson. Last year the Walkers built a new dairy barn with free-stalls and a parlour for their 150-head Holstein and Jersey herd.

Mr Walker visits Australia annually to spend time with his family in Gippsland — wife Robin, daughter Alex and her husband Darien and their daughter Ivy.

IDW Sheri Martin Memorial Youth Showmanship Competition

Lisa McKay manages her family farm in Irrewillipe, Western Victoria, her husband Willy McKay. They milk a 200-cow registered Holstein and Jersey herd under the Linsand prefix.

Showing has been a huge part of Mrs McKay's life for many years. She has been fortunate enough to own and exhibit three IDW Supreme Champions and various All-Australian winners.

Mrs McKay has travelled extensively throughout Australia and North America — working for numerous breeders both on farm and at shows/sales. In the past few years she has judged in every state of Australia.

Australia's National Illawarra Show

Max Hyland established the Rockvale Ayrshire stud in Tasmania in 1962 before he, Jenny and family moved to Victoria in 1973. The Hylands dispersed their milking herd in 2015 and the finale heifer sale was in 2017, spanning 55 years of breeding and showing Ayrshires for the family.

Mr Hyland is a life member of Australian Ayrshires. He has judged at many shows throughout Australia and New Zealand including International Dairy Week, Sydney Royal (twice) Adelaide Royal, Melbourne Royal, Brisbane and many country shows throughout Australia. Mr Hyland has judged the Victorian Illawarra on farm competition and also the Jersey Semex Great Southern on farm competition.

Australia's National Guernsey Show

Chris Lang owns Springhill Farm at Big Prairie in Ohio, United States. Mr Lang milks 80 registered Guernseys and Holsteins and is assisted by several key staff including long-time employee Marshall Overholt.

Springhill has had All-American Nominations in four breeds, over 65 All-American and Junior All-American nominations in the Guernsey breed in the last nine years, including five National Junior Champions and has bred and owned the 2017 Senior and Grand Champion and the 2016 and 2014 Intermediate Champions at World Dairy Expo, National Grand Champion (Louisville) and two times HM National Grand Champion at World Dairy Expo.

He is no stranger to the show ring and his judging highlights include: Lead Judge at the Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Illinois and Minnesota State Fairs; Pennsylvania Farm Show, Eastern States Exposition (Big E), Western National In Washington, National Guernsey Show in Louisville, several times in the UK, Associate Judge at The World Dairy Expo and this auumn will be judging all breeds at the North Carolina State Fair.

Australia's National Brown Swiss Show

David Mayo was raised on his parents Parkvale stud at Albion Park, NSW. He worked with his father as herd manager up until 1990, when the herd was dispersed.

Mr Mayo and wife, Sharon have continued this tradition with their small Regal Park stud, which was established in 1990. ▶

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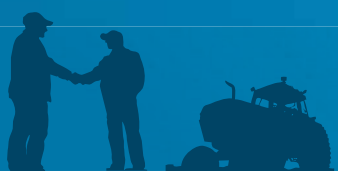

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◀ Since early June 2002 Mr Mayo has been employed by Semex. In 2015, he was appointed general manager of Semex New Zealand and then in 2018, general manager of Semex Australia.

He has judged at most shows in Australia including: International Dairy Week Ayrshire, Guernsey, Dairy Youth Challenge; Sydney Royal; Brisbane RNA; Melbourne Royal; Perth Royal; Canberra Royal; and Internationally at multiple shows in Canada, Finland, Scotland, South Africa and New Zealand.

Australia's National Ayrshire Show

Gregory Evans, of Georgetown, New York, US, operates Sunny Acres Farm along with his parents Doug and Kathryn, and girlfriend Kathy.

Sunny Acres is a sixth-generation dairy consisting of 100 head of registered Ayrshires. Sunny Acres has bred, owned or developed more than 200 All-American or Junior All American nominations.

Judging and evaluating cattle has always been a passion for Mr Evans. He has judged more than 50 local, district and state shows in the past seven years taking him to five different states and one province in Canada.

Australia's National Jersey Show

Brian Leslie has been involved in the pedigree dairy industry his entire life. Mr Leslie has spent most of his time as an auctioneer, selling mainly dairy sales in all states of Australia as well as overseas. He sold the record-priced animals in all dairy breeds including the record-priced $251,000 heifer at IDW in 2017.

He is a partner of Dairy Livestock Services, which has representatives throughout Australia and sells several thousand dairy cattle both domestically and internationally each year.

Mr Leslie has judged All Breeds at major and Royal shows in every State of Australia and has judged in Canada many times, including the huge Hayes Classic Royal Winter Fair. He has also judged many times in New Zealand as well as Germany, Northern Ireland, Jersey Island, Argentina and Japan.

He is the only Australian to judge the Holsteins at IDW.

Mr Leslie has enjoyed a long relationship with Jersey breeders all his life. He has judged the Jerseys at Sydney Royal, Brisbane Royal, Adelaide Royal (twice), Hobart and Perth Royals along with the NSW State Fair, Northern Victorian and Gippsland Jersey Fairs. Also several major Jersey Shows in New Zealand including the NZ Dairy Expo.

A major highlight was judging the Diamond Jubilee Royal Spring Show on Jersey Island 2012.

Australia's National Holstein Show

Adam Liddle and his wife Nicole own Liddleholme Farm in Argyle, New York, with their children, Anthony, Brock, and Hailee. Liddleholme, an 80-hectare farm, is home to 65 milking Holsteins with 38 of them being scored EX, including two at EX 96 and seven at EX 94. Liddleholme's showing accomplishments have culminated in many All-New York and All-American nominations. For 10 consecutive years, they have had an All-American nomination.

Mr Liddle serves on the state show committee for New York Holstein Association, is a Tri-County director, and is a delegate for Holstein USA.

His past judging experiences include multiple state and county shows. He has judged the Red and White show, in 2012, and the Holstein show in 2017, at the World Dairy Expo. He has also judged shows at the National level in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Switzerland, and Italy. D

Genetic planning delivers returns

GENETIC improvement planning is no less important than financial planning to remain viable in dairying, according to ABS Australia national sales manager Paul Quinlan.

"You don't have to pay the earth to breed a profitable cow or herd," he said. "And developing your own genetic improvement plan can be a lot more fun than doing your finances.

"After all, with genetic improvement, you're working on the lifeblood of your business — the productive animals you observe in the dairy every day. Seeing them improve according to your genetic plan is one of the most rewarding experiences a dairy farmer can enjoy."

Speaking at the announcement of the December Australian Breeding Values results, in which ABS once again delivered a spread of high-ranking bulls, Mr Quinlan said ABS offered a wide range of sires that made it economical to breed highly profitable herds.

ABS Australia was now ranked as the most preferred and trusted supplier of dairy and beef genetics in Australia, according to the recently released National Herd Improvement Association (NHIA) survey.

"No other company in more than two decades has been able to achieve this overwhelming endorsement from breeders in Australia," Mr Quinlan said. "We have been working hard to develop genetics that delivers the type of cow that Australian dairy farmers need in what is (mostly) an open paddock, grazing system.

"To have our customers endorse the efforts of ABS and our breeding strategy is very humbling."

Mr Quinlan said the rapid changes in genetic improvement meant that dairy farmers did not have to wait for the progeny to enter the herd to see if they had made progress.

"Genetic progress can be quickly and easily assessed well before you make that valuable purchase," he said. "Work with a genetic adviser who understands your goals and can build a long-term improvement plan with you; then you can measure and monitor your herd's progress against the genetics being recommended."

ABS has developed the most comprehensive genetic mating system available in the industry. ABS technical and genetic services manager, Asia region, Matt Aikenhead said the 'Genetic Mating System (GMS) Herd Audit' had been measuring, building strategies and delivering outcomes to ABS customers for many years. "The most pleasing thing for us is seeing these herds improve year on year," he said.

"By developing a breeding plan, sticking to that plan and using GMS herd audits to measure progress, it is truly exciting to see the rate of gain our customers can make towards business sustainability — their progress toward profitability."

ABS staff will be on the company's stand at International Dairy Week to talk with dairy farmers about their genetic planning.

Article supplied by ABS Australia, phone (03) 8358 8800, email <ABS.AU.Info@genusplc.com>, website <www.absglobal.com/au>.

Champions breed champions

GENETICS Australia will be bolstering its stocks this summer by adding sons from two Australian champions to its sire catalogue.

J11Salon and J11Cruiser are sons of the reigning International Dairy Week Supreme Champion All Breeds, Elmar Goldwyn Jessica 11 EX92 3E. They are sired by the prominent Doorman sons Walnutlawn Solomon (J11Salon) and Maverick Crush (J11Cruiser).

"This is a rare opportunity for Australian Holstein enthusiasts to inject some Jessica blood into their herd," Genetics Australia's marketing manager Claire McKie said. Few, if any young bulls have been available that can boast two IDW champions in their direct maternal line, with their great grand dam being the legendary Elmar Leader Jessica EX3E, the Grand Champion Holstein cow 2003.

The type genomic numbers on these young bulls are impressive, in particular, the udder ratings. In the December Australian Breeding Values, both were 106 for type while Cruiser was 113 for mammary system and Salon was 110. Semen from both is available now.

Jazzy, Gorbro Joans Jazz is a new Illawarra sire with outstanding show credentials. Its dam, Llandovery Joan 982 EX94, has an impressive record at IDW; first three-year-old 2015, first four-year-old 2016, first five-year-old 2017 and Grand Champion and Reserve Supreme Champion 2018. "Joan is undoubtedly one of the best Illawarra cows to ever grace the IDW show ring and we are thrilled to have her son Jazzy in our lineup", Ms McKie said. Sired by ABSmanu, Jazzy semen will be available at IDW.

Genetics Australia has semen from the two sons of the reigning International Dairy Week Supreme Champion All Breeds, Elmar Goldwyn Jessica 11 EX92 3E.

Genetics Australia has also added depth into its international sire stack with the addition of several new releases from at Jetstream Genetics USA.

Two new "custom-cut type" sires have joined the Jetstream offering. Blexy's Brewer RC (Diamondback x Goldwyn) is a red carrier sire from the 2017 World Dairy Expo Supreme Champion Blexy.

Immense (Jacoby x Beemer) has amazing type credentials. The grand dam of Immense is Our-Favourite Unlimited EX94.

Siemers Hotspot is a type superstar. This A22 Peak Hotline son is backed by the renowned Cookiecutter "H" family.

Genetics Australia has proven that it can pick some serious type sensations, having been awarded three out of the five IDW premium sire awards in 2018 for Maple-Downs GW Atwood (Holstein), All Lynn's Louie Valentino (Jersey) and Palmyra Tri-Star Burdette (Ayrshire). "We feel that with the addition of these new bulls, Australian dairy farmers will be spoilt for choice when selecting sires to breed their next champion," Ms McKie said. D

Genetics Australia staff will be on the company's stand at IDW to talk with farmers about its breeding success.

Article supplied by Genetics Australia, website <www.genaust.com.au>, phone 1800 039 047.

Cow monitoring made simple

LALLEMAND Animal Nutrition, a leading supplier of probiotics, silage inoculants and sealing systems used in the Australian fodder and livestock industries, has acquired the distribution rights for the smaXtec cow monitoring system.

The technology, which provides highly accurate, real-time data about cow health and fertility is already used in dairy herds throughout Australia.

Lallemand Animal Nutrition managing director Alex Turney said smaXtec saved time, money and work by monitoring body temperature, animal activity, water intake and rumen pH around the clock. This information can then be used to accurately predict a range of parameters, including heat, calving and metabolic challenge.

"Better heat detection can improve conception rates and reduce the number of days open," Mr Turney said. "Likewise, the early notification of calving enables managers and staff to put all relevant measures into place. There is a strong correlation between water and feed uptake, which means any irregularities can be detected right away. Tracking body temperature also allows health problems."

Carl and Rachelle Moon from Carrell Holsteins, Numurkah, Victoria, adopted the SmaXtec system in their 150-cow herd in 2016.

The heart of the smaXtec System is a 100-millimetre rumen bolus, which is administered to cows orally.

Collected data is transferred to a base station via a series of repeaters throughout the farm and then to the smaXtec Cloud database.

The dashboard, which can be accessed using a smartphone, tablet or office computer, provides a clear and precise overview of the health and performance of the herd.

Carl and Rachelle Moon from Carrell Holsteins, Numurkah, Victoria, adopted the SmaXtec system in their 150-cow herd in 2016 as a means of improving conception rates in their artificial insemination program.

"Getting more heifers in calf is important because it maximises our investment in genetic improvement and the cost of rearing calves," Mr Moon said. "This system allows us to see what's happening in our cows, even if we're off-farm. "It's so simple — the animal tells us when it's on heat or under stress and sends us an alert to our phone or office computer so we can take the appropriate action.

"Mr Moon said the system was extremely 'farmer-friendly'. "Once it's set up, it's very simple to use and there is zero maintenance," he said. "The app on our phone gives us access all the basic information we need, quickly and easily. Once a task is complete, I just tick the box on my phone and it updates the cow's profile and the whole system." D

Lallemand Animal Nutrition staff will be on the company's stand at International Dairy Week to answer questions about the SmaXtex system.

Article supplied by Llallemand Animal Nutrition, website <http://lallemandanimalnutrition.com/en/australia/>, phone (07) 5451 0125.

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Pre-weaning nutrition key to lifetime production

PRE-WEANING nutrition has an impact on the long-term profitability of a dairy herd. "Better nutrition for your calves will deliver a better return on your investment," MaxCare business manager Tom Newton said.

Something to consider is the impact the pre-weaning period has on whole-of-life production. Recently data (from Gelsinger et al., 2016) was presented showing a 130-kilogram increase in 305-day milk yield with each 100-gram per day increase of Average Daily Gain (ADG) in the pre-weaning period. This means if a farm can increase its ADG in the preweaning period from 500g per day to 800g per day, it would produce an extra 390kg of milk per cow per lactation. "Increasing average daily gain can be achieved by feeding a high-quality calf milk replacer (CMR) with higher nutrient densities which are above 'traditional' rates" Mr Newton said.

Figure 1 shows a 'traditional view' of feeding one per cent of body weight with a lower nutrient density CMR (20:20 protein:fat) compared with a 'modern view' of feeding 1.5pc of body weight with a CMR containing 28pc protein and 22pc fat.

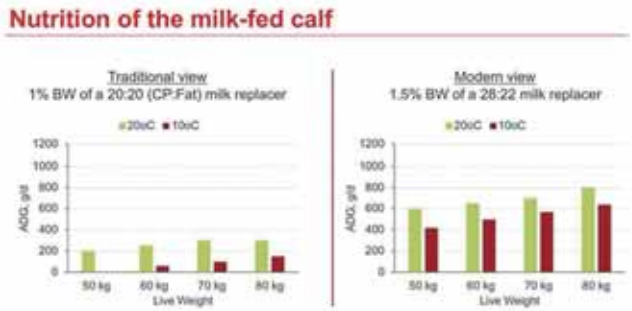

Figure 1: Impact of Feeding Rates, CMR Nutrient Density and Ambient Temperature on Average Daily Gain. Source: Dr. Luis Felipe P. Silva (2018)

Figure 1 also demonstrates that the atmospheric temperature can have an impact on ADG. Farmers need to consider how to adapt the feeding regime for calves when the temperature drops.

It's important to understand the desired Mature Cow Body Weight (MBW) determines the growth rate needed in calves. Some 50pc of skeletal growth comes in the first six months and the cow needs to achieve 85pc of its MBW after first calving.

To achieve this, the following targets are needed:

- Weaning Weight: 17pc of MBW.
- Puberty (7 months): 35pc MBW.
- Joining (13 months): 55pc MBW.
- Pre-calving (24 months): 94pc MBW.

The feed conversion ratio (i.e. feed:growth) at the different stages of life for a pre-calving heifer is:

- Birth to Weaning = 2:1.
- Weaning to Puberty = 6:1.
- Puberty to Joining = 13:1.
- Joining to Late Pregnancy = 15:1

Maxcare staff will be on the company's stand at International Dairy Week to answers questions on calf milk replacers. Article supplied by Maxcare, website <www.maxumfoods.com>.

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Semex introduces female immunity test

FIVE years after the introduction of Immunity+, the , award-winning genetic technology that was developed by Dr Bonnie Mallard at the University of Guelph, Semex has taken the next step and brought it to clients worldwide. With its female genomic testing program, Elevate, Semex is now offering a genomic test that ranks and selects cows based on their genetic merit as well as their Immunity+ genomic test results.

Tested females will be classified as having high, average or low immune genomic status. Those animals classified as high receive the official Semex immunity female designation. Female immune genomics have been validated in commercial herds in the United States.

How are genomic values calculated?

Single-step methodology (Misztal et al., 2009) is used to combine genotypes and phenotypes of thousands of animals to estimate genomic values for anti-body mediated and cell-mediated immune response. Applying all animals tested for immune response using the University of Guelph's patented high immune response test as a reference population, genomic values for any genotyped Holstein animal can be calculated.

Immune response is highly heritable, and so genomic selection with a moderate size reference population is highly accurate. Animals that exceed 1 standard deviation above population mean are classified as high. Animals less than 1 standard deviation below the population mean are classified as low.

