

Funded by Dairy Australia and your dairy service levy



DAIRY NEWS

NEWS ABOUT HOW DAIRY FARMERS' LEVIES ARE INVESTED

A special *On The Land* supplement



TAKING TIME TO MANAGE

Working on your business – not just in it – is essential

ALL dairy managers can benefit from taking time out to work on the business, rather than in it.

This is the message from Dr Pauline Brightling who manages The People in Dairy program for Dairy Australia.

“It doesn’t matter how large or small a dairy operation is, there’s value in taking ourselves away from the distractions of the daily farming activities and thinking about it from a different perspective,” said Dr Brightling.

“As a dairy business grows and employs more people it becomes increasingly important to do this.”

The concept may start with the introduction of regular “staff meetings” where the people involved in the farm can discuss plans for the

coming weeks and issues that may need special attention.

It may also include taking the time to document the farm’s procedures and policies.

“It sounds simple but the process of documenting these things helps the business owner or manager think through practices that have been communicated informally in the past. It is the first step for formalising farm systems and it helps both managers and employees to have a clear understanding of what’s expected.”

Another step is to write job descriptions for staff.

“Job descriptions are often prepared when a position becomes vacant on the farm. It’s a good opportunity to think about the tasks involved and the skills required.”

The process of writing a job description helps the owner or manager clarify in their own mind what they need from the position and the type of person who will fit the role.

And having a written job description helps the new staff member know exactly what is expected of them.

“Job descriptions, procedures, policies, staff meetings — you can’t do any of these on the run, while you are busy with the day-to-day activities on the farm. They are best done by taking time out, away from the farm, to concentrate on the business rather than the daily chores.”

Many of these tasks can be made easier by using the templates and tools available on The People in Dairy website.

“Dairy farming can be a hectic occupation. But when you take time away to look at things differently you’ll often come up with ideas that save time and stress every day,” she said.

“Having these key documents—job descriptions, farm policies, procedures — also help present the operation as a professional business. And in the long run that will help address the on-going issue of attracting, developing and retaining people in the dairy industry,” said Dr Brightling.

For more information visit www.thepeopleindairy.org.au or phone 9620-7283.



Theres and Jamie Drake with their children on their farm near Terang.

Home to Terang, via New Zealand and Switzerland

SWISS dairy farmer Theres Drake and her New Zealand husband Jamie are making their way into the Aussie dairy industry.

The route taken by the Drakes to a farm near Terang has been a long and circuitous one but it is starting to pay off.

They have already purchased 60 calves and are continuing to build their herd and their equity as part of a plan to enter into a share farming agreement and eventually achieve their ultimate goal of farm ownership.

Jamie is assistant manager

of Jeff and Barb Collins’ farm at Dixie, continuing a connection and friendship which dates back nearly a decade.

Theres and Jamie met in New Zealand where Theres had travelled as a horticulture exchange student.

CONTINUED PAGE 14

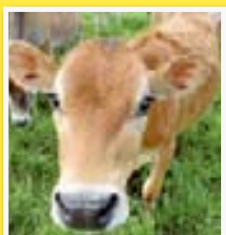


No matter how large or small a dairy operation is, there’s value in taking time away from the distractions of the daily farming activities and thinking about the business from a different perspective.

INSIDE THIS MONTH’S WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

IMPORTANT DAIRY REMINDERS

PAGE 8



JANE’S WEATHER INSIGHTS

PAGE 10



MAKING MOST OF MOISTURE

PAGE 14



WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

INSIDE

PAGE 7

Taking time to manage Home to Terang

PAGE 8

Sharing the farm load Important dairy reminders

PAGE 9

Be wary of hype Keeping soil bugs happy

PAGE 10

Protect your livelihood

PAGE 11

Farming for the future

PAGE 12

Managing resources

PAGE 13

Retreats help managers Transition diet tips

PAGE 14

Strategies for rainfall change



Sharing the farming load

Industry to help those who take new path

AS Mark Stuart sets out on an exciting new period in his dairy farming career he's keen to be supported by as much information as he can find.