What is the impact of Immunity Female on farm?

Fifteen large commercial herds in the United States were analysed to assess the impact of female immune genomics on disease incidence. Mastitis, lameness and total disease frequency in heifers and cows (any case of routinely recorded disease) were analysed as the most prevalent and consistently well-recorded traits. Disease frequencies reflect the current population average, including some animals in early lactation. A model was fit to determine the effect of High immune genomic females compared to herdmates, after fixed effects for herd, age, and parity. All traits investigated were found to be significant (see Table 1). Semex will continue to validate the effect of iImmune genomics in commercial herds as more and more animals are genotyped with Elevate in the coming years. D

Table 1: Results of Immunity+ trait analysis of 15 US farms

	Mastitis	Persistent mastitis	Lameness	Total disease	Heifer disease
High Immunity+ cows	7.2%	0.5%	12.6%	18.5%	21%
Average	8.7%	1.6%	22.6%	27.1%	21%
Low	10.0%	2.4%	19.5%	27.0%	255

For more information on immunity female test, Elevate and Immunity+, visit Semex's site at International Dairy Week, to hear all about it first hand from Semex's genomics program manager, research and innovation team, Dr Steven Larmer. Article supplied by Semex, website <www.semex.com.au>.

BPI becoming preferred breeding index

Key points

- ✔ Balanced Performance Index introduced in 2015
- ✔ Many farmers set minimum BPI for bulls to buy
- ✔ Herd 19 conference to present exciting speakers

THE Balanced Performance Index (BPI) is rapidly becoming the preferred index of genetic merit used by Australian dairy farmers and the herd improvement industry.

Michelle Axford, from DataGene, said the BPI, released in 2015, included the main traits that influence a dairy cow's contribution to the farm business — production, fertility, cell count, feed efficiency, functional type, longevity and workability.

"Dairy farmers may have different breeding priorities, but they all run a business, so they do consider the traits that affect the bottom line," she said.

"Many farmers set a minimum BPI cut off for bulls they buy. There are so many high BPI bulls available, that this approach leaves plenty of choice for priority traits, budget and company preferences."

An easy way to select for BPI is to always breed replacements from bulls that carry the Good Bulls logo. The Good Bulls logo means the animal meets DataGene's minimum criteria for BPI and reliability and is available for purchase.

DataGene has announced the dates of its 2019 ABV releases: April 8, August 19 and December 9.

'Dairy farmers may have different breeding priorities, but they all run a business, so they do consider the traits that affect the bottom line.'

Contact: Datagene website <www.datagene.com.au>, phone (03) 9032 7191.

Herd 19

Dairy breeding enthusiasts will be eagerly looking forward to Herd 19 which will be held at Bendigo on March 19-20.

Held once every two years, this conference has a reputation for presenting exciting speakers at the cutting edge of herd improvement.

Herd 19 is no exception with the program boasting leaders in the field from both Australia and overseas.

With a theme of 'Delivering Change in Herd Improvement', Herd 19 delegates will hear about the latest developments in genomics, semen sexing and robotics.

New herd testing technologies such as MIR spectroscopy will also be covered.

Speakers include a healthy mix of farmers and farm service providers to provide a practical perspective. Presentations include:

- Keeping up the pace of change on farm: Craig Lister, Victorian dairy farmer, leading breeder of high genetic merit bulls and DataGene board member.
- The unintended consequences of genomic selection: Dr Sijne Van der Beek, Manager Innovation CRV, Netherlands.
- MIR reveals more from herd test samples: Jennie Pryce, AgriBio
- Mastitis management without blanket dry cow treatment: Dr John Penry, Anexa FVC, animal health and vet services, NZ. D

Register before January 31 for early bird discount. Register at <https://www.ivvy.com.au/event/Herd19/herd-19-register-now.html> or contact Jaydee Events, phone (03) 5659 4219, mobile 0419 878 055, email <deanne@jaydee.net.au>.

The Good Bulls Guide provides an easy way for farmers to identify high-quality bulls.

Jelbart joins DataGene

VICTORIAN dairy farmer Tim Jelbart has been appointed to the board of DataGene, the dairy industry's organisation to drive herd improvement.

He was appointed at DataGene's annual general meeting in November at which Simone Jolliffe, dairy farmer from Wagga Wagga, NSW, and Graeme Gillan, Holstein Australia chief executive officer and chairman of the National Herd Improvement Organisation were re-appointed to the board.

Mr Jelbart is general manager of the 1000-cow dairy operation, Jelbart Dairy, in South Gippsland, which he co-owns with his two brothers. Before returning to the family farm, he established a career in agribusiness property valuation, which he continues on a part-time basis.

Gippsland dairyfarmer Tim Jelbart has been appointed to the board of DataGene.

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IRG	Ireland Genetics
LIC	Livestock Improvement
SEM	Semex Australia
SHG	Shamrock Genetics
SXT	ST Genetics Australia
TLG	Total Livestock Genetics
VIK	Viking Genetics
WWS	World Wide Sires
TBA	To BE Advised

Good Bulls Guide for Holstein — Balanced Performance Index (BPI) — Australian Proven

			Indices				Production Traits				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
1	29HO16888	SEAGULL-BAY MVP-ET	337	90	258	354	197	98	855	144	110	84	110	112	94	103	104	104	92	109	89	121	93	-124	45	ABS
2	MAEBULL	CALISTER MAEBULL	317	82	285	314	129	94	115	32	109	68	103	103	77	101	100	103	75	112	77	194	82	70	39	GAC
3	TRICKIN	JET STAR MANOMAN TRICKIN	304	82	232	281	173	92	53	32	108	76	104	100	81	106	101	100	74	113	81	126	87	-58	40	GAC
4	29HO16714	DE-SU 11236 BALISTO-ET	299	86	233	314	183	95	88	23	108	84	105	106	89	101	102	104	79	104	89	156	92	-40	43	ABS
5	29HO16887	DE-SU 11620 NIRVANA-ET	298	84	240	314	167	93	79	25	108	78	107	110	85	101	103	104	73	105	86	155	89	-70	42	ABS
6	011HO11379	LONE-OAK-ACRES ALTARABO	294	86	255	335	130	98	297	48	111	78	109	112	82	103	104	105	78	108	87	177	90	-34	41	ALT
7	GEEMCEE	RENGAW MANOMAN HUMMER-ET	289	78	204	220	195	92	58	26	104	65	98	100	76	100	102	102	69	110	73	154	74	-109	39	GAC
8	29HO17553	UECKER SUPERSIRE JOSUPER-ET	281	85	219	260	155	95	130	33	109	79	102	103	86	99	103	104	78	106	86	158	89	-101	42	ABS
9	29HO16667	DE-SU 11228 TOPSY-ET	279	87	194	292	221	96	187	37	106	83	105	106	87	101	99	102	84	102	89	142	92	-98	43	ABS
10	0200HO07450	AMIGHETTI NUMERO UNO	279	90	247	281	79	99	497	106	111	88	105	109	94	103	102	103	87	114	93	162	96	-67	45	SEM
11	29HO16909	LARCREST COMMANDER-ET	277	88	205	321	156	97	363	84	109	83	108	111	92	104	105	105	86	105	90	148	92	-181	45	ABS
12	CHRISTMAS	EMU BANKS CHRISTMAS-ET	276	91	178	261	221	99	2250	281	103	84	107	101	96	101	101	102	96	102	93	119	96	-140	46	GAC
13	CARLITION	KAARMONA CARLITION	276	80	266	244	54	93	88	31	111	67	102	99	75	102	101	102	73	116	76	164	80	29	39	ABS
14	0200HO06267	GEN-I-BEQ LAVAMAN	274	88	226	254	163	96	240	49	105	87	105	109	90	102	97	102	82	110	92	134	96	35	44	SEM
15	29HO12772	BALLYCAIRN OMAN PELLO	266	88	202	200	158	97	248	52	106	85	97	94	87	101	100	102	87	109	88	159	95	-52	43	ABS
16	JAKOVICH	RENGAW CROWN JAKOVICH	261	78	215	241	136	94	101	23	107	59	102	102	61	104	101	103	67	107	72	139	77	8	32	AGR
17	COGENTTWIST	COGENT TWIST	261	91	200	239	135	99	742	119	109	91	104	100	94	101	104	103	93	107	94	143	97	-96	45	SXT
18	29HO17607	BRYCEHOLME SS BOASTFUL	261	85	235	224	83	97	205	35	110	74	98	102	86	100	102	103	76	111	81	160	88	16	42	ABS
19	011HO11138	COOMBOONA SUPERSTITION REGAL	251	87	197	281	121	98	320	69	108	82	105	105	87	102	104	104	79	106	89	184	90	-118	43	ALT
20	JANEK	RENGAW JARDIN JANEK	250	84	221	227	118	97	180	49	108	72	103	104	78	100	103	103	77	106	80	152	85	63	40	ABS
21	WRANGLER	RENGAW MANOMAN WRANGLER-ET	249	79	182	228	159	93	72	37	107	65	104	103	76	99	102	102	69	106	73	143	76	-84	39	GAC
22	FULLTHROTTLE	CURRAJUGLE FULL THROTTLE-IMP-ET	248	82	186	217	134	94	111	47	106	70	102	103	78	102	101	102	77	111	77	151	83	-120	40	ABS
23	ROYALMAN	HINDLEE GOLDWYN OMANROYAL 121003	248	90	204	229	125	99	1180	163	105	80	103	104	95	101	102	102	94	111	91	80	94	-16	46	GAC
24	7H11351	SEAGULL-BAY SUPERSIRE	246	90	195	207	124	98	239	51	108	88	100	101	95	99	105	105	89	105	93	165	97	-83	46	GAC
25	OTTMAR	DILEE BUDDHA OLLIE 751	244	79	210	181	171	93	78	33	98	65	94	98	78	100	102	102	72	102	68	146	74	163	40	GAC
26	GVLIQUIDGOLD	GENERVATIONS LIQUID GOLD	240	86	173	210	153	95	158	41	105	81	102	101	86	101	97	101	79	105	88	166	89	-86	42	WWS
27	7H9420	FUSTEAD GOLDWYN GUTHRIE	240	92	227	293	80	99	2276	296	109	94	109	113	97	101	102	104	96	104	97	141	96	34	47	GAC
28	NADAL	JET STAR MANOMAN NADARL -ET	237	82	162	199	177	94	90	35	103	69	102	104	79	102	99	100	76	105	77	137	79	-99	40	GAC
29	HOMANIFOLD	MAINSTREAM MANIFOLD	234	92	165	221	168	99	805	67	106	93	103	104	95	98	100	103	90	109	95	130	99	-106	46	SEM
30	VIKBENTO	VH BENTO	229	88	167	216	168	98	435	61	106	83	102	100	83	101	101	103	88	107	88	132	92	-19	41	VIK
31	7H11163	TIGER-LILLY LADD P-RED	227	85	212	268	43	94	59	26	109	84	107	109	87	101	101	100	76	110	89	170	92	-44	42	GAC
32	7H10176	MR REGELCREEK SHOT AL	224	89	209	214	72	98	409	68	108	88	102	101	89	101	102	103	87	107	92	157	95	65	43	GAC
33	BUDDHA	BUSHLEA PERFECTOR BOLD-ET	220	93	177	189	126	99	4658	486	104	97	101	101	99	100	102	102	99	105	98	146	98	-3	47	GAC
34	29HO17573	SEAGULL-BAY SILVER-ET	220	87	171	242	107	97	181	53	110	81	106	110	89	105	101	104	79	104	87	123	91	-128	43	ABS
35	0200HO06480	VAL-BISSON DOORMAN	220	89	176	255	102	98	225	72	109	87	107	111	95	94	102	104	80	106	91	192	95	-101	46	SEM
36	CHALLENGER	RENGAW MANOMAN CHALLENGER-ET	220	78	194	209	79	92	61	29	108	65	104	106	73	101	103	103	69	108	72	147	74	-32	38	GAC
37	SHOLTZ	ST. CLAIR SHOLTZ-TWIN	219	88	135	182	177	98	561	103	104	79	102	99	89	98	104	104	90	102	86	151	91	-173	44	ABS
38	DELSANTO	MANNA FARM DEL SANTO	217	93	169	242	161	99	3747	403	101	97	106	110	98	101	102	102	98	98	98	113	99	25	47	GAC

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ABS	ABS Australia	**ECL**	Eclipse Genetics
AGR	Agri-Gene	**GAC**	Genetics Australia
ALT	Alta Genetics	**GGI**	GGI Australia
AMC	Agrimilk Consulting	**IRG**	Ireland Genetics
AXB	Auzred XB	**LIC**	Livestock Improvement
CRV	CRV Australia	**SEM**	Semex Australia
		SHG	Shamrock Genetics
		SXT	ST Genetics Australia
		TLG	Total Livestock Genetics
		VIK	Viking Genetics
		WWS	World Wide Sires
		TBA	To Be Advised

			Indices				Production Traits				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
39	011HO11425	ZAHBULLS ALTA1STCLASS	217	86	214	261	49	97	237	51	109	80	106	113	87	104	102	103	74	108	86	174	89	42	43	ALT
40	29HO16955	VIEW-HOME MONTEREY-ET	216	88	188	208	110	98	394	70	107	81	101	108	88	104	104	103	83	107	87	120	90	31	43	ABS
41	MRSASS	JET STAR MRSAM SASS-ET	214	85	176	167	136	96	117	49	104	74	101	101	85	101	99	101	83	104	81	142	86	40	42	GAC
42	JUSTLE	RENGAW MOM JUSTLE	213	80	178	116	132	96	174	40	107	62	93	97	66	97	101	102	71	110	72	104	79	77	34	AGR
43	WARRADYN	WARRAMONT PALERMO DYNASTY	213	81	184	200	108	94	81	30	108	68	102	100	80	102	102	102	77	102	73	147	77	56	40	GAC
44	ARMAND	HILL VALLEY O ARMAND	212	79	140	162	169	92	62	24	104	66	98	98	76	103	100	101	73	98	72	136	75	-92	39	GAC
45	PICOLA	ADLEJAMA DELSANTO PICOLA	211	91	161	177	138	99	1338	173	104	86	100	102	97	101	102	103	96	100	92	137	96	-17	46	GAC
46	PICARDUS	PINE-TREE-PICARDUS-ET	211	86	160	206	115	95	152	49	106	80	102	104	87	102	103	102	83	104	87	119	89	-110	43	ABS
47	7H8081	ENSENADA TABOO PLANET ET	210	93	184	216	67	99	935	175	110	98	104	109	99	100	102	103	96	102	99	132	99	-78	47	GAC
48	0200HO05592	CRACKHOLM FEVER	208	93	205	239	14	99	2179	290	111	96	106	105	98	102	104	105	96	106	97	164	98	-17	47	SEM
49	VIKVHMIRACLE	VH MIRACLE	207	89	218	201	17	98	556	80	109	86	102	102	89	104	102	101	91	109	91	159	94	111	44	VIK
50	JOPPA	KANDES M40-ET	204	78	137	134	147	92	73	28	102	64	96	99	77	101	102	102	67	104	68	124	72	-92	39	GAC

Good Bulls Guide for Holstein — Balanced Performance Index (BPI) — Genomic ABV(g)s

			Indices				Production				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
1	29HO18698	ABS JERONIMO-P-ET	408	58	350	359	199	73	0	0	110	43	102	102	45	101	102	102	54	120	42	162	55	78	26	ABS
2	NACASH	NACASH	390	60	314	347	204	75	0	0	110	45	102	103	47	102	103	104	57	113	42	167	58	-40	27	AGR
3	GGIHOTSPOT	WIL HOTSPOT P	385	60	324	341	198	74	0	0	111	45	102	102	47	102	102	103	56	113	44	156	57	33	27	GAC
4	7HO14250	PINE-TREE CW LEGACY-ET	376	60	337	339	164	74	0	0	112	45	100	102	47	99	101	102	56	114	44	169	57	103	27	WWS
5	7HO14174	OCD ALLTIME LATROBE-ET	374	60	314	325	194	74	0	0	109	46	99	106	49	100	101	101	55	117	45	165	59	18	28	WWS
6	011HO12161	PEAK ALTAAROLDIS-ET	369	59	299	347	208	74	0	0	110	42	103	103	44	101	103	104	54	111	42	148	56	6	26	ALT
7	011HO12163	PEAK ALTAANCHOR-ET	361	61	306	332	174	75	0	0	112	45	101	104	46	101	101	102	55	113	45	136	59	13	27	ALT
8	CHAIRMAN	ST GEN DIRECTOR CHAIRMAN-ET	359	61	291	307	198	76	0	0	108	44	100	102	46	102	102	102	56	115	46	147	60	2	27	AGR
9	011HO12336	PEAK ALTALEAP-ET	359	61	302	318	178	75	0	0	111	46	99	101	48	100	103	103	57	112	42	168	58	32	27	ALT
10	011HO12258	PEAK ALTASTAFFORD-ET	359	62	296	328	177	76	0	0	111	47	102	102	49	100	103	103	58	112	46	155	59	-25	28	ALT

Good Bulls Guide for Red Breeds — Balanced Performance Index (BPI) — Australian Proven