Mark has recently joined the Garvoc property of John and Margaret Wines as a one-third share farmer.

It's a big challenge for Mark, wife Helen and family after many years of working on the family dairy farm.

"The time was right to make the move," Mark said.

"I'd been working for wages on my parents' farm at Framlingham for about 17 years, milking 600 cows with my brothers."

The new farm is on a smaller acreage with just 250 cows, which he hopes will improve his work-life balance.

"We decided to have a go at share farming as a way of getting more involved in the industry," Mark said.

"We want to build up our equity as a way of moving ahead."

Mark is taking 30 cows he owns into the share farming agreement and hopes to build on his herd numbers.

His next career ambition is securing a 50 per cent share farming deal.

As he moves, Mark is pleased that levy investments are being made into new programs run by WestVic Dairy.

The programs will arm farmers with information to make transitions and also to support new entrants into dairying.

Mark was a participant in the Framlingham kitchen

“We decided to have a go at share farming as a way of getting more involved in the industry.”

forum run by WestVic Dairy as part of its priority setting process for 2011-12.

Employment and transition issues were high on the agenda, along with concerns about power supply, soil testing, bull fertility issues, "policing" service providers, climate change and dealing with milk price changes.

Several of these issues are being addressed this year in WestVic Dairy's investment plan.

This includes In Charge Financial Literacy, which aims to improve the financial decision making of farmers, a cow health fertility project, and In2Dairy which aims to prepare job ready, newly-trained people for the industry.

One program in particular attracted Mark's attention as he changes career paths.

Managing transitions is an extension and research project to assist farm businesses to plan and move from one phase to another, such as from self operation to employing a sharefarmer.

Although he has had more than 20 years in dairying, including time working in Western Australia and on the Midfield Meat farm at Woolsthorpe, Mark remains keen to learn more.

"We need to have the right information out there to help farmers," he said.

"Not only people like me, but to attract young people into the industry."

"It's a fantastic industry."

"You're outside in the elements doing work you enjoy. It's not some cushy job but that's what is great about it."

"We need to keep finding ways to better describe the business case for our industry."

Mark said he appreciated the kitchen forum concept and would like to see more events in a similar vein. "It's good to know how the levy works and to have a say in how it is being spent," he said.

Mark added that the concept was being adopted by the UDV/VFF as a way to bring farmers together.

Some important dairy reminders for July

By HELEN CHENOWETH,
Dairy Services, DPI
Warrnambool



Pastures

PUGGING damages pastures for the rest of the season, be careful and use preventative measures when grazing wet soils (see item from Michele Ryan in this month's *WestVic Dairy Newsletter* on *On-off grazing*). Through July our region is at its most susceptible to frosts and cold overcast days. During these conditions ryegrass growth is at its slowest for the year. As a result grazing rotations will need to be extended to optimise the pasture performance. A grazing rotation of 45-60 days will ensure plants have grown to their potential. Allowing perennial ryegrass plants to be grazed below five centimetres will severely reduce their ability to produce large leaves, and high yields in subsequent grazings of fodder conservation. As we move into August pasture growth rates will increase and this

will mean faster rotations to optimise quality.

Calves

WHEN weaning calves ensure they continue to have access to plenty of quality supplement and clean water. Do not allow antibiotic contaminated milk from cows treated with veterinary drugs to be fed to bobby calves you intend to sell for slaughter. Make sure all bobby calves, including those for sale, get a drink of good quality colostrum after birth to help with immunity against diseases. Where possible, treat calves that have scours with an electrolyte replacement program rather than antibiotics, to avoid the possibility of chemical residues in calves sold to the bobby calf market.

Heifers

DON'T neglect your heifers this winter. Supplementing the heifers' pasture diet with pellets or good quality hay (9 MJ ME/kg DM or better) helps to maintain energy levels in the diet, and provides adequate fibre, energy, protein and minerals to the growing animal.

Cows

WATCH out for nitrate poisoning when grazing forage oats, brassicas, annual or hybrid ryegrass or pastures containing capeweed or marshmallow. Do not put hungry cows on potentially high nitrate

pastures. Instead feed with hay or supplement prior to grazing any pastures containing elevated nitrate levels. Watch for signs of acidosis in fresh cows, particularly if you are feeding high levels of grain to compensate for limited pasture.

Nitrogen fertiliser use

DON'T apply nitrogen to waterlogged paddocks as the plants will not use it and worse, it will be lost to runoff and the atmosphere.

Where possible allow at least 21 days before grazing after application. In winter, best responses occur six to eight weeks after being applied.

Nitrogen increases the size of the ryegrass leaves grown, but not the rate at which the leaves will be produced. So still try to graze the ryegrass where possible between 2.5 to 3-leaf stage or at canopy closure.

Fodder

PREPARE a fodder budget to get you through to the magic spring day. Make your decision not only on the cost of the supplement, but also the return you will receive from it. Base it on "best value for money".

For example, hay may be cheaper than a grain on a cents per megajoule basis, but the hay may not return as much money via milk in the vat! Your factory field officer, consultant or DPI dairy services officer can assist with these decisions.



Ensure calf live weights are on target before weaning.

Business

GET an income prediction for the dairy farm based on last year's milk production, using this financial year's announced milk prices to see how the costs

from last year match up to changes in income. This could then form the basis of whether any changes are needed.

People

THE most important asset

on the farm! Don't forget to look after yourself, your family and staff. Use the school holidays as a bit of an excuse for a break off the farm, even if for just a few hours!



WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

Be wary of hype

Ask questions before buying soil products

FARMERS should be wary of soil biology products and ask questions before considering their use, a workshop at Terang has been told.

Research scientist Dr Damian Bougoure told a Future Ready Dairy Systems workshop at DemoDAIRY on June 9 that some products could be OK but some probably weren't.

"There are concerns because it is not a regulated industry. Anyone can make a glossy brochure or website, but that doesn't necessarily mean the product will work for your farm," Dr Bougoure said.

"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

More than 50 farmers and service providers attended the soil biology workshop and

were told they should not be shy in asking questions when offered biological products.

"It's not my job to say if any product is good or not, but I can arm you with information to ask the right questions," Dr Bougoure said.

"You should ask whether it is registered, what is in it, is the product suitable for your climate, crop and soil conditions, have there been local trials of the product and if it is backed by data in scientific journals?"

"There is no way to say that a product that works in Queensland would work here in south-west Victoria without proper testing/trials."

Dr Bougoure said that getting management systems right was more important than "adding a few bugs".

Dr Bougoure also warned farmers to be careful using some commercial soil biology tests.

"They are limited in the information they tell us at this stage," he said.

"You are better off undertaking longer-term monitoring of patterns of management, crop production and climate than taking one-off samples, although better tests for soil biology are just around the corner."

Dr Bougoure said fertiliser applications would eventually cost more and farmers needed to use them to best advantage as well as encouraging soil biology to help maintain production.

"We're not in a position to give a definitive answer on what is a good measure of

soil biology, but it is always important to get your house right and make sure things such as pH levels are right and you are encouraging more bugs and more diversity" he said.

The workshop gave farmers and service providers information to help them to better understand soil biology, nutrient cycling, storage of carbon, and improving the performance of bugs.

Dr Bougoure is part of the soil microbiology group of the Department of Primary Industries' Biosciences Research Division.

The session was funded by Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Australian Government's Caring for our Country, Dairy Australia, DAFF and other project partners.



Research scientist Dr Damian Bougoure.