			Indices				Production				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
1	VFOSKE	V FOSKE	278	91	206	279	170	99	1952	152	108	91	105	106	92	102	102	104	97	104	97	113	97	-129	42	VIK
2	AXBBLACKWOOD	BLACKWOOD PARK BLACKWOOD	275	69	238	265	169	89	57	10	101	48	100	108	62	102	102	103	45	100	46	113	66	84	30	AXB
3	ARBSCAREBEAR	JOHVILLE PARK SCAREBEAR	254	77	214	206	152	93	84	31	101	58	97	101	67	103	102	104	77	103	60	118	75	75	33	GAC
4	ARBABBOTT	BEAULANDS ABBOTT	240	76	168	202	244	93	84	27	95	56	95	96	66	101	100	103	72	97	61	61	76	93	32	GAC
5	ARBCYGNET	BEAULANDS SWANNIES - ET	235	74	202	200	128	92	76	31	101	54	100	107	63	103	102	103	67	104	59	122	71	29	31	GAC
6	ARBDMAX	LOUVIC D MAX	183	81	101	95	189	96	143	46	99	63	94	90	64	90	101	98	79	103	75	112	84	-58	32	GAC
7	ARBBONJOVI	BOSGOWAN BON JOVI	180	91	138	160	109	99	2292	251	103	93	100	103	89	101	100	102	98	105	97	82	98	-27	42	GAC
8	ARBDAIRYWEEK	BEAULANDS DAIRY WEEK	173	76	152	161	64	94	102	35	104	51	102	106	52	100	101	101	76	100	63	103	75	-9	26	GAC
9	ARBOBAMA	BEAULANDS OBAMA	169	82	142	158	104	96	177	63	105	68	97	95	67	105	99	102	86	100	79	97	85	86	33	GAC

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AGR	Agri-Gene	**GAC**	Genetics Australia
ALT	Alta Genetics	**GGI**	GGI Australia
AMC	Agrimilk Consulting	**IRG**	Ireland Genetics
AXB	Auzred XB	**LIC**	Livestock Improvement
CRV	CRV Australia	**SEM**	Semex Australia
		SHG	Shamrock Genetics
		SXT	ST Genetics Australia
		TLG	Total Livestock Genetics
		VIK	Viking Genetics
		WWS	World Wide Sires
		TBA	To Be Advised

Good Bulls Guide for Jersey — Balanced Performance Index (BPI) — Australian Proven

			Indices				Production				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
1	0200JE00183	SUNSET CANYON DAVID	359	86	288	414	194	97	193	44	114	82	112	114	86	105	105	107	73	100	86	115	91	-100	41	SEM
2	7J1038	ALL LYNNS LOUIE VALENTINO	266	92	226	351	85	99	1561	160	113	93	115	117	97	103	106	107	96	100	96	135	98	-166	45	GAC
3	7J1163	ALL LYNNS VALENTINO IRWIN	235	88	215	322	58	97	318	52	112	84	112	114	91	103	105	105	87	98	88	155	93	-68	42	GAC
4	CSCAMBITION	RIVERSIDE AMBITION	228	84	211	193	109	97	168	52	104	71	101	103	77	102	96	99	81	103	79	96	86	128	37	ABS
5	011JE1118	ALL LYNNS VALENTINO MARVEL	216	87	206	266	58	97	197	47	110	81	107	108	82	102	105	104	83	99	88	147	93	31	38	ALT
6	7J1151	BUTTERCREST GALVANIZE	213	85	167	287	93	95	156	37	111	81	111	110	85	102	104	105	78	96	87	116	87	-148	40	GAC
7	CSCMELVARA	WALLACEDALE MELVARA	210	85	194	234	74	98	277	77	108	74	107	113	81	101	102	102	82	104	81	132	89	7	38	ABS
8	VOYAGEDALE	WALLACEDALE MELS VOYAGE	197	78	154	176	155	93	101	41	102	60	104	103	63	101	101	101	78	102	71	125	79	44	31	GAC
9	BOSMURMUR	OKURA LIKA MURMUR S3J	193	91	161	174	86	99	741	100	102	92	97	97	91	99	100	100	93	104	96	148	96	16	42	CRV
10	AUSSIEGOLD	BROADLIN AUSSIEGOLD P - ET	190	88	132	238	91	98	422	97	107	80	111	107	85	102	103	104	91	100	85	135	92	-202	40	GAC
11	29JE3762	ALL LYNNS LEGAL VOLCANO-ET	187	84	161	235	69	96	132	35	108	79	108	104	82	103	105	105	76	99	84	143	86	-47	38	ABS
12	CRVMARVARIE	WALLACEDALE MARVARIE ET	186	80	141	204	117	93	95	33	103	68	111	106	71	102	105	102	78	101	76	104	80	-58	34	CRV
13	BOSGREGSTAR	WHITE STAR GREG	180	88	128	121	130	98	456	96	101	84	98	95	84	101	102	102	91	101	91	109	94	-26	40	CRV
14	BARTPOWER	DARAWAY FLOWERPOWER SATIRA	178	91	186	229	25	99	1047	246	106	93	110	114	91	101	100	102	96	102	96	136	98	49	42	GAC
15	TAHBILK	BEULAH TAHBILK	173	82	108	218	138	96	149	43	105	66	109	109	76	105	107	106	79	98	75	91	83	-144	37	GAC
16	LEVIGENES	BROADLIN LEVI	166	80	127	194	107	97	196	46	105	58	105	106	64	101	104	105	76	102	73	96	83	-33	30	GAC
17	CRVVOYANT	MERSEYBANK CLAIRVOYANT	164	77	132	189	62	94	91	27	109	61	103	103	71	100	102	102	67	104	56	134	73	-89	34	CRV
18	CSCEDISON	CAIRNBRAE TBONE EDISON	161	84	75	188	160	97	181	58	102	71	105	103	75	102	102	101	81	97	79	85	85	-206	36	ABS

Good Bulls Guide for Jersey — Balanced Performance Index (BPI) — Genomic ABV(g)s

			Indices				Production				Survival		Conformation Traits			Workability				Daughter Fertility		Cell Count		Feed Saved		Source
Rank	Bull ID	Bull Name	BPI $	BPI Rel	HWI	TWI	ASI	ASI Rel	No. Dtrs	No. Herds	Sur-vival	Rel	Over Type	Mam Syst	Type Rel	Milk Spd	Temp	Like	Rel	Dtr Fert	Rel	CC	Rel	Feed Saved	Rel	
1	PUBLICAN	WHITE STAR PATRICK	320	55	237	348	215	71	0	0	108	39	107	110	41	104	105	105	51	102	37	91	49	-78	20	AGR
2	NZGCRESMISTY	CRESCENT EXCELL MISTY ET	316	61	209	312	213	74	0	0	106	43	100	98	61	100	98	98	45	102	44	155	76	-166	31	LIC
3	NZGLARSON	EVLEEN INTEGRITY LARSON	310	67	177	241	294	78	17	2	103	51	96	91	61	102	101	99	48	100	55	128	91	-170	32	LIC
4	DOBSON	WHITE STAR DOORMAN	296	55	231	317	183	68	0	0	109	41	106	107	43	102	103	104	49	101	42	114	54	-36	21	GAC
5	DOUGGAN	WHITE STAR DOUGLAS	293	56	226	289	180	69	0	0	107	43	102	103	46	102	102	104	51	104	43	135	55	-46	22	GAC
6	CRVTRIPLSTAR	BRAEDENE PAS TRIPLESTAR	279	64	185	264	237	76	0	0	102	48	100	100	59	105	101	101	49	102	48	108	78	-64	31	CRV
7	29JE3987	NFW SPARKY IMPISH-ET	276	64	217	284	190	75	0	0	106	54	106	102	64	102	103	103	48	100	51	115	71	27	31	ABS
8	NZGBELFLOYD	BELLS OI FLOYD S3J	271	64	167	257	205	76	0	0	107	46	100	97	63	99	101	100	44	99	51	140	86	-201	32	LIC
9	CRVWALKER	PUKEROA GUN WALKER JG	270	60	190	238	203	73	0	0	105	43	100	98	54	101	100	101	45	101	42	129	69	-47	28	CRV
10	CRVCARRICK	PUKETAWA KING CARRICK JG	269	64	189	258	182	76	0	0	104	47	101	99	60	102	99	98	49	102	47	141	78	-93	31	CRV
11	NZGINTEGRITY	OKURA LT INTEGRITY	262	70	174	250	218	78	68	8	105	57	102	98	65	96	100	99	53	100	76	117	93	-64	34	LIC
12	ALGERNON	BROADLIN HILUX	262	56	200	260	171	71	0	0	106	41	103	108	41	102	101	104	53	103	39	92	51	-38	20	GAC
13	0200JE00230	BUTTERCREST GAMEDAY	258	70	205	292	131	78	4	1	111	70	109	108	72	103	103	105	52	100	74	114	79	-95	34	SEM
14	MANLY	BROADLIN 179 GLENFERRIE-ET	254	52	205	267	136	66	0	0	108	39	105	107	40	103	103	105	50	101	38	99	49	-42	19	GAC
15	NZGWILLANDMO	WILLAND LT DYNAMO	253	67	197	281	150	78	0	0	106	50	104	104	60	102	102	100	49	99	54	122	91	-33	32	LIC
16	0200JE01015	AHLEM RATCLIFFE-ET	253	62	240	289	42	76	0	0	114	48	106	108	54	104	100	101	50	104	38	144	67	-16	27	SEM
17	VALIN	KINGS VIEW VALIN 4697	247	58	208	316	99	72	1	1	110	50	113	113	46	103	105	106	56	100	44	122	55	-91	22	GAC
18	SANDBANK	ARALUEN PARK HATMAN SANDBANK	246	58	176	260	171	72	0	0	106	44	106	106	46	101	101	103	56	101	42	86	54	-78	22	GAC
19	CRVMAXWELL	WAITEITEI SUPER MAXWELL	246	67	179	254	154	78	0	0	104	52	102	101	61	104	101	101	49	104	53	130	90	-80	32	CRV
20	0200JE07756	GOLDEN GDK VIVALDI	245	68	181	270	159	77	5	2	106	64	105	103	61	101	101	99	45	101	75	124	81	-49	30	SEM

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VR4442687

Jerseys take place as 'Dairy's Finest'

Key points

- ✔ New campaign to promote the dairy breed in Australia
- ✔ Two-pronged campaign focusing on breeding and milk
- ✔ Aim to increase Jerseys to 25 per cent of national herd

AUSTRALIAN Jersey cows are taking their place as 'Dairy's Finest' in a new campaign designed to highlight the breed's success.

The new promotion called 'Dairy's Finest' is highlighting the strengths of Jersey cows and milk in Australian farming conditions.

Along with a new corporate logo, Jersey Australia has developed sub-brands as part of the campaign.

In the genetics field, the '5 Star' Jersey is being highlighted as the finest cow. A '5 star' Jersey is one that is registered, artificial insemination-bred, herd-tested, classified and genomic-tested.

It can also be promoted for five features that are best loved and known about the Jersey cow: highly fertile, feed efficient, heat tolerant, medium-sized and most profitable cow for Australia farming conditions.

For Jersey Australia, the new logo and image are part of a multi-faceted campaign to highlight the benefits of the breed and to grow its market share in Australia.

When devising the term Dairy's Finest, they believe they've hit the mark in describing Australian Jerseys.

"We see all things Jersey as the finest the dairy industry has to offer," Jersey Australia general manager Glen Barrett said. "It's not just about the cow; having a focus on the qualities of Jersey milk is also a critical growth strategy for the breed."

Mr Barrett said it was a bold marketing strategy but one based on facts and Australian experiences.

"We see Jersey milk as dairy's finest milk and the Jersey cow as dairy's finest cow and we believe that this premium quality should be well known across Australia," he said.

There are now about 10 processors in Australia providing Jersey-branded product, sold for a premium price and delivering premium returns to farmers.

"There are opportunities to support the growth of Jersey milk in the marketplace and we want to grow the breed and increase demand for the product," Mr Barrett said.

Jerseys currently represent about 15 per cent of the Australian dairy industry but Jersey Australia wants to achieve 25 per cent market share by 2030.

The new logo promoting the value of Jersey cows.

The new logo promoting Jersey milk.

"It is an ambitious target but we're working towards growing the number of cows and product lines because we see Jerseys as the ideal cow for the Australian dairy industry," Mr Barrett said. "We also get a lot of feedback from coffee shops that pure Jersey milk makes the best coffee."

Important message

Jersey Australia president Chris McKenzie said the new marketing campaign was warranted and would send an important message to farmers, processors and the broader community.

"We believe we have something good to market," Mr McKenzie said. "We believe there are a number of advantages with the breed and what farmers can gain from it. A new logo and a new approach will help to spread the word across Australia."

Mr McKenzie said developing the new branding had been a collaborative process, with the ultimate aim of highlighting the benefits of Jerseys.

"We looked at different ideas and this was a consensus decision for the board," he said.

"We're pretty pleased with what we came up with. Dairy's Finest explains what we consider the value in the Jersey cow. It's using the word finest to demonstrate the value in the product right across the breed.

"It's a good description for the breed. It's a broad campaign to stir thoughts from the manufacturing side right through to the cow breeders to see the value in the product and the cost efficiency in processing.

"We aim to cover as many aspects as possible and we believe there is true value in what we're saying."

Just the facts

Mr McKenzie said the campaign was backed by statistical and anecdotal evidence.

"We're looking at the efficiency of the cow," he said. "The Jersey is a proven cow around the world but on the local scene we think we have something special to offer in the value of the product produced by the cow.

"People are starting to hear the message. The industry has declined in numbers but we've still holding our per cent in the national dairy herd and Jersey semen sales have been strong.

"There is interest in Jerseys for breeding reasons, for calving reasons and for production reasons; the basic things that will help with farming."

Five-star fame

Jersey Australia hopes the 5 Star status will inspire farmers to aim for better cows, adding a competitive edge to farming and breeding.

Mr McKenzie said the breed continued to improve and it was hoped Dairy's Finest would inspire not only a greater market share, but promote a shift towards breeding even better cows.

"It's always a challenge because people have different approaches in how and why they breed cows, but we want people to consider some of these other areas as well so we can increase and improve the genetic pool," he said.

"There are some tremendous cow families out there that nobody knows anything about.

"This will be something for farmers to work towards and encourage farmers to look at their breeding programs."

Mr McKenzie said the campaign would be beneficial to the industry at large and to individual farmers.

"Farmers can use it as a promotional tool for their own enterprise," he said. "It will help to put them on the map, which is a good thing."

It is expected cows with a 5 Star ranking will be able to attract top dollar at sales.

Mr McKenzie said the board believed ▶

◀ the 5 Star description covered the main benefits of Jerseys. "It all comes down to being the most efficient cow, with what she consumes and returns on bodyweight and how they breed," he said.

Fair prices

Jersey Australia has been pushing for a shake-up of the country's milk pricing system to make it simpler and fairer with more emphasis on the value of milk solids.

It has called for the system to better recognise the efficiencies and value generated through processing high-density milk compared to low-density milk.

Studies commissioned by Jersey Australia and funded by Farming Together have shown pricing systems don't necessarily represent the current market value of milk components, to the disadvantage of Jersey and other higher component farmers.

The reports found that higher component milk is 8.5c/kg milk solids or 0.6c/litre of milk cheaper for processors to cart and handle.

Chris McKenzie: Dairy's Finest explains what we consider the value in the Jersey cow.

Jersey Australia is advocating simpler milk payments with one price for milk solids, butterfat and protein and an appropriate volume charge that penalises lower solids milk.

Mr McKenzie said he hoped the new campaign would influence processors and lead to better recognition for Jerseys. "You see the graphs and the world prices are so far apart on butter and protein but the big seller last year was whole milk powder," he said. "Demand for full cream milk powder around the world is growing so let's look at what the consumer is saying; that's what people want and that's where Jerseys are the best. We believe what we're able to produce is what people are asking for.

"I'd like to think the processors and manufacturers would look more seriously at the facts. Ultimately, the cost of their processing effects the price the farmer receives." D

The new logos and brands will be officially unveiled at International Dairy Week where people will also be able to enjoy coffees made with Jersey milk for a gold coin donation to an IDW charity.

Article supplied by Jersey Australia, website <https://jersey.com.au/>.

New marketing campaign 'hits bullseye'

GIPPSLAND Jersey breeder Trevor Saunders says the new Dairy's Finest and 5 Star promotions "hit the bullseye" for the breed.

"I'm a big advocate for the 5 Star system and the new Dairy's Finest campaign," Mr Saunders said, adding that he believes it will help to promote the benefits of Jerseys and give an incentive for all farmers to aim for premium herds.

"The registered industry wants to continue to look at ways to highlight the difference between pedigree stock and grade cattle," he said.

"The 5 Star strategy is a way of identifying cows that are registered, classified, herd-tested, AI-bred and genomically tested. It puts a tag on the cattle that tick all the boxes and people can buy with confidence."

The 5 Star Jersey is being highlighted as Dairy's Finest cow that is registered, artificial insemination-bred, herd tested, classified and genomic-tested.