Keeping soil bugs happy

THEY say "don't let the bad bugs bite", but for farmers making sure the soil bugs are happy and doing the right thing is one of the key ingredients to a successful operation.

A soil biology workshop conducted by the Future Ready Dairy Systems Project (FRDS) and Glenelg Hopkins CMA in Terang on June 9 helped more than 50 local farmers and service providers better understand the role bugs play in their soil.

Research scientist Dr Damian Bougoure led the session and encouraged farmers to seek greater numbers and diversity of bacteria, fungi, earthworms and other bugs in their soil as they consider ways to improve its health.

Dr Bougoure said diverse soil biology can help achieve good production.

He said good soil biology decomposes plant residues, regulates plant nutrient supply, improves soil structure, degrades pesticides and herbicides, regulates water supply and captures and releases greenhouse gases.

"Carbon and soil biology are best mates as carbon is great bug food. More carbon equals more bugs which is good for everyone."

"The more carbon you have in your soil the more types of bugs you will have working for you," Dr Bougoure said.

"It is important you know about your bugs and what they can do for you and also how your management practices can impact on their processes."

Management practices can create the right conditions for good bugs to increase in number and carry out the process that will benefit growth of healthy plants.

"The more good bugs you

have the more chances you have to suppress bad bugs," he said.

He said farmers should manage nutrient inputs to avoid creating "lazy soil microbes. Too many chemical inputs might knock about the system, but if you have to use chemicals it's not the end of the world," he said.

"Bugs are tough and many will survive just about anything."

He said fungicides were more likely to cause damage to soil microbes than herbicides and insecticides.

"There are about 400 registered chemicals we add to different agricultural soil types with different microbial communities and different climatic conditions."

"None of these interactions are black and white so it is difficult to know how all soil biology will respond."

"Getting your pH levels right is important and lime can have a significant impact on soil microbial community structure."

"The bug community changes for the better when you get your pH right and that helps your plant growth and nitrogen fixation."

Dr Bougoure, from the soil microbiology group of the Department of Primary Industries' Biosciences Research Division, is researching whether soil microbes maintain ecosystem functions if nutrient inputs are reduced.

He said farmers had indicated high intensity systems were falling out of favour for reasons such as increased fertilizer costs, so it would be valuable for farmers to know if their soil biology could help maintain productivity with less inputs.



Pathways for your future

Wednesday 31st August 2011

Expo registrations 9.00am. Dinner 5.30pm (pre-dinner drinks) for 6.45pm
Glenormiston College Banquet Hall, Glenormiston South, Victoria.

Key Speakers

PETER NOTMAN founder of Notman Seeds
Why Choose Dairying? Key stepping stones, motivation and the drive to be successful.

EDWARD CONHEADY a Noorat Dairy Farmer
How to milk it 4 more with the best of them.

BERNARD BAXTER, Industry Relations for Dairy Australia
What is really available to all dairy farmers and service providers?

MIKE WEISE, WestVic Dairy EO
WestVic Dairy's role and its current projects.

IAN HALLIDAY, Managing Director of Dairy Australia
Dairy Australia's focus within, and the future direction of the dairy industry.

CHRIS GRIFFIN, UDV President
What role does UDV have for the Dairy Industry and who can we chat with?

Workshops

PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE A CHOICE OF 4 WORKSHOPS OUT OF 5

MAKING DOUGH \$ ON DAIRY FARMS with John Mulvany
The principles of managing profitable and sustainable dairy farm businesses and how to grow while doing it

CAREERS ON THE COUCH Case studies

- ❖ Manager
- ❖ Sharefarmer
- ❖ Equity Partner
- ❖ Leasing
- ❖ Owner

MONEY MATTERS Finance Options hosted by Rural Finance

- ❖ What is available?
- ❖ Cowbank
- ❖ Tax and farming
- ❖ Vendor Finance
- ❖ Stock agent finance

RULING THE ROOST Hosted by The People in Dairy

- ❖ Managing the boss
- ❖ Pathways forward together
- ❖ Keys to driving the same direction

MILKING GENETICS

- ❖ Hosted by Steve Mills of Jetstar Holsteins
- ❖ How to make an alternate income with genetics

The whole day will be driven by participants, this is your chance to speak up and gain a sense of direction in the dairy industry.

Expo dinner

The forum dinner will be held in the Glenormiston College Banquet Hall. Pre-dinner drinks will be available at bar price from 5.30pm. The two course dinner will include an inspiring presentation: Simon Illingworth on "Surviving the challenges in life".

To hear **Simon Illingworth** speak is to experience a unique insight into the increasingly frightening world of Melbourne's gangland killings and rampant police corruption. Simon is a thirty-six-year-old Detective Sergeant who's spent the last four years working with police internal affairs in Victoria, rooting out crooked officers. He has been commended for his work and been responsible for bringing successful prosecutions against corrupt officers. But Illingworth has been bashed, isolated and threatened - not by crooks but by other policeman. At great personal risk, he recently revealed his inside story in a very moving episode of "Australian Story".



WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

Kaniva College makes history



Kaniva College representatives with WestVic Dairy Careers Coordinator and the Cows Create Careers junior section winner's plaque.

YEAR 7 students from Kaniva College continued a proud tradition for the small school on the western edge of the state: they took home the \$500 cheque for the winning junior school in the 2011 Cows Create Careers project in Western Victoria.

Cows Create Careers started in Gippsland in 2004 and has spread around the country.

In 2011, 7000 students from 180 schools in 20 dairying regions across Australia took on caring for two young calves for three weeks, undertook research into the dairy industry and the career paths it offers, and submitted assessment work for judging.

The students work in teams of four or five, and members of the winning teams in each region from the junior (years 7-8) and senior (years 9-10) sections take home \$50 each.

Schools that have a minimum of four teams are eligible for the Winning School prize of \$500 in each section.

Ballarat Grammar School won the senior section for the Western region.

It has won the senior prize four times out of the five it has entered the competition.

The school will spend the winnings on show halters for its cattle show team.

Kaniva College, a P-12 school almost on the South Australian border, three hours north of Portland, has been involved in the junior section of Cows Create Careers every year since it commenced in Western Victoria in 2006 — and has won it every time!

The first group of year 7s involved in the project are now in year 12, and understand that a career in Agriculture does not have to be restricted to the sheep and cropping that surrounds them.

Students at Kaniva are



WestVic Dairy Careers Coordinator Robyn Vale, Ballarat Grammar teacher Matt Dickinson and one of the winning Cows Create Careers senior teams.

miles from the nearest dairy and the novelty of dairy calves in the school engages students from all year levels, not just those involved in the project.

Di Sanders, one of the teachers who has been involved in the project, says the combination of learning about the calves and how to care for them, and the IT skills needed for the assessment work, make the project attractive to students every year.

It is not just the energy of one or two teachers that drives the project's success: teachers from many different curriculum areas use the students' interest in the calves to stimulate learning, from science and English classes to cooking with dairy products in home economics.

At an assembly after the 2011 Cows Create Careers awards presentation, the principal asked the secondary school student body to put their hands up if they had won a Cows Create Careers prize. Every hand in the school was raised.

Cows Create Careers is a Dairy Australia project, and in Western Victoria it is delivered as part of a much broader effort by WestVic Dairy to promote the dairy industry as a career destination of choice.

Those efforts are well supported by the industry, as was Cows Create Careers.

In Western Victoria commercial supplies for Cows Create Careers

were provided by Murray Goulburn and Reid Stockfeeds.

Each school is supported by industry advocates, who visit the schools to speak to the students about the industry, their own career paths and the opportunities in the dairy industry.

Advocates in Western Victoria included representatives from Hico, Warrnambool Cheese & Butter, Murray Goulburn, Pfizer Animal Health, Fonterra, National Centre for Dairy Education Australia, Langdons Produce and Alltech Biotechnology, and farmers Mark Billing and Kerry Ross.