It can also be promoted for its high fertility, feed efficiency, heat tolerance, its size and for being the most profitable cow for Australia farming conditions.

Mr Saunders said the 5 Star description would create a marketing opportunity for members' stock that match the criteria, and it would be an incentive for anyone who wants to market registered cattle.

"If you're marketing cattle, you should be striving to provide the best quality branded cows for your potential buyers," he said.

"I think it's taking it to the next level. They are the five things needed to develop a successful herd and they indicate quality and consistency in cattle that can be achieved from services offered in the dairy industry."

Trevor Saunders runs his Araluen Park stud with wife Anthea. They run about 950 registered Jerseys.

There are also plans to introduce an 'elite' ranking for Jersey cows. Although the criteria haven't been determined, the elite cows would be in a bracket above the current Excellent rating.

"We'll have an elite sub-bracket if they reach the benchmark figures, such as a genomic breeding value over 180," Mr Saunders said.

"They would be out of Excellent cows 90 points or better and be bred from the top group of AI bulls."

Mr Saunders said having 5 Star recognition would confirm the cows have ticked all five boxes, while the elite ranking would mean they were at the top end of the scale.

He plans to use 5 Star status in his marketing. The concept of "Dairy's Finest - 5-Star Jersey cows should over time provide a recognisable brand," he said. "I think that will happen fairly quickly and I've already put the 5 Star and Dairy's Finest brand onto our marketing and advertisements.

"It shows they're not run-of-the milk cows you're trying to sell, they're genuinely well bred and you will supply a consistency of product. Consistency should bring confidence and that will bring top dollar as a general rule."

Mr Saunders said he believed all breeders of registered Jersey cattle would find ways to benefit from this strategy as in most cases their own personal herd development plan incorporates some, if not all, of the 5 Star program anyway

Mr Saunders is also a fan of the Dairy's Finest campaign.

"I like the title," he said. "We've always argued that Jerseys are high quality, they are efficient, their milk is high quality and that they are a bit smaller and convert more efficiently in relation to their size.

"I think Dairy's Finest is an accurate slogan. It was something that hit the bullseye. It captures people's attention and we can sell it with a story about consistency and quality.

"Finest is a good term for Jerseys."

Mr Saunders is a Jersey Australia board member and former president and runs his Araluen Park stud with wife Anthea. They run about 950 registered Jerseys including a milking component of 650. They currently have the No.13 Australian Breeding Value herd and about 200 Excellent cows in the herd, seven former number one genomic Balanced Performance Index heifers and have been regular winners in the Great Southern Challenge in recent years.

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Five Star for Breed Guarantee

- Registered
- AI Bred
- Classified
- Herd Tested
- Genomic Tested

Five Star for Breed Advantage

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Dutch farmer aims to cut antibiotic use

Key points

- ✔ Dutch farm reduces antibiotic use by 25 per cent
- ✔ Increased focus on preventive health programs
- ✔ Good facilities help with herd health

By **Chris McCullough**

A YOUNG Dutch dairy farmer says he recognises that continued use of antibiotics on his cows in the future is unviable.

Ivo Hermanussen is just 28 years old and is already in charge of the 200-cow Barendonk Holsteins herd situated at Beers in the east of the Netherlands.

Farming with his father Jan, the young farmer recognises the importance of reducing the use of antibiotics yet maintaining a healthy herd. This is even more relevant in the Hermanussen case as they sell breeding stock as well as producing high-quality milk.

The herd consists of 200 Holsteins averaging 10,511 kilograms per cow per year at 3.52 per cent protein and 4.26pc butterfat.

Even though the herd has continued to expand over the years Ivo would like to expand further, but there are a number of obstacles in his way.

Cows are bred to be sold and with that in mind a good herd health status is vital to ensure successful marketing of breeding stock.

"Animal health is very important to us and we see continued use of antibiotics as unviable," Ivo said. "On this farm, we operate a strict animal health and treatment plan.

"Each time a cow has a problem she is assessed and we closely follow the regulations on how to treat her and with which specific medication.

"We focus more on prevention rather than treatments to improve animal health and vaccinate for IBR, BVD, Lepto and Salmonella. Hygiene and cleanliness are also very important factors in our efforts to maintain a healthy herd."

Since 2010 the Hermanussen family have reduced their bills for antibiotics by 25pc thanks to their animal health program. Plus, the farm now spends about 30pc of its health plan budget on prevention rather than treatments.

"Following our strict health plan has made us realise that the use of antibiotics on every animal is not necessary," Ivo said. "At the moment we are down to using antibiotics on only half the herd, which on average means we have reduced antibiotic use by two animal doses per day."

Ivo and Jan Hermanussen run a 200-cow farm at Beers in Holland.

'Following our strict health plan has made us realise that the use of antibiotics on every animal is not necessary.'

The first free-stall barn on the farm was built in 1979 and expanded once in 1988 and again in 2005 to 135 cubicles. Two years ago a brand new free-stall barn with another 125 cubicles was added.

Two Lely robotic milking systems have been in the first barn since 2005 and another two second-hand robots were added to the new barn in 2016.

"The new barn cost us around 6,000 euros per cow place including the price of the robots," Ivo said. "We keep the older cows in the new barn as it has extra comfort for them. The cubicles in all the barns are deep filled with a mix of 1kg of straw, 2kg of water and 3kg of lime.

"Good ventilation and available light are also important to our herd and we must allow them outdoors in the summer for six hours per day for 120 days. There are an estimated 1.7 million dairy cows in the Netherlands where 95pc of the dairy farms milk record their herds. With this information to hand this has helped reduce the overall use of antibiotics by 65pc from 2009 to 2016 there.

The cubicles in all the barns are deep filled with a mix of 1kg of straw, 2kg of water and 3kg of lime.

Jan and Ivo sell their milk to Friesland Campina and receive an average 36.5 euro cents per litre including taxes. Ivo estimates his costs, including farm labour for him and his father, at 34.5 euro cents per litre.

The Netherlands is a small country stretching to 41,500 square kilometres and home to 18,000 dairy farms making dairy an intensive sector there.

Having so many cows the country adopted its nitrates directive in order to comply with European Union regulations that govern the amount of phosphates that can be used per farm with a base figure taken from stocking rates in 2015.▶

Dutch dairy farmers are having to move their young stock to farms in other European countries to spread the phosphates quota restriction and comply with the regulations.

Jan and Ivo send half their young stock to a farm in Belgium, close to the French border, to be contract reared in order to comply with their phosphates quota.

"We currently have 84 animals in Belgium," Ivo said. "We send them out there from eight months old to one year and bring them home two months ahead of calving. Some of them are sold in Belgium before we need to bring them back and we sell them for around 1500 euros freshly calved.

"The phosphates regulations from the European Commission make it very hard for a young farmer to expand. Land here is around 70,000 euros per hectare. We operate around 100ha here for growing grass and crops but need more.

"I think there needs to be a new system introduced that allow farmers to invest in slurry separation equipment so we can reduce the phosphates applications.

"The challenges we face today as dairy farmers is achieving a return on our investments whether it be in infrastructure, land or indeed on an animal health plan." D

Antibiotic use under increasing scrutiny

ANTIBIOTIC use in livestock is under coming under increasing scrutiny as industries deal with the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The first Australian Veterinary Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference was held in November, coinciding with World Antibiotic Awareness Week.

"Australia has low rates of antibiotic use in animals compared to some other nations but we need to do more if we are to continue to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for humans and animals," Animal Medicines Australia executive director Ben Stapley said. "We need a comprehensive resistance surveillance program, so we can ensure that best practice prescribing occurs for livestock and companion animals, food quality and safety is maintained, and the best health outcomes are assured for humans, animals and the environment."

World Antibiotic Awareness Week this year targeted key operators in the agricultural, animal husbandry and public health sectors to encourage all to play a vital role in managing the use of antibiotics in a responsible manner to safeguard against AMR.

The International Dairy Federation was part of that campaign. Chair of the IDF standing committee on animal health and welfare Dr Olav Østerås stressed the importance of handling antimicrobials with care to preserve their efficacy and safeguard public health. "Antimicrobials must be used responsibly and only when needed for the treatment of infected and diseased animals so as to preserve animal welfare, including dairy cows," Dr ster†s said.

"Healthy animals do not need antibiotics. It is important to prioritise infection prevention through good animal husbandry, hygiene practices and biosecurity to reduce but optimise the use of antimicrobials."

The IDF guidance on AMR is available at <https://www.fil-idf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Factsheet-003_2017-Guidance-on-Antimicrobial-Resistance-from-the-Dairy-Sector.pdf>.

Keeping dry cows cool lifts returns

Key points

- ✔ Cows kept cool in dry period produce more milk
- ✔ Heat stress negative impacts on in-utero calf
- ✔ Develop plan and facilities to reduce heat stress

KEEPING a dry cow cool and comfortable is beneficial to it, its calf and a dairy farmers' bottom line, according to US animal scientist Geoff Dahl, who recently presented at a Dairy-SA Heat Stress Management Workshop at Meningie in South Australia.

Dr Dahl outlined that understanding heat stress management was not only important for the whole dairy herd but particularly vital for dry cows, with updated research showing that heat stress resulted both in lower milk production and had a 'generational effect' on future progeny.

More than 40 dairy farmers and service providers attended the session — held at Brad and Karin Fischer's farm — featuring a detailed presentation followed by a walk to the dry cow area and valuable interactive discussion among the group.

Dr Dahl explained how heat stress limited mammary growth, metabolism and immune function, with these factors setting the stage for a more challenging transition, resulting in lower yield in the next lactation.

His research found cooling dry cows increased milk for 40 weeks after calving. Yields from cows cooled during the dry period saw a 4-5 litre increase a day than uncooled cows, despite zero differences in how the animals were treated after calving.

"Across the board, they all show the same thing," Dr Dahl said. "Animals cooled when dry make more milk in their next lactation."

Cooling dry cows increased body weight prepartum, but decreased body weight postpartum. Cooled animals gained weight during their dry period and, because they were making a lot more milk after calving, they were metabolising more body tissue. Research also found that cooling dry cows had positive effects on their immune function, including lymphocyte proliferation and increased neutrophil action postpartum.

Dr Dahl said the effects on acquired immunity and antibody production could be important to vaccination profiles.

US Animal Scientist Geoff Dahl provided an insight into the importance of managing heat stress in dry cows, at a Heat Stress Management Workshop at Meningie. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Anderson, Stock Journal.

'It makes sense to cool dry cows.'

"Biopsies revealed that cooling dry cows has a direct impact on their mammary cells," he said. "The difference is an effect on the proliferation — or growth — of these cells. There are a lot more in cooled cows."

Effect on calves

Heat stress on the cow also impacted the unborn calf, both early in life and when it begins lactating. Dr Dahl termed this a "generational issue" and not just on the affected animal, likening it to human mothers smoking during pregnancy and its resulting effect on a child's development.

"We have essentially created a situation where calves cannot reach their genetic potential when they suffer heat stress in the dry period," Dr Dahl said.

He said cooling the cow increased its calf's birth weight. "We found the difference persists into weaning, as does the persistence of lower birth weights of hot cattle," he said, citing research that found in-utero heat stress of about six weeks in length reduced calf body weight and height at weaning. "Cooled calves were heavier and taller," Dr Dahl said.

Cooling also improved immunity, measured by the higher circulating Immunoglobulin G (IgG). "In fact, it looked like calves born to hot cows had lower ability to absorb lgG," Dr Dahl said.

His studies also showed that in-utero heat stress decreased reproductive performance, with cooled calves requiring fewer services and achieving pregnancy at an earlier age at pregnancy, by almost a month.

Dr Dahl said it made good financial sense to cool cows, for the present and long term. While the ideal approach would be to build a barn to mediate heat stress, or retrofitting it with a cooling system such as fans or soakers, he recognised this was not always feasible.

"Creating temporary shade structures, providing tree shade, sprinklers or even planning calving patterns that allow cows to be dry in the cool months of the year, will all help," he said.

"At a minimum, we need to be allowing animals to recover from heat stress to ensure core body temperature does reduce, and that will have positive flow-on effects for the whole business. It makes sense to cool dry cows."

To get practical information and tools to manage heat stress, head to <http://coolcows.dairyaustralia.com.au/>. Farmers can also sign up for the free Dairy Forecast Service that will alert them to upcoming extreme heat events. D

Professor Geoff Dahl was a keynote speaker at the 2018 Australian Association of Ruminant Nutrition Conference held in Victoria, and his visit was thanks to the support of Dairy Australia.

Farms key in managing disease outbreak

Key points

- ✔ Farm biosecurity vital part of preventing exotic disease outbreak
- ✔ Early detection key to minimising impact
- ✔ People travelling overseas increase risk

By **Jeanette Severs**

BIOSECURITY on farm is one of those things where the government and industry get together and develop policies and plans and farmers are expected to implement them. It's all too hard, right?

Except, the risk of an exotic disease outbreak to Australia is calculated in the billions of dollars; without calculating the mass culling of genetic lines that would have to occur in some situations, disruption to business and normal social life — the list goes on.

So, where is the farmer's role in this and what does the farmer need to be aware of and is expected to comply with? The commonly discussed scenario is foot-and-mouth disease, but there are more exotic disease risks to the dairy industry.

Dairy Australia's tools for dairy farmers focus on recording livestock movements, herd health, farm inputs and controlling visitor access.

Biosecurity includes taking into account the disease risk posed by imported food and visitors — insects and people — travelling to Australia.

Australia's agricultural industry is dependent on early detection and control of exotic diseases. Without early detection, the disease can spread unrestricted, making containment and eradication a larger job when it is detected.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) is one of a number of government and industry groups tasked with the role of overseeing and managing education and awareness programs to raise awareness of exotic diseases.

A lot of resources have been invested in the AADIS — the model to follow if an exotic disease outbreak occurs that has district, state/territory or Australia-wide impacts. The first aim of the Australian Animal Disease Spread (AADIS) model is to contain the disease risk before it becomes a national emergency.

However, modelling of the risk of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) — as one example — indicated on any given day in Australia, an estimated 100,000 head of cattle, 40,000 pigs and 30,000 sheep were transported on the roads. It was estimated it would take 72 hours to totally halt movements of susceptible livestock species if an endemic disease outbreak occurred.

In the United Kingdom, at least 57 farms in 16 counties were infected by the time the first FMD case was confirmed in 2001.

Blue tongue virus, Theileria, Johne's

and Anthrax are other notifiable diseases of concern. Then there are the exotic diseases where modelling indicates it only takes wind to spread them from Papua New Guinea or Indonesia, relying on mosquito and midge vectors to fly diseases into Australia.

A big part of the risk is that the early detection indicators of so many exotic diseases look similar. There is also the perception that blood tests and autopsies cost a lot of money.

In actual fact, the diagnosis of an exotic disease is often partially or fully funded by government. That is a measure of how keen the authorities are to control the situation as early as possible.

AHA manages development and review of the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (Ausvetplan) for every livestock exotic disease risk — each plan contains the nationally agreed approach for response to an emergency outbreak in Australia.

Dairy Australia and Meat and Livestock Australia also have a range of information resources that relate to those emergency plans — including farm biosecurity plans, cattle health statements, specific disease documents, the Livestock Production Assurance program and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

Dairy Australia's tools for dairy farmers focus on recording livestock movements, herd health, farm inputs, controlling visitor access, containing effluent and waste, protecting the farm and herd from neighbours and segregating sick and dead animals.

Victorian Farmers Federation livestock committee member Steve Harrison believes the popularity of international travel has increased disease risk in Australia.

The people factor

Beyond anything, the perceived highest risk factor for the spread of endemic exotic disease in Australia, is likely to be people. They could be visitors from overseas or Australians who have returned home after trekking or hunting through areas that contain endemic diseases such as FMD.

"We have been fortunate to date, but increased international trade, movements of people and products all around the world and the uncertain impacts of climate change increasingly threaten our good biosecurity. It is vital we continually work to increase our preparedness for an outbreak," AHA's biosecurity and extension manager, Northern Australia, Jess Rummery said.

Victorian Farmers Federation livestock committee member Steve Harrison participated in government and industry-funded FMD training in India. His message is more blunt. "Before I went to Nepal, I always had the impression that animals died from FMD," he said.

"But they don't — you get production losses. It's the practice around dealing with it that results in the high livestock death toll."

Mr Harrison said he believed the popularity of international travel and the high level of endemic FMD in Asia caused increased disease risk in Australia. "If it comes into Melbourne's domestic airport, the first people affected will be farmers on the peri-urban border," he said. "It'll be brought in by someone on a working holiday or visiting relatives. We need to ensure money is spent on the biosecurity front line at our airports.

"As farmers, we need to share knowledge between ourselves and with our overseas neighbours. The Nepalese villagers we met cared about their animals and were asking us to help them improve their livestock practices."

Australia's Biosecurity Act 2015 requires everyone to take reasonable and practical steps to prevent, eliminate or minimise the impact of biosecurity risks.

Farmers should ensure they have the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline number **(1800 675 888)** somewhere accessible. This number is a 24-hour line where they can report unusual signs of disease in their livestock. D

See pages 72-73 for information about some of the notifiable diseases that could hit a dairy herd.