The schools were provided with healthy young calves by farmers from across the region: David Lees, Dean Netherway, Ricky and Randall Mair, Scott Lack, Rick Guye, Lou Luteri, David and Sandra Byrd, Brendan O'Brien and Mark Billing.

Without this significant support from individual farmers and service providers, Cows Create Careers, and other projects designed to promote dairy careers to young people would not be possible.

Other farmers or service providers interested in being part of this or any other careers promotion project in the industry should contact the Dairy careers co-ordinator, Robyn Vale at WestVic Dairy on 5592 2477.



Kay Hollis (Warrnambool College), Josie Long (Emmanuel), Andrea Goode (Mortlake College), Liz Gardiner (Cobden Technical School), Narelle Holiday (Terang College) and Adam Whyte (Murray Goulburn) are involved in the Cows Create Careers project.

Dairying is a delight in south-west classrooms

DAIRY Australia launched the Cows Create Careers — Manufacturing project in Warrnambool on Wednesday, June 22.

The project will involve five south-west Victorian schools: Mortlake College, Terang College, Warrnambool College, Emmanuel College and Cobden Technical School.

The project was piloted in

2010, to encourage secondary school food and technology students to examine the possible career and education pathways available within the dairy manufacturing industry.

The project involves student teams making a dairy recipe, presenting a team research paper and submitting a school recipe book.

Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co Ltd, Fonterra Australia and Warrnambool Cheese & Butter will visit students from the participating schools to talk about dairy manufacturing career pathways.

The students will then have an opportunity to visit a manufacturing site to see some of these pathways first hand.

Farmers learn difference between rain and showers

COBDEN district farmers now know the difference between rain and showers and "isolated" and "scattered" after attending a Milk from Moisture workshop on Friday, May 6.

Meteorologist and WIN News weather presenter Jane Bunn helped farmers and other community members to improve their understanding of weather conditions with her presentation about the different types of weather and how forecasts are devised.

Ms Bunn said farmers would benefit from knowing how to interpret weather forecasts.

"For example, isolated showers generally means just one, maybe two showers, while scattered showers indicated there could be plenty," she said.

Ms Bunn explained that rain was driven by continuous strati form clouds, was consistent and covered a large area. Showers came from puffy cumuli form clouds and were "hit and miss" in any area, she said.

Farmers were told to expect winds to travel anti-clockwise around high pressure and clockwise around a low. "The terrain around your property will influence your conditions," she said.

Ms Bunn said weather forecasts were generally useful for about seven days



Jane Bunn (second from right) with workshop participants.

out. "Beyond that no one can tell you specifically what will happen on a day-to-day basis," she said.

"It is not an exact science and probably never will be. There is a certain level of natural variability in the climate which is chaotic and unpredictable.

"We put all the relevant information into advanced computer system models but the information is an approximation."

Thunderstorms were most difficult to predict, she added.

Ms Bunn completed a Bachelor of Science at Monash University in 2005, majoring in mathematics and atmospheric science.

In 2008 she joined The Weather Channel as its morning meteorologist before taking up her position with WIN News.

Unlike many television weather presenters Ms Bunn compiles her own

forecasts and writes her own scripts considering the variables from each of the major forecasting computer models.

"I've always loved the weather. I love forecasting but I also love talking about it. I think I have the best job in the world."

Ms Bunn said farmers should be ready to adapt to climate change. "I do believe our climate is changing and that pollution is doing something. We will probably need to prepare for more extremes."

The Milk from Moisture Workshop is the second in a series planned in south-west Victoria and was funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under the Farm Ready program and supported by Southern Farming Systems, WestVic Dairy and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.

WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS



Developing Dairy Leaders program participants pose outside Parliament House in Canberra during their time in the capital.