Recognising and reporting unusual signs of disease

DISEASES of significance to Australia's agricultural sector are listed on Animal Health Australia's notifiable disease lists. Suspected or confirmed notifiable diseases are required to be reported to agricultural authorities. Reporting has two key benefits:

1. If a notifiable disease is detected, picking it up early can significantly reduce its cost and increase chances of containment.

2. If an investigation is undertaken and it turns out not to be a disease of significance, this aids in collection of data, which can help Australia prove it is free of these diseases.

In Australia, some diseases are nationally notifiable, meaning they must be reported no matter where a farm is located. There are also state or territory-specific notifiable diseases.

So how do farmers recognise potential cases of notifiable disease and report them? The nationally notifiable disease list in Australia for terrestrial animals lists a whopping 98 diseases. This is a lot of diseases for anyone to remember, not to mention all the signs that could come with them. Add any of the state and territory specific diseases, and the list just keeps getting bigger. So that raises the question, how do farmers know when they might have a notifiable disease and when do they need to report it?

The best rule of thumb? If in doubt, report it. Anything unusual in livestock is worth reporting to be on the safe side. This can include one or a combination of the following:

- Unusual or mass mortalities, including in wildlife, birds and aquatic species.
- Rapid spread of disease through livestock.
- A disease that appears to be affecting multiple species.
- A sudden drop in the usual reproductive/production rates.
- Unusual or suspicious signs of disease, such as: cloven-hooved animals that have ulcers, erosions or blisters around the feet, udder or mouth; drooling or salivating or unusual nervous signs.
- Anything else that is out of the ordinary.

If a farmer spots something unusual, the first step should be to report it. In the event of an exotic disease, failure to report unusual signs of disease quickly means it could be spreading uncontrolled. It could also mean the farmer is not eligible to receive compensation under the emergency response arrangements in the event of an incursion.

Farmers can report it to their local vet, their state or territory's agricultural department or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888. This number is a 24-hour hotline.

—Jess Rummery, biosecurity and extension manager, Northern Australia

Notifiable exotic disease in Australia

Key points

- ✔ Know key symptoms of exotic diseases
- ✔ Understand how animals with diseases should be handled
- ✔ Implement biosecurity plans

By **Jeanette Severs**

FOLLOWING are some of the notifiable exotic diseases in Australia. The total list of national notifiable diseases is almost 100 — with further notifiable diseases in each state and territory.

Foot and mouth disease (a notifiable disease)

Australia is surrounded by countries with endemic levels of the highly contagious foot and mouth disease (FMD). It is estimated an outbreak of FMD in Australia would cost at least $6 billion and up to $52 billion across 10 years.

AHA recently warned that everyone who works with FMD-susceptible species should be aware of the signs and symptoms of the disease; and if anything is found that is unusual, it is reported as quickly as possible.

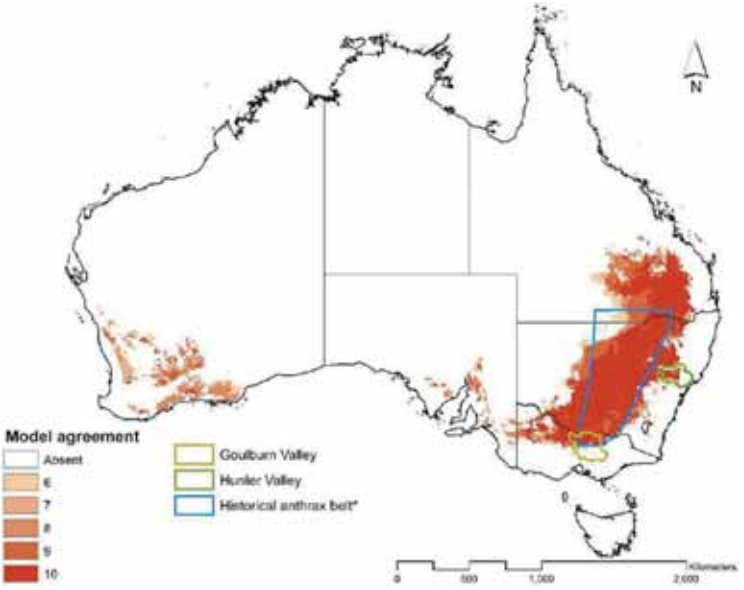
Symptoms include animals showing signs of thrift, depression, anorexia, fever and lameness. Milk production drops. The virus can be excreted by animals for up to four days before clinical signs appear. The virus is excreted in breath, saliva, mucus, milk, faeces and on the hooves of livestock.

Obvious clinical signs are vesicles and ulcers on the tongue, gums, muzzle, teats, hooves and in the animal's mouth — but these will rupture within five days and need to be documented and sighted by a veterinarian or animal health extension officers. FMD virus can also be spread on wool, hair, grass, straw, on the wind or by mud and manure sticking to footwear, clothing, farm equipment and vehicle tyres.

The last resort for FMD control in Australia is vaccination. According to the plan endorsed by Australia's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, vaccination will be considered as one of the potential strategies for disease control on the day an FMD incursion is detected.

Blue tongue virus (a notifiable disease)

While northern and eastern Australia is home to an endemic strain of blue-tongue virus (BTV), southern Australian was relatively safe — until October 2017, when an outbreak was identified in the Lockington district, in northern Victoria.



The main areas in Australia affected by anthrax.

'AHA recently warned that everyone who works with FMD-susceptible species should be aware of the signs and symptoms of the disease.'

Evidence of past exposure was identified in 12-month-old dairy heifers after routine pre-export blood tests. The cattle were not showing signs of clinical blue-tongue disease and no virus was detected in the animals' blood.

According to Agriculture Victoria, one of the key issues surrounding the case was that evidence of the animals' traceability had not been complied with through the National Livestock Identification Scheme system.

Surveillance activities included taking blood samples from 2500 cattle in more than 100 mobs in a 100km radius of the original farm — covering areas of Victoria and NSW — to inform the BTV status of the area.

Several months after the detection, China was still unwilling to accept live cattle from this zone in northern Victoria and southern NSW, unless the animals were intended for slaughter within 24 hours of arrival.

A dead animal infected with anthrax. Farmers need to take precautions about handling carcasses of animals that have died from anthrax.

BTV is a viral disease of livestock spread by flying insects known as midges. A spokesperson for the NSW Department of Primary Industries said it was important to note antibodies could be present in animals that had previously lived in an area exposed to the virus.

Symptoms range from acute to mild and typically involve variable, fluctuating fever, excess salivation and nasal discharge, increased blood flow to the mouth and nose, which is shown as extreme reddening. Lips and tongue may become swollen and the oedema may extend over the

face. Haemorrhages occur around the mouth and eyes.

Five to eight days after the onset of fever, ulcers develop on the gums, cheek and tongue. Foot lesions may appear towards the end of the febrile period. Associated pain causes the animals to stand with arched backs and be reluctant to move.

It is generally accepted that windborne spread and distribution of BTV-infected midges may change as climate allows.

Anthrax (a notifiable disease)

According to research by NSW's Department of Primary Industries, anthrax was first identified in Australia in 1847, but transmission of the disease is still largely unexplored. The re-appearance of anthrax is unpredictable and can occur up to 50 years after an outbreak.

Anthrax is a zoonotic bacterial disease and primarily affects grazing animals; although most warmed- blooded mammals may be susceptible, including humans. Earthworks and deep cultivation of paddocks, livestock grazing short pasture and stubbles and contact with infected carcasses are all factors in increasing the risk of an outbreak. Moderate rainfall following prolonged dry periods and alkaline soils that favour spore survival are also increased risks.

Biting flies may be involved in transmission and inhalation cannot be ruled out.

The dominant corridor where anthrax outbreaks have occurred in Australia is from northern Victoria through the centre of NSW to central east Queensland. Another corridor is in south-west Western Australia. Annual vaccination of cattle and sheep on properties with a history of anthrax is strongly recommended.

Each year several cases of anthrax in livestock are reported — annually, about five properties in NSW are identified positive for anthrax outbreak. The handling of infected animals and their carcases represents a risk to people.

Because dairy cows are observed regularly, farmers are likely to see early symptoms of depression, signs of fever and a drop in milk production, prior to death. Anthrax usually presents as a sudden death or one or a group of animals.

Confirmation requires isolation of anthrax bacteria from the blood, skin lesions or respiratory secretions.

Be suspicious of anthrax if livestock die suddenly and blood oozes from body orifices and sites of predation; blood from the carcass does not clot; and there is a history of anthrax at any time on the property.

Cutaneous anthrax may be suspected based on the appearance of the ulcer.

Anyone who handles material potentially contaminated with anthrax should wear disposable overalls, P2 or high-efficiency masks, rubber or latex gloves and boot covers and should ensure that skin wounds are protected with sealed waterproof dressings.

All potentially contaminated items and clothing should be stored in labelled double plastic bags until anthrax is excluded. Burn all protective gear where it is taken off or incinerate later with the carcass or sterilise at 121 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes.

Thorough hand washing and showering with soap is also an important protection against infection. Antibiotics may be needed to help prevent infection.

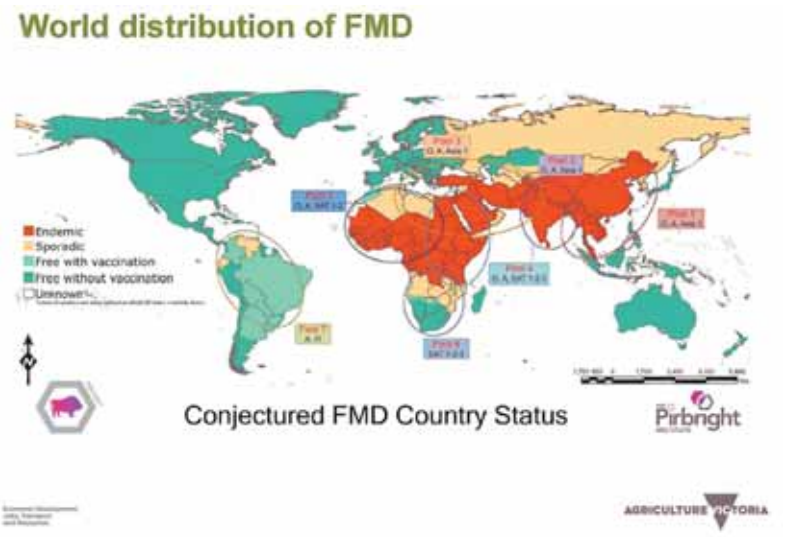
The NSW Department of Primary Industries recommends not handling, moving, opening or skinning the carcass of anthrax-infected animals.

Workers and other people who have been in close contact with anthrax-infected animals should self-monitor their health for at least 10 days after the last exposure.

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (a notifiable disease)

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (EBL) is a viral disease of cattle that can develop into cancer of the lymph nodes and spread into internal organs, leading to a debilitating and painful death.

It can spread from dam to calf either ▶



Australia's status as being free from foot and mouth disease is vital for continued trade.

◀ in-utero or through the milk and from cow to cow by blood transfer. It mainly affects cows six- to eight-years-old.

Dairy cattle are affected more than beef cattle. Australia's dairy farmers participated in an EBL eradication program from 2008 with the aim of getting the nation's dairy herds declared EBL-free; which occurred in 2012.

Although the risk of introducing EBL through the purchase of a beef bull is low, there is still a risk — EBL is known to occur in beef cattle in northern Australia. Dairy farmers are advised to ask about the history of the livestock they are buying and test any beef bulls and herds they buy in.

The biosecurity measures dairy farmers should take to prevent EBL are what they should be doing anyway — avoid transferring blood between cattle during examination or treatment. Any equipment that is capable of carrying blood from one animal to another is a biosecurity risk. Other opportunities for the spread of infected blood include contamination from open wounds, during natural mating or at calving.

EBL infects white blood cells and persists for the life of the animal. Affected animals go off their feed and become weak and debilitated. Sometimes enlarged lymph nodes can be felt as lumps under the skin.

In NSW, Department of Primary Industries has an owner/vendor declaration of enzootic bovine leucosis in dairy cattle form that is recommended but not compulsory for vendors of cattle to complete.

Theileria (a notifiable disease)

In 2010, in NSW, four cows died and 30 calves aborted on one farm. Blood tests confirmed the presence of Theileria, a tick-borne disease that is in dairy and beef herds, across all of mainland Australia. South Australia was the most recent state to register the disease.

The symptoms are similar to many ailments suffered by cattle — thrift and separating from the herd, lethargy, lack of appetite, anaemic gums, a fast heart rate, respiratory distress, abortion and still births, deaths in late pregnancy or early lactation, reducing milk production.

Clear indicators of *Theileria orientalis* infection include severe anaemia, eating dirt and pulsating jugular veins in both sides of the neck, according to Bairnsdale veterinarian, Dr Jade Hammer. "One or two deaths, a drop in milk production, a downer cow or aborted calf may be all that is seen and can be attributed to many causes," Dr Hammer said. "A simple smear blood test taken in the crush will confirm it."

Blue Tongue Virus zones in Australia (shown in the darker colour).

Bovine TB (a notifiable disease, eradicated in Australia)

Australia was officially declared free of bovine tuberculosis in 1997, after an eradication program that lasted more than 20 years.

Bovine TB is still a notifiable disease, which means farmers are all legally required to report any suspected cases in their herds. If bovine TB is detected in livestock, it could have a severe impact on the local and export industry.

AHA has a disease surveillance program for bovine TB to ensure the Australian agriculture industry remains free from this disease.

Bovine Johne's disease (a notifiable disease)

A biosecurity plan managed at the farm level is the current focus for the endemic Bovine Johne's Disease (BJD). BJD is a relatively common, chronic, incurable, bacterial disease in adult cattle in the dairy regions of southeast Australia.

AHA co-ordinates industry-funded projects to manage BJD, to protect Australia's favourable JD status and reduce the impacts of the disease and its control measures on the livestock industries. All dairy farmers are expected to implement measures to control the risks posted by BJD.

South Australia has protected status for its herds, so the onus is on dairy farmers to reduce the risk of BJD appearing on their farm and help them keep market access. As well as a written property biosecurity plan, they are expected to ask for a national cattle health declaration for bought-in cattle and buy livestock from properties that are involved in an assurance program.

Theileria is a tick-borne disease that is in dairy and beef herds, across all of mainland Australia.

In Queensland, where testing has demonstrated a low prevalence of BJD, farmers are expected to report the infection to protect the state's export status and contain it on farm.

Symptoms include chronic diarrhoea, reduced milk production, weight loss and eventually death. The disease is mainly spread through ingestion of contaminated faeces. Infection is usually acquired in calf-hood but generally no clinical signs are seen until animals are at least four years old. It is difficult to reliably detect infection in live animals, particularly in the early stages of the disease.

Preventing exposure of young calves, introducing only low-risk cattle and targeted testing and culling of animals to reduce shedding of the bacteria into the environment are the keys to controlling spread in a herd.

The principal focus is to minimise the risk of contamination by promoting good dairy hygiene through the Three Step Calf Rearing Plan or the Johne's Disease Calf Accreditation Program (JDCAP). Both plans set down the minimum conditions for raising calves. D

High-tech irrigation lifts pasture growth

Key points

- ✔ Automated irrigation system introduced as part of modernisation project
- ✔ Has delivered increase pasture production
- ✔ Lifestyle improvements from automated control

By **Jeanette Severs**

Ashley and Lisa Mezenberg, Denison, Victoria, have used technology to vastly improve irrigation systems on their farms.

FOUR years ago, Ashley and Lisa Mezenberg, Denison, Victoria, signed up for the modernisation scheme in the Macalister Irrigation District (MID), which led them to consider what type of automated watering system they would invest in for their farm.

They wanted a system that enabled them to spend more time involved in family activities, without limiting production on the farm. They also wanted to reduce the risk of overwatering. They needed a system that incorporated two farms.

It led Ash Mezenberg to take a plane trip to the Elmore Field Days, three years ago, specifically to investigate automated irrigation systems. It was a day out well invested.

Mr Mezenberg chose the WISA automated irrigation system and it was user-friendly enough that he was able to install it himself.

"I installed it over a few days. WISA technicians were on the phone, available to assist," he said. "It saved me about $5000, installing it myself."

WISA technicians visited the farm to test the system was operating correctly before they commissioned it. "Even now they're only a phone call away for support, even on weekends," Mr Mezenberg said.

He was aware of the WISA system before the trip to Elmore; and it was one of the systems he wanted to investigate further.

"I knew my cousin at Katamatite had been using it for a few years," Mr Mezenberg said.

The Mezenberg dairy business operates two farms, milking 600 cows; a self-replacing, predominantly Friesian-cross herd, with infusions of Normande, Aussie Red and Brown Swiss. The herd produces 3.5 million litres annually.

The farms include 365 irrigated hectares and an 80ha leased block. Grazing is on 25-day rotation, which also enables silage and round bales of hay to be harvested each season. In late October 2018, Mr Mezenberg harvested 330 tonnes of dry grass into one silage pit.

'With more grazing opportunities, the business is looking to increase herd size and milk production.'

He also grows a maize crop to support autumn calving. "This year, we'll grow an additional eight hectares of maize for winter grazing, to offset higher hay prices," Mr Mezenberg said.

Rationalising investment

Southern Rural Water introduced the rationalisation program and encouraged farmers to decommission the old-fashioned Dethbridge wheels and modernise their irrigation systems.

Earthworks undertaken on the Mezenberg farms included installing siphons, new channels, delvers and doors to optimise water flow. New SlipMeters use solar-powered meters and computer technology to order and measure flow and volume.

Eight Dethbridge wheels were decommissioned on farm one, with nine wheels decommissioned across both farms.

On the second farm, modifications included building a 10-megalitre capacity re-use dam. A centre pivot and fixed sprinklers are fed from two bores, irrigating 40ha. An underground pipeline from the bores was integrated into the initial earthworks.

About 220ha is irrigated with flood, with 30ha converted to automated irrigation via a SlipMeter.

All the excess irrigation water goes into the re-use dam and is returned into the system for flood irrigation. The re-use dam reduces environmental damage in the MID system by minimising nutrient outflow — all fertiliser and nutrients stay on the farm.

"We graded some paddocks and installed drains and siphons to catch excess water and divert it into the re-use dam," Mr Mezenberg said.

"By undertaking the paddock renovation works and de-commissioning the Dethbridge wheels, we received a subsidy of about $100,000 from SRW for adopting the rationalisation program.

"More than 60 gates flood irrigate about a third of the farm."

The farm business contributed $400,000 to complete the work to date and Mr and Mrs Mezenberg said water volumes had reduced by 25 per cent. That has led to more opportunities to irrigate, which means increased pasture production, in an industry where on-farm cost variables are measured by how much grass is grown by a dairy farmer.

As their business equity grows, they will have the opportunity to invest in more irrigation efficiencies.

WISA investment

The entire system across both farms ▶

The improved irrigation systems have allowed the Mezenbergs to grow substantially more grass.

New slipmeters use solar-powered meters and computer technology to order and measure flow and volume.

is controlled by a WISA automated irrigation system, installed on the farm's computer and accessible through smart devices, sharing through cloud technology.

The Mezenberg dairy business is one of two farm businesses in the MID to be early adopters of the WISA system, and it makes for a more efficient working day.

"The WISA system enables us to monitor soil moisture and schedule irrigations," Mr Mezenberg said.

The software receives information from radio-frequency antennae and sends alerts to mobile telephones and other devices, so irrigation, soil moisture, weather impacts and other variables can be monitored 24 hours a day. Mr Mezenberg chooses to keep the system on his desktop computer. His experience so far is there is no problem big enough that he needs to be disturbed from sleep or other work.

Tweaking the bugs out of the system

"I need to ensure each bay is inputted into the program," Mr Mezenberg said of the WISA software.

"It's a fairly simple program, so it's just a matter of spending the time learning to do it."

Some of the power boards in the WISA boxes became damp during a rain event and needed replacing. The technicians checked the system, analysed the problem, then visited the farm and made the changeover.

Getting rid of so many Dethbridge wheels and changing to SlipMeters was not without its management challenges.

"SlipMeters initially gave us bigger flows, so we had to learn to change the timers to accommodate that," Mr Mezenberg said.

"Now we water when we need it. We grow a lot more grass and we're a lot more productive."

With more grazing opportunities, the business is looking to increase herd size and milk production, growing ▶

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In late October 2018, Mr Mezenberg harvested 330 tonnes of dry grass into one silage pit.

◀ their business to be a more sustainable enterprise. Irrigating more efficiently and eliminating overwatering has done more than use less water volume. Mr Mezenberg has also noted reduced water runoff in the paddocks, which means the re-use dam is used less, which has lowered pumping use and maintenance costs.

More water to grow the farm

As part of the rationalisation program, Southern Rural Water has been able to continue its environmental water flow commitments while delivering greater efficiencies across the entire system. This enabled more irrigation water volumes to be made available to farmers in the MID, across several auctions.

Ash and Lisa Mezenberg took advantage of the offer and bought additional water parcels, which means the entire farm is now under irrigation. That, too, has increased their production capacity and business sustainability.

In drought and dry weather conditions, as the district is experiencing this season, Mr Mezenberg said the ability to apply more irrigation had made the difference to the dairy farm's production.

As well as being able to grow grass, the cheapest form of feed for dairy cows, the farm was still producing all the hay and silage the herd needs.

There are also lifestyle improvements from the improved irrigation system. "Because I don't have to get up during the night to turn timers on and off, I get more sleep," Mr Mezenberg said.

Ashley Mezenberg chooses to control the system from his desktop computer.

"That means I'm not tired and more able and keen to do the work around the farm that needs to be done."

After 20 years in the dairy industry, he is also able to spend more time with his family. Irrigation is preprogrammed and can occur while the entire family spends a few hours away from the farm. D

Technology automates water and fertiliser application

THE WISA irrigation technology can be integrated with existing infrastructure. Modular in design, it can be added to over time. This means that investment can occur at the farmers' discretion.

Automating water — and, where required, fertiliser — applications to plants when they need it helps optimise growing conditions.

The system can be run from the farmer's computer desktop or their mobile telephone.

Ashley Mezenberg said real-time information — for example, soil moisture monitoring, evapotranspiration and other weather data — was collected through a series of probes and sensors, analysed by the software and made a real difference to making decisions about whether and when to irrigate.

That data reduced the time spent irrigating.

Mr Mezenberg receives real-time alerts to his desktop computer, which he can check at his leisure.

Mrs Mezenberg said: "It did take us a little while to get used to it; we'd wake up to the alert light on, on the computer."

Mr Mezenberg said: "I don't have it on my telephone because I want to check it when I have time, not feel it's controlling me."

But installing the system has saved him a lot of time. He can now check where irrigation was applied according to the report on the computer; rather than drive around his property, making sure the channels are filled and the gates have opened and closed when they should.

He allocates a timetable to watering that the software applies against his various paddocks, ensuring pasture is irrigated and growing where he needs it to be, according to the herd's rotation.

Because Southern Rural Water has automated the gates on their channels, once the water is booked for a time and day, their system also requires less manual handling.

In normal circumstances, their gates open when they should and an alert sounds in their system if the automation does not happen as planned.

—Jeanette Severs

Cows and fitbits on NSW dairy farms

Key points

- ✔ Project looking at technology use on NSW dairy farms
- ✔ About 60 per cent using one of four types of technology
- ✔ Farms not using technology have fewer than 300 cows

DAIRY farmers now have access to a range of technologies for day-to-day management of individual cows. These include auto drafting, computerised bail feeding, in-line milk meters, and activity meters (collars or tags).

The big question is 'Are dairy farmers investing in these technologies?'

A recent survey of all dairy farmers in NSW asked what technology they had, whether it had made a difference to their farm businesses, and what they would automate next if they could.

The survey was sent out in July 2018 by DairyNSW, Murray Dairy and Subtropical Dairy Program. 102 farmers responded, representing about 15 per cent of the 650 farms in NSW.

In the coming months, *Australian Dairyfarmer* will feature case studies around these cow management technologies — sharing how farmers are using them in their businesses, what has worked for them, or not worked, and why.

What are the main findings?

- About 60pc of NSW dairy farms use at least one of auto drafting, bail feeding, activity meters or in-line milk meters.
- 7pc use all four technologies.
- Farms that don't use any of these technologies (virtually all) have fewer than 300 cows.
- Heat detection is the primary reason for using activity meters (typically collars).
- Collars are currently used on 26pc of farms, particularly the larger farms.
- 61pc of collars were bought in the past two years, and satisfaction with them is high.
- For herds with activity meters, the next target is information about individual cow production and detection of mastitis.
- Two software packages originating from Australia (Easy Dairy and Jantec) are used as the herd management software for 46pc of NSW dairy farms that have one or more of the technologies.
- 21pc of farms do not use computerised records for herd management. All of these have fewer than 300 cows and most don't use any of the technologies.

'61pc of collars were bought in the past two years, and satisfaction with them is high.'

The TechKISS project is supported by the NSW Dairy Industry Fund. D

Contact: Pauline Brightling, email <pauline@harrisparkgroup.com.au>.

Robots monitor mastitis at Pyengana

Key points

- ✔ Robot units have on-line electrical conductivity sensors
- ✔ Identify cows with mastitis
- ✔ System set to divert milk and wash more thoroughly when treated cows milked

Automatic milking system farmer, Richard Hori, from Tasmania says getting pasture management right is a critical part of making an AMS work.

MASTITIS management is highly effective but far from conventional for Tasmanian dairy farm manager Richard Hori. That's no surprise given the herd is milked through a robotic dairy.

Mr Hori manages a 200-cow Holstein herd in the Pyengana Valley, which is a 20-minute drive inland of the north-east coast of Tasmania.

The herd split calves with 40 per cent calving in autumn and 60pc in spring and is milked through three Lely single-box units.

The farm was one of the first in Tasmania to invest in automatic milking systems (AMS) in June 2010. Mr Hori began working on the farm 12 months later and has since taken on the lease of the farm.

Milk quality is a priority for Mr Hori, who has a contract to supply Pyengana Dairy, a milk plant and cheese factory which adjoins the farm and is owned by the Tasmanian Food Co.

The herd's current average cell count for 2018-19 to date is 131,000 and ranges from as low as 30,000 to 218,000 depending on seasonal conditions.

While the AMS approach to mastitis management is different to a conventional dairy, it's not difficult, according to Mr Hori.

"Robotic milking is a totally different way of dairy farming with a reliance on sensors and computers — instead of people — to monitor issues such as mastitis," he said.

"In a lot of ways, the robots and the computer system become your eyes and ears on the herd.

"It doesn't mean you're not involved — you still need a good routine to constantly check things and act when the computer sends you an alert — but you're not relying on people in the dairy to identify and manage cows with mastitis."

Detecting cows

Every AMS unit on the Pyengana farm has on-line electrical conductivity sensors, which monitor each quarter in real time at every milking. The data collected is then used to generate an 'alert' when the conductivity level passes a set threshold.

'Robotic milking is a totally different way of dairy farming with a reliance on sensors and computers - instead of people - to monitor issues such as mastitis.'

Dr Nicolas Lyons, from NSW DPI's The Milking Edge* project, said that while electrical conductivity testing was the most common measure used to detect mastitis in AMS dairies, other sensor technologies were also used to detect mastitis. They include monitoring milk colour, temperature, yield, milk flow rates and the time between milkings. Some AMS units had on-line somatic cell counters as well.

"Research underway at the University is Sydney by PhD student, Momena Khatun, is looking at optimising which combinations of measurements could enhance mastitis detection in AMS dairies even further. Results so far look promising," Dr Lyons said.

Mr Hori makes a point of regularly checking his computer in the office to watch for alerts on cows going through the dairy. "The AMS makes identifying clinical cows straightforward, but once detected they need to be acted on," Mr Hori said.

"Mastitis management still means you have to have a routine .

"We don't have good mobile coverage in Pyengana so I can't access the data on a mobile phone, but I make a point of looking at the computer three to four times a day — depending the season — to see what is happening with the cows.

"The computer alerts are also backed up by manual observation of milk filters. We change two milk filters every day between washes.

"When you look at the reports generated by the system there are always a few new cows with cell counts going up and a handful of cows we need to keep an eye on. The detection and alert system allows us to act quickly on potential cases of mastitis — as soon as a quarter becomes infected and the cow is milked, the cow and infected quarter will appear on a report.

"The AMS system means we don't miss a case of mastitis and then have an undetected cow going through a number of milkings and affecting the herd's milk quality; which is the sort of thing which can happen in a conventional dairy."

Once the AMS identifies a cow as having a milk quality issue, the system is set to automatically draft the suspect cow into a treatment yard before the next milking. "Some systems will allow the computer to automatically draft suspect cows, but I tend to enter the cows into the computer manually," Mr Hori said. "I run a small herd, so I know all the cows and tend to know where they are in the grazing system and when a particular cow is likely to come through the dairy.

"I'll make myself aware of when a sus-

pect cow is coming into the shed and will intercept her prior to milking and manually strip her out so she does not have to wait around in a holding yard for me to let her out.

"Before I treat her, I record against the cow's ID in the computer which quarters are treated, which drugs are used, the number of treatments and the withholding period.

"This is crucial because it's important the computer system knows to divert the milk from the treated cows away from the vat for the entire withholding period, plus an extra 24 hours."

The AMS will then automatically do a 1-2 minute wash after handling a treated cow with separated milk, before letting the next cow into the milking unit. This is instead of the normal 2-3 second rinse between standard milkings.

Mr Hori also uses the same system to record freshly calved cows, so the colostrum is redirected into a separate line at the dairy.

Quarter time

The ability of an AMS dairy to monitor and milk each quarter individually has significant benefits with mastitis management, according to Mr Hori.

"One of the advantages of the AMS is being able to get information on what is happening in each quarter of every cow, especially in late lactation," he said.

"There can be cows coming through in late lactation which are still producing at a high level but may have a milk quality issue in one quarter.

"The computer system allows me to set the AMS so that it will dry the problem quarter off in a cow, who is still producing well in the other three quarters.

"This means I can keep the cow in production rather than drying her off which can be important in managing numbers and total production. I want to keep cow numbers and not cull a cow unnecessarily."

Mr Hori grew up with his parents share dairy farming on the North Island of New Zealand but working in Tasmania has been his first experience with robotic milking.

"When I moved to Tasmania and first started working for the farm owners — the Healy family — in 2011, I couldn't believe how lucky I was to be working on an AMS farm," he said.

"I began leasing the farm in 2015 and am now in the process of buying their herd."

While the AMS frees up time which would otherwise be spent milking cows in a conventional dairy, more time is spent analysing individual cow reports and focusing on pasture management.

One of the keys to running an AMS dairy is ensuring cows keep coming to the shed and there is an even cow flow in a 24-hour period.

"It makes pasture management crucial and I tend to plan three to four weeks ahead where I want the cows to go," Mr Hori said. "If your pasture management isn't spot on and your plans are wrong, there are big ramifications on voluntary cow flow through the dairy and milk production suffers.

"Our average annual rainfall is in the order of 1100-1200 millimetres a year — which means it can get very wet and cold in winter.

"We can get a bit of mud on the laneway in winters but it's not a major contributor to mastitis because we only ever have small number of cows on the laneways at any one time." D

Contact: Nicolas Lyons, mobile 0401 650 073, email <nicolas.lyons@dpi.nsw.gov.au>.

**The Milking Edge is a collaborative industry project funded by Dairy Australia, NSW Department of Primary Industries and DeLaval, supporting AMS on Australian dairy farms. Dr Nicolas Lyons is the project leader.*

January 20-24 Tatura, Vic	**International Dairy Week** Contact: Robyn Barber Email: <info@internationaldairyweek.com.au> Website: <www.internationaldairyweek.com.au>
February 6 Whorouly, Vic	**Euthanasia of livestock workshop** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: 0438 906 613 Email: <rread@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 7 Katunga, Vic	**Euthanasia of livestock workshop** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: 0438 906 613 Email: <rread@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 11 Blighty, NSW	**Feed and water management for a productive spring** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: (03) 5833 5312 Email: <admin@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 12 Cohuna, Vic	**Feed and water management for a productive spring** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: (03) 5833 5312 Email: <admin@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 13-15 Allansford, Vic	**Sungold Field Days** Phone: (03) 5565 3142 Email: <sungold.fielddays@saputo.com> Website: <www.sungoldfielddays.com.au>
February 13 Kyabram, Vic	**Feed and water management for a productive spring** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: (03) 5833 5312 Email: <admin@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 14 Katunga, Vic	**Feed and water management for a productive spring** Contact: Murray Dairy Phone: (03) 5833 5312 Email: <admin@murraydairy.com.au> Website: <http://murraydairy.com.au>
February 19-21 Canberra, ACT	**Australian Dairy Conference** Website: <http://www.australiandairyconference.com.au/>
February 22 Currie, Tas	**Young Dairy Network Bowls & Dinner Event at King Island Bowls Club** Contact: DairyTas Phone: (03) 6432 2233 Email: <admin@dairytas.net.au> Website: <http://www.dairytas.com.au/>
February 24-28 Paris, France	**SIMA and Simagena 2019** Website: <http://en.simaonline.com/>
March 6 Smithton, Tas	**Tasmanian Focus Farm Open Day 2018** Contact: DairyTas Phone: (03) 6432 2233 Email: <admin@dairytas.net.au> Website: <http://www.dairytas.com.au/>
March 11-14 Asakusa, Japan	**International Conference on Lameness in Ruminants** Website: <http://web.apollon.nta.co.jp/lamenessinruminants2019/>
March 14 Tailem Bend, SA	**DairySA Central Conference** Contact: Dairy SA Phone: 0408 951 695 Email: <info@dairysa.com.au> Website: <https://dairysa.com.au>
March 19 -20 Bendigo, Vic	**Herd '19 Conference** Website: <www.nhia.org.au>
March 21 Launceston, Tas	**Tasmanian Dairy Conference and awards dinner** Phone: (03) 6432 2233 Email: <admin@dairytas.net.au> Website: <http://www.dairytas.com.au/>
March 22-29 SA and Vic	**International Red Dairy Breeders Federation conference and tour** Contact: Kylie Boston Phone: 0407 231 547 Email: <kylie.smc@bigpond.com> Website: <www.irdbf2019.com.au>

DairySA central conference right on track

THE 2019 DairySA Central Conference promises an exciting line-up of speakers around the theme of 'Diverse Dairy: Driving Opportunities'.

More than 120 dairyfarmers and service providers from across South Australia's Fleurieu, Barossa Mid-North and River and Lakes districts are expected to attend the one-day conference, to be held for the first time at The Bend Motorsport Park at Tailem Bend, on March 14.

Acknowledging the diverse dairy farm operations in the region — in herd size, milk production and systems — the 2019 DairySA Central Conference will present, discuss and question the opportunities for each farm to reach their potential.

DairySA's conference co-ordinator Beck Burgess said the conference had been designed to provide an insight into the latest advancements in animal, energy and people management areas, challenging delegates to identify opportunities to help them grow or improve current practices on farm.

World-renowned calf-rearing expert, Dr Bob James, professor emeritus of dairy science at Virginia Tech University, will challenge farmers to think differently about calf rearing and its associated costs by reassessing the common elements of environment, colostrum, feeding regimes, group housing and facility management.

Four concurrent sessions will look at the new opportunities around irrigation management, energy options, and looking after people.

The new Dairy Platform Outdoor Trade Sites are also included as part of these concurrent sessions, giving delegates the chance to get up close to the latest large machinery on the market.

For speaker Sam Bailey, life has always been about doing it differently. A farmer, pilot, husband and best-selling author, he has achieved all of those from a wheelchair. His inspirational story is guaranteed to make everyone think differently about life and overcoming its obstacles.

To register for the DairySA Central Conference 2019, head to <www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2019-dairysa-central-conference-tickets-53085301566>.

In-house culture: a smarter approach

By **Ee Cheng Ooi***

Key points

- ✔ New mastitis tests offer faster turnaround
- ✔ Enables quicker identification of bacteria involved
- ✔ Helps inform decision making about treatment options

AT the herd level, culturing milk samples is a really useful practice. The type of mastitis being dealt with can greatly influence control and prevention strategy.

Let's say for example that a farm finds out it has a *Staph aureus* problem. This bug likes to hide in infected udders and is contagious, spreading from cow to cow at milking time.

To control it, the farmer needs to find the infected cows and either treat or get rid of them, using an antibiotic that works on this bacteria. Even with appropriate treatment, cure rates can be low.

On the other hand, if the farm has a *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* issue, we know that this type of bug likes to hide in contaminated water and hose linings. So to fight it, the farmer will need to replace cracked old linings and check the water supply. Sometimes we find out that a milker has been warming up intramammary tubes in warm water before putting them in teats — stopping this practice would be the quick first step towards solving the problem.

So different bugs on the farm will all have different stories with different endings. In an outbreak situation (or any situation), it's a good idea to know what is being dealt with so as to not waste time chasing the wrong thing.

Cow mastitis cultures

Using milk culture to investigate herd mastitis outbreaks has been done for decades. Usually, 20 or more samples are taken from selected cows, the courier called, the milk sent away to the laboratory and then wait for the results. While the milk is in transit, everyone hopes that the bugs being looked for don't die and that contaminants don't grow.

But now with new advances in technology, many vet practices can do milk cultures in the clinic. Instead of sending the samples away to the city and having to wait several days for the result, samples can be turned over in a 24-hour period.

Why is this important?

Thanks to this quick turnaround, we have the ability to delay treatment until we're sure that the cow needs antibiotics. This only applies to mild cases (changes seen in milk) and moderate cases (changes seen in milk and udder). Severe cases where the cow is sick (has a fever or is not eating or is depressed) should still be seen and/or treated immediately.

By only treating cases which we know will respond to antibiotics, we can:

- Save money on drugs.
- Throw out less milk.
- Have fewer cows on the bucket — reducing risks of residue violations and time wasted on unnecessary treatments.
- Use antibiotics in a responsible way that reduces the risk of antibiotic resistance.

'In-house mastitis culture can be a great way to save money and reduce our usage of unnecessary antibiotics.'

How do culture results change our approach to treatment? The reduction in antibiotic use will depend on the types of bugs commonly seen on the farm.

Research suggests that mastitis caused by gram-positive bacteria usually responds well to intramammary antibiotics. These include bugs such as *Streptococcus uberis*, *Streptococcus dysgalactiae*, *Streptococcus agalactiae* and coagulase-negative *Staphylococci* species.

Mild and moderate mastitis caused by most gram-negative bacteria, however, such as *E coli* and *Klebsiella* species, tend to self-cure. Using intramammary antibiotics on these cows makes little difference to cure rates, and poses a risk of introducing new infections during administration.

A mixed growth plate of gram-positive bacteria and gram-negative bacteria. Correct treatment relies on identifying the bacteria involved.

We sometimes see problem bacteria like *Serratia* species and non-bacterial agents like *Candida* species (which is a yeast). These cases often have poor outcomes, and will not respond to antibiotic treatment — there is little value in using them in these instances. Supportive treatment like anti-inflammatories may have a bigger impact.

Finally, we can also identify cases where there is no bacterial agent. If the samples do not grow bacteria, there is little use in treating with antibiotics — it may be that cow is not actually infected, or else the cow is likely to self-cure on its own and/or with stripping. We have had some farmers treating a mysterious mastitis infection in heifers with trisoprim. Culturing no growths gave them the confidence to stop treatment — and all 13 of the untreated heifers were perfectly normal.

In short, in-house mastitis culture can be a great way to save money and reduce our usage of unnecessary antibiotics. Anyone who thinks there might be a place for in-house mastitis culture in their management system, should give their local vet a call about it to find out more. D

**Ee Cheng Ooi is a dairy veterinarian and fertility researcher in Northern Victoria.*

All comments and information discussed in this article are intended to be of a general nature only. Please consult the farm's vet for herd health advice, protocols and/or treatments that are tailored to a herd's particular needs.

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Breeding and feeding go hand-in-hand

Key points

- ✔ Long history of quality breeding sets base for high production
- ✔ Focus now switched to daughter fertility
- ✔ Genomic semen helped accelerate genetic gain

MAINTAINING a top quality genetic-base ensures Kate and Jason Kirk get the most out of their stringent feeding regime.

The couple, with their son Harvey, 9, milk 310 Holsteins in a split-calving system at Loch, Vic.

Their Holsteins are not only even in type and stature, but they are also big production animals. The 640-kilogram average herd delivers an average 640kg of milk solids a lactation. Heifers come into the dairy at about 540kg producing 85 per cent of a mature cows' production in their first season.

While special attention is paid to feeding and nutrition, Mrs Kirk said without a good genetic base there would be no way the cows could achieve this milk production. "We always go for top quality bulls, so we can get top quality cows," she said.

"If the genetic potential isn't there, it doesn't matter what you feed them, they won't be top performers compared to all the other Holstein herds.

"With the genetics there, and then our general management strategy we can get the potential out of cows."

The herd receives 2.4 tonnes of wheat/cow/year.

In mid-November, their diet included 8kg of wheat/cow/day and 14kg dry matter pasture/cow/day. The pasture-base is perennial ryegrass across their 120ha clay loam country with an average annual rainfall of 1000 millimetres. Supplementary feed is mostly homegrown silage and "occasionally" high protein hay vetch or lucerne hay, which is bought-in.

Mrs Kirk completed an advanced dairy nutrition course run by Dairy Australia.

Breeding and genetics

The Kirks started with a great genetic base for their operation, buying their herd about 10 years ago from Mr Kirk's parents Ken and Val, who had 40 years of breeding.

This strong genetic history, including all the cow's information, made it easy to continue with the quality and level of breeding. Mr Kirk's parents bred mostly for protein and butterfat.

Kate Kirk says although their animals are fed well, genetics is a key to high production.

Mrs Kirk said breeding and genetics were an important part of their herd management. "We only pick high (Balanced Performance Index) BPI sires and we wouldn't take anything under 200 BPI," she said.

> ***'If the genetic potential isn't there, it doesn't matter what you feed them...'***

Less weight is now placed on production when it comes to breeding decisions. Now, those that make the cut must be above 100 for daughter fertility, regardless of their other good qualities.

Longevity has also become a focus as well as good feet and legs. Their steep, hilly farm requires a walk of up to 2km, including an uphill trek to the dairy.

"Good feet and legs are crucial, and without this, the topography of the farm can reduce the length of time a cow stays in the herd," Mrs Kirk said.

"Our cows' frame size has also reduced in recent years, while bulls are also selected for mastitis resistance."

The DataGene *Good Bulls Guide* is used to compared different traits. "I have a list of what I want, I go through and pick the bulls I like and go through each bull individually and set parameters," Mrs Kirk said.

"For example, I want positive fertility and could have 20 bulls I like, but six or eight could be wiped out because they don't have positive fertility."

Sires for heifers must include a high ranking for calving ease.

Genomic semen makes up about 50 per cent of their total gene pool. Mrs Kirk said genomic semen has replaced their progeny test semen.

While it has contributed to a rise in artificial insemination costs, the reliability has been worth it, and they have been able to advance their genetics quicker.

Mrs Kirk does all the artificial insemination with a fixed-time program used on the heifers for the past four years.

Sexed semen was first used by the family with their heifers, achieving an average conception rate of about 60pc, and now is used for second to third lactation cows with a good fertility history.

The family is moving to a new farm at Dumbalk and breeding has, and will continue to play, a key role in their management plans.

The extra numbers bred using sexed semen will help lift the closed herd to 400 or more. "They certainly pay us back (the cows), that's for sure," Mrs Kirk said. "We treat them as well as we can, and we don't get a lot of metabolic problems. That comes from good quality breeding." D

Preg-testing vital to help plan ahead

Key points

- ✔ Knowing preg status of cows help with culling decisions
- ✔ Means more efficient use of feed resources
- ✔ Look to use semen from high daughter fertility bulls

PREGNANCY testing cows is important for dairy farmers at this time of year to help budget accurately as feed costs remain high.

Dairy Australia's newly-appointed InCalf program leader Tim Humphris said knowing the pregnancy status of cows was important as it allowed farmers to make culling decisions, accurately feed budget and accurately plan transition feeding, which is critical to reproductive performance.

"That way, with the limited feed resources available, we can maintain the Body Condition Score of the cows that we do have," he said.

"We will know, for example, the correct dry-off dates and which cows will be calving at a particular time.

"We really want to make sure they don't become too thin. We want to maintain them in an optimum condition so that they can be productive for us and they can get in calf for the next season."

Heifers

The pregnancy status of heifers was also important, Mr Humphris said. This would assist farmers considering late calving heifers for sale and empty heifers to be sold meaning, more efficient use of feed resources.

"Spring calving heifers are at a stage when they can be pregnancy tested and there will be another seven to eight months before they are likely to calve again," he said.

"If we can work out which of these are empty at this stage, we can save eight months of feed for that animal."

Culling

When culling, consider the impacts on reproduction. Early calving cows will have the best reproductive performance; likewise, young cows will have a better reproductive performance than older cows.

"The best cows to keep in your herd to maximise recovery from a tough year are young early calving cows," Mr Humphris said.

"Unfortunately this year our culling rates are going to be higher than normal. Cows that aren't pregnant, that aren't milking well enough or cows that have some age on them from a fertility point of view would be on my radar to be sold."

Semen selection

Mr Humphris said semen selection could have a big impact on a herd's reproductive performance into the future.

Selecting bulls with a positive semen fertility was a good strategy as using these bulls would result in more pregnancies per insemination than lower or negative rated bulls. "For long term impact select bulls from the DataGene *Good Bulls Guide* with a high daughter fertility ABV," he said.

For Holstein bulls, try to select a team with daughter fertility ABV above 110. In the future, animals in the herd sired by high daughter fertility ABV bulls will have higher reproductive performance, higher six-week-in calf rate and lower not-in-calf rates. D

The Datagene GoodBulls app, which helps farmers to make selections and filter on daughter fertility ABV, is a good way to select bulls. For more information, visit <datagene.com.au/extension-good-bulls-app>.

New InCalf leader on a mission

TIM Humphris was appointed leader of the InCalf program in July 2018. He has been working in northern Victoria for the past 25 years, 10 as a dairy farmer and 15 as a dairy vet.

"It's a role that is dear to my heart," Mr Humphris said. "I've been part of the National Herd Fertility Project since its inception in 1996 and herd fertility is a particular passion of mine."

The InCalf program assists farmers and advisers to develop an effective, profitable strategy to achieve farm targets for herd reproduction whatever calving system is used.

As a farmer, Mr Humphris knows how critical successful reproduction is for farm businesses. "Cows that get in calf drive the system, the more cows in calf we get the harder the system is driven," he said.

"If I have an excess of pregnant cows I am able to choose which cows I sell, I can choose how many cows to milk, I can choose how many replacements to rear. If I don't have enough pregnancies all of these choices are taken away from me."

Mr Humphris said the continued development of the daughter fertility Australian Breeding Value (ABV) by DataGene is one of the best new tools farmers had available to improve reproduction.

Yet farmers, shouldn't forget about other key management areas, which had an immediate benefit on fertility including:

- Calf and heifer management.
- Body condition and nutrition.
- Heat detection.
- Artificial insemination technique and semen handling.
- Bull management.
- Transition cow management and cow health.

Helping farmers recognise the importance of collecting and using data is one area that Mr Humphrs will be focusing on in his new role. "If we can't measure something how do we know what our targets are," he said. "How do we know when we have reached them?"

Mr Humprhis said the six-week InCalf rate had been an excellent figure to benchmark reproductive performance between herds but was not a term all farmers were comfortable using. ▶

Tim Humphris: Cows that get in calf drive the system.

Dairy Australia
Your Levy at Work

Being mindful of wasting feed

Key points
- ✔ Feed test everything
- ✔ Reduce feed wastage
- ✔ Prepare feed budgets

FOR Tom Acocks, knowing how much feed he has, what quality it is and wasting as little as possible is the key to running an efficient dairy farm business.

Running a hybrid system where his 900 cows are on a total mixed ration regime for seven months of the year with five months available for grazing, Mr Acocks said he believed measuring and conserving feed were helping the family business cope with the tough conditions faced by northern Victorian farmers.

"If you are not getting the response you need from the feed going in, you will be behind the eight ball, not just this year but every year," he said.

The Acocks 1300-hectare farm at Rochester moved from a pasture-based system about seven years ago and is now centred around vetch and wheat crops on dryland with irrigated lucerne and maize, as well as some ryegrass or clover for grazing.

They grow 80 per cent of their fodder on farm, buying in some protein sources and grain when needed, which helps produce 780 kilograms of milk solids per cow per year.

"To make all that work you need to have good quality feed, you need to store it correctly, you need quality silage," Mr Acocks said.

"We feed a lot of silage, so that is the bulk of ration. We need to make sure we cut at the right time, ensiling it properly, choosing the right crop varieties to give us the best feed quality.

"We feed test everything as it goes into the pit so we know what dry matter we have and we feed test it as it comes out so we know what the ration looks like after we have ensiled it.

"Depending on the stack — if it is a big stack — we will feed test once we get a face going and again halfway through the stack if we think the dry matter is changing. We just feed test all the time."

Factbox

Feed wastage
- Wastage adds cost to home-grown and purchased feeds.
- Feed losses are most significant during feed out.
- More feed is wasted when it is fed out on bare ground in the paddock or along a roadway than when delivered using a feed-out facility.
- Make realistic allowances for feed wastage when developing your feed budget.

Feed testing
- Feed lab testing should provide the key information needed to confirm a feed's nutritional value or to compare its nutritional value with another feed.
- It's important to understand that there is always a certain degree of variation that needs to be allowed for around the result as measured at the lab.
- By far the greatest source of variation is due to sampling method, so it's well worth taking the time required to collect a truly representative sample and not take short cuts.

'We can't afford to be wasting feed, not just this year, but any year.'

Once sure of the quality, the Acocks team works hard to ensure as little as possible is wasted once it has been put in front of the cow.

Estimating that up to 20pc of fed-out product would have been left behind under the old pasture system, Mr Acocks said that had been reduced to negligible levels.

"We aim to have about 5pc of the feed from the day before left in front of the cows, which we call refusal or weigh-back," he said.

"We push that feed out each day and weigh it and then feed it to dry cows, heifers or lower producing cows."

While it has taken 10 years of planning and implementing, Mr Acocks said reducing wastage was one of the key areas that the family identified to deal with a tightening dairy market.

"With the way the water market was heading, we thought that investing in that feeding infrastructure was the only way we were going to survive," he said.

"We can't afford to be wasting feed, not just this year, but any year."

Feed budgeting is the third element of the Acocks efficient-feeding regime, with careful documentation of what the cows are eating making planning easier. "We work on known quantities of silage we have on hand — we keep an inventory of that," Mr Acocks said.

"We do daily feed sheets for the guys feeding cows. We have a full-time labour unit that just feeds cows so they get a print out of what groups need feeding each day. Based on that daily feed sheet, I will know how much we will use of each commodity in a 12-month or one-month period." D

For further information on feed budgeting, reducing feed wastage or feed testing go to <www.dairyaustralia.com.au/feedshortage>.

New InCalf leader on a mission

◀ Another of his aims is to develop a language around fertility to which farmers, veterinarians, AI technicians, nutritionists can all relate.

Dairy farmers have a number of ways to get involved with the InCalf program including getting in touch with a Repro Right trained adviser or enrolling in and InCharge module run by InCalf and Regional Development Programs.

The InCalf program also has a number of resources available including the InCalf book, which gives farmers the best available information they need to effectively manage reproduction and achieve their farm profit and business goals.

For more information, visit <dairyaustralia.com.au/InCalf>.

Dairy Australia
Your Levy at Work

Mycotoxin testing worthwhile this year

Key points

- ✔ Mould may create mycotoxins in feed
- ✔ Impacts animal performance in several ways
- ✔ Binder may help mitigate problems

MYCOTOXIN testing might be worth considering for farmers looking to increase milk production, lower cell counts and improve empty rates.

Jason Bake, from Crossmaglen near Coffs Harbour, NSW, has seen a dramatic improvement in all three of these areas since identifying and dealing with a mycotoxin issue on his 90-hectare farm.

Mycotoxins are caused by moulds in feed, which both decrease digestibility and often cause production and health issues. These issues range from minor illness to major impacts that greatly reduce milk production, or cause reproductive failure, abortion, or even death in cows.

Mr Bake, who grows corn for silage and grain in the humid conditions of the NSW north coast, was aware that mycotoxins were an issue, but did not realise how much affect they were having on his 400 crossbred cows."We had a bit of an issue and were working closely with Dr Bruce Hamilton from Ruminant Nutrition Australia," he said.

"We were looking at our production figures and we knew there was something not right. We did a test for mycotoxins and a couple of the strains were at very high levels.

"We already used a mycotoxin binder in the feed, which wasn't doing the job for us, so we did a bit of testing and changed to our present binder. Once we started using it, within three weeks we had an increase of three litres per cow per day of milk and our somatic cell count average dropped from 230,000 back to 180,000. Our empty rate was up to about 18 per cent and after a season with the binder in, it dropped back to about 12pc."

Mould risk can be identified in feed through visible moulds and musty smells. If mould can be seen or smelt, farmers should avoid purchasing it if they can. Mould isn't always visible but there can still be fungal impacts.

White moulds are dangerous — not just coloured moulds and fungi. There are a few types of fungi that usually produce white-coloured mould amd also produce dangerous toxins. This includes fusarium fungi, which is the most common fungi of forages in southern Australia. The white mould it produces can have toxins detrimental to cow health, production and reproduction.

For Mr Bake, identifying potential mycotoxin risks and finding the correct binder was well worth the effort. "If you open your silage bunker or round bale and there is white mould on it, that is a form of mycotoxin," he said. You need to test your feed, find out if you have it, what the concentration is and what the strain is. Then you can deal with it.

Jason Bake uses mycotoxin binder in his ration and has seen great results from it.

"We feed mycotoxin binder and have seen great results from it. It actually attracts the mycotoxin to it, it binds it to the product and it passes through the cow without it affecting digestion."

Correct harvesting also plays a big part in reducing mycotoxin risk, with Mr Bake careful about the process from paddock to feeding. These includes cutting pastures early, compacting forage as densely as possible, sealing quickly to exclude air and repairing any holes in the stack. "Ensuring it is harvested at the right time and you have the right compaction is important," he said.

"We bag it all in a big sausage-style bag rather than put it in a bunker. It means we have a smaller face and you can work it back quicker so you don't get the mould starting to grow on the face." D

For more information see the Dairy Australia mycotoxin factsheet at <www.dairyaustralia/feedshortage>.

Mould and fungi a risk when using alternative feeds

SEASONS with low growth can see a range of less common feed ingredients being used. These include older hay, alternative co-product feeds, and a high volume of failed cereal and canola crops.

If using these less common feed ingredients, it is important to understand potential risks and upsides for the herd.

Alternative crop hays such as canola hay are often cut and on the ground for longer than normal hay sources. This time 'down' increases the chances of microbial action within the plant mass.

The thicker stem means it hard to dry down and may have a higher moisture level than pasture or cereal hay. This can also apply to failed cereal crops cut for hay, with moisture still in nodes. Microbial load plus moisture carries a higher risk of becoming mouldy in storage.

It is hard to keep oxygen out of silage made from mature crops, so there is a higher risk of spoilage. Incorrectly stored hay, silage or other high moisture feeds bring a similar risk of mould spoilage as microbial action takes places. This is the early stages of a composting process, which is a significant negative.

These moulds can produce toxins called mycotoxins, which both decrease the digestibility of feed and often cause production and health issues. These range from minor illness to major impacts that greatly reduce milk production, or cause reproductive failure, abortion, or even death in cows.

If concerned about the level of mould in feed, getting a mould and fungi count is a sensible first option to check the risk.

In the case of production or reproduction issues, other common causes should be considered and ruled out before attributing issues to mycotoxins.

These may include reduced dry matter intake due to basic feed availability or feed quality.

It may also include seasonal impacts such as heat.

Dairy Australia
Your Levy at Work

Roundtables help localise feed advice

Key points

- ✔ Feedbase options discussed in small local groups
- ✔ Farmers help advice each other
- ✔ Consultants help facilitate discussions

WITH the drought affecting New South Wales differently from region to region, the state's dairy farmers needed advice and assistance that would work in their local area.

To help ease the pressure on farmers, DairyNSW came up with an innovative idea to bring small groups of farmers together to discuss feedbase options available in their own districts.

The Feedbase Roundtable events have seen farmers meet around a kitchen table to share their knowledge and work on solutions to the problems they are all facing.

With an experienced consultant on hand to steer the discussion, the Roundtable events have proved an effective method for assisting farmers to adapt to whatever conditions they are facing at a local level.

'Because the needs were so varied, we came up with the concept of Feedbase Roundtables.'

DairyNSW regional manager April Browne said the Regional Development Program could not rely on a one-size-fits-all approach to feedbase extension.

"We had regions where 90 per cent of their feed was bought-in while others, particularly along the coast were getting some rain, so they wanted to know how to capitalise on any rainfall they got or irrigation they could access," she said.

"Because the needs were so varied, we came up with the concept of Feedbase Roundtables, which brought about half a dozen or so farmers together.

"We'd usually encourage neighbours who have similar feedbase needs to come along, with the theory being that, if you farm within a couple of hundred metres of each other, you probably have the same challenges.

Feedbase Roundtable being held at Pyree with members of the Young Dairy Network.

"We bring along a consultant and they sit around the kitchen table to thrash out a few of the issues they are facing with feedbase."

Ms Browne said the Feedbase Roundtables had shown that farmers were able to help each other by sharing local knowledge that could be invaluable in making the right decisions for specific areas.

"We've had really good feedback on how well targeted they are and how they have fitted the needs of their business," she said.

"They were able to make good business decisions based off it, rather than a more general approach, where they may or may not take something away.

"What we found is that it almost ended up having a Focus Farm affect in that, when the farmers got together, they were almost self-advising. The consultant was sometimes there more as a thought provoker or a facilitator of a conversation.

"If you can get the conversation heading into a very specific area, like feed rationing or sowing options on a certain irrigation allocation, they can get into a lot of detail and a lot of good information in a short amount of time."

A Feedbase Roundtable at Bodalla, NSW, considers the best way to make use of available feed.

Feedbase Roundtable at Pyree, NSW, looks at feed options.

To find out what is happening in your region, contact your Regional Development Program. Their contact details can be found inside the back cover of this edition of the *Australian Dairyfarmer*.

Dairy Australia
Your Levy at Work

Taking Stock sets farmer up for 2019

Key points

- ✔ Taking Stock helps farmer plan to manage drought
- ✔ Identified options for growing quick feed
- ✔ Helped find best way to access funds to cover short-term cashflow needs

GREG Heffernan believes failing to plan means planning to fail.

The Bega, NSW, dairy farmer has used Dairy Australia's Taking Stock program to not only get through a tough drought period, but also to set his goals for next autumn's growing season.

Taking Stock, which offers a free farm visit by a consultant of choice, helps the dairy farm business assess its current financial and physical position and create an action plan.

Mr Heffernan, who runs a 260-hectare farm with wife Kellie and his extended family, said Taking Stock helped the business develop short-term tactics about feed options while helping him to set concrete plans to move forward into 2019.

"We were getting tight for money with the drought and we had to work out what we were going to do over the next few months if it didn't rain," he said.

"The consultant came and sat down with us and helped us to work out the easiest way to buy hay."

One of the aspects of Taking Stock that impressed Mr Heffernan was the holistic approach that it took to looking at the farm business

"The consultant actually drove around the whole farm to have a look at the cows and paddocks — it wasn't just a sit in the office sort of thing," he said.

Greg Heffernan says a Taking Stock consultation helped set him on the right track to better manage this season.

"He got a good picture in his head of where we were at and then came up with some good solutions for what we could do if it didn't rain.

'The consultant came and sat down with us and helped us to work out the easiest way to buy hay.'

"It made sure we were spending what money we had wisely, instead of wasting it. It sort of refreshed our thinking about a few things."

One of the practical outcomes from the Taking Stock was helping Mr Heffernan and his family make the right decisions about accessing money to cover short-term cashflow problems.

"We were wondering if we should go to the government and get a low-interest loan that's available in drought declared areas, just so we could buy hay," he said.

"But he recommended we pull out some Farm Managed Deposits, which ended up being a cheaper way to top the cash flow up until it rained."

With spring rain finally putting some grass in front of the cows, Mr Heffernan has turned his attention to summer and autumn to ensure he can start building a feed wedge as soon as conditions are right.

The Taking Stock consultation convinced him to plant summer crops, which can either be used for forage or, better still, put in the pit for a later date. With his sorghum and millet up and running, he is now planning his strategy for the autumn break.

"I start spraying in late December, then start to fallow the paddocks for sowing in February," Mr Heffernan said

"At the first sign of rain, I have the seed and the drill ready and then once I start I don't stop for six weeks.

"I did Feeding Pastures for Profit a few years ago and since then, I have followed the cows with the seeder, paddock by paddock, and then I build my feed wedge through autumn and spring."

Dairy Australia's Neil Webster said Mr Heffernan's experience with Taking Stock was reflected across dairy-farming regions, where farmers dealing with challenging conditions have found the program to be well worth their time.

"It's a free service that is really making a difference to the way dairy farmers tackle the dry conditions and how they plan ahead for when the rains do return," Mr Webster said. D

Taking Stock program available in all regions

DAIRY Australia's Taking Stock program can be booked by dairy farmers across the country, including farmers who are not facing drought conditions.

Sessions take place on farm, are private and confidential, and aim to help farmers map out a plan for the season ahead including next steps.

The consultation is focused on providing customised advice tailored to the needs of each individual farm and may include any physical, financial and people issues that are identified, resulting in a tailored action plan.

This could include:

- Feed options, planning and budgeting.
- Managing a fodder shortage.
- Herd decisions and animal health.
- Cash budgeting.
- Managing the farm team during tough times.
- Meeting the bank.

Book a free Taking Stock session by contacting the local Regional Development Program. See contact details on the inside back page of this magazine.

What's happening in your region?

Contact your Regional Development Program

Dairy NSW
Ph: 02 9351 1737
dairynsw.com.au

Murray Dairy
Ph: 03 5833 5312
murraydairy.com.au

DairySA
Ph: 08 8766 0127
dairysa.com.au

Subtropical Dairy
Ph: 0431 197 479
dairyinfo.biz

DairyTas
Ph: 03 6432 2233
dairytas.com.au

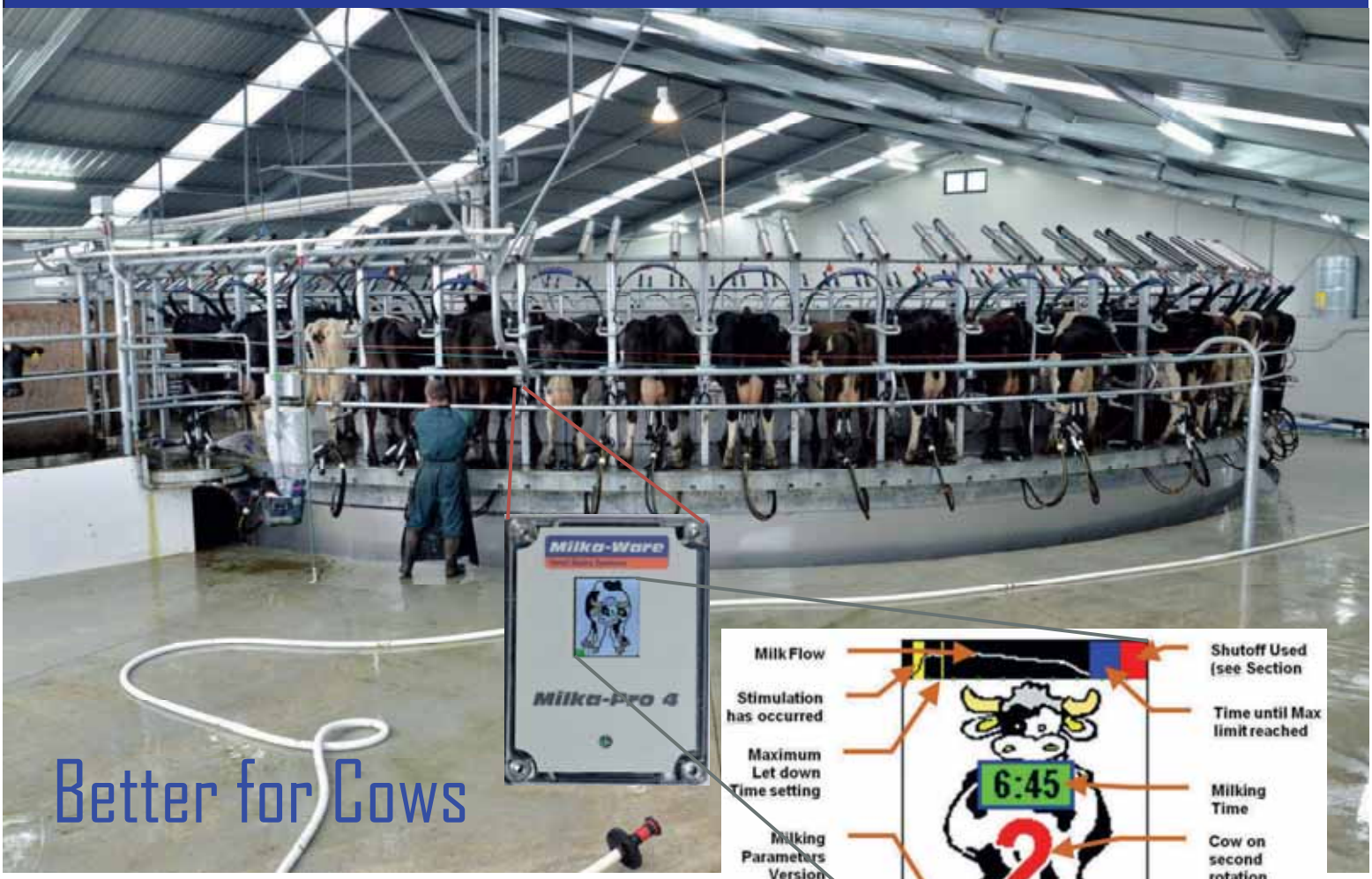
Western Dairy
Ph: 0418 931 938
westerndairy.com.au

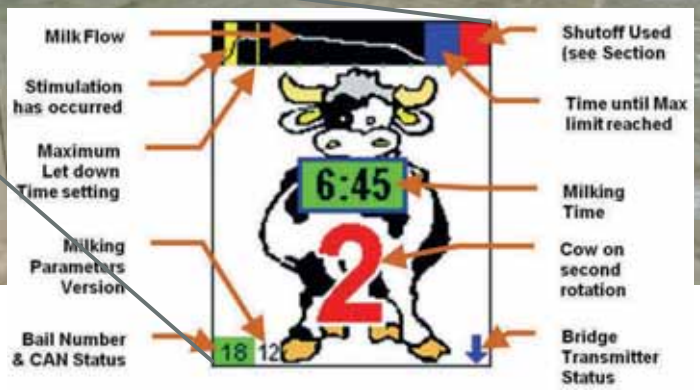
GippsDairy
Ph: 03 5624 3900
gippsdairy.com.au

WestVic Dairy
Ph: 03 55571000
westvicdairy.com.au

To find out more about Dairy Australia visit **dairyaustralia.com.au**

Lower cell count, improve udder health and Reduce labour costs!





Informative for milkers

Milka-Ware's Milka-Pro 4 ACR system improves milking for cows and for milkers. It's advanced microprocessor enables it to analyse and adapt to each individual animal's milking profile in real time. This means that the cups will be removed at the optimum time for each and every animal, every milking. This ensures complete and clean milking in the minimum time without the need to compromise settings for fast or slow milkers.

Designed and manufactured in Australia for Australian dairying conditions the Milka-Pro 4 puts key milking information in the bail, right where you need it.

Did she let down well? How long did she take to milk? What is her milk flow profile like? Is she a good producer? At a glance of the in-bail display these questions and more can be answered so you can better understand your cow's milking performance.

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