Farming health, safety risks in spotlight

By IRENE HOBLEY
Farm Health and Safety - Otway
Division of General Practice
Community Support Worker

FARM health and safety are significant problems in rural Australia according to the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.

Farmers and farm workers have high incidence or risk associated with;

Cardiovascular disease including acute myocardial infarction;

Some cancers — prostate, colo-rectal and melanoma;

Zoonoses, or diseases of animal origin;

On-farm injury;
Road traffic accidents;
Hearing loss; and
Suicide.

Some of the factors that contribute to these problems include difficulty accessing primary health care services, including the local GP.

Environmental factors include working with machinery and livestock, exposure to sun and travelling on country roads in poor condition.

Periods of drought, changing rural economy and declining terms of trade have increased financial, family and personal pressures on farmers and increased levels of stress.

It is important to have regular health check-ups.

Ask your GP about, skin, prostate and other cancers, where to have your hearing and vision tested, your falls risk and ways to prevent falls and tell your GP if you are overly stressed, depressed, not sleeping, or “just not right”.

Farming for future

Young group primed to lead nation's dairy industry

POLICIES, regulation and decision-making for the dairy sector of tomorrow are in good hands now the pilot Developing Dairy Leaders program has been completed.

A group of 15 young people from across Australia (which included Rowan Ault, from Allansford, and Tahnee King, from Warrnambool) completed the program which involved a four-day residential skills development program in Melbourne with state and national industry leaders and time in Canberra learning about advocacy and policy development at a national level.

The program, developed by Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and Dairy Australia and delivered

by the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA), aims to build on the leadership skills of people aged 18-30 who are committed to the dairy industry and have been identified as potential future leaders.

Throughout the program, participants learned to articulate, present and debate ideas, provide advocacy and representation and participate as a member of a board.

The group was given media training and its members now know how to lead community or industry organisations and balance work and professional development.

Participants gained formal accreditation through the NCDEA as a result of the program.

Gippsland participant Sally Pate said the program provided an in-depth look into the operations of the Australian dairy industry and the many leadership avenues available.

“The media training provided throughout the program has helped me develop some key skills in how to present myself and communicate more effectively,” Ms Pate said.

Ty Maidment, from Meadows in South Australia, said the program had helped him develop his leadership and networking skills and strengthen his knowledge of the overall industry.

“It’s been a great opportunity for me to learn about industry board structures, corporate governance and

government-related issues and I’ve been able to hone my public speaking skills.

“It’s definitely going to help me in the future in the industry and open up different options for me.”

ADF vice-president Adrian Drury said the program was a key activity in supporting the development of the dairy industry’s state level leaders and the dedication and willingness of participants to put something back into their industry was great to see.

“I have met the participants of the Developing Dairy Leaders Program and believe them to be a group of young people who are more than capable of responding to any challenge thrown at them, leading our industry and staying true

to themselves,” Mr Drury said.

Dairy Australia managing director Ian Halliday said the course had attracted a group of enthusiastic and passionate young people from the industry. “It is very encouraging to see a group of young people so keen to build on their dairy careers, which just goes to show the future of our industry, is in extremely good hands,” he said.

The program was developed in response to the *Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) Dairy Leadership — An Industry Blueprint 2010-15*, which identified that 200 leadership roles were required across the industry and 40 new people were needed each year.

Collective bargaining by dairy farmers to continue decision

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has issued a draft decision proposing to allow dairy farmers to continue to collectively bargain with processors for a further 10 years.

Dairy farmers have been collectively bargaining with milk processors under an ACCC authorisation granted to Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd (ADF) since 2002.

About 500 farming families are registered under the ADF’s collective bargaining arrangements, in 18 collective bargaining groups.

ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel said the commission had reviewed ADF’s arrangements twice since 2002.

“Feedback from the industry

is that the collective bargaining arrangements are supported and well understood by dairy farmers and processors. As such the ACCC considers it is in a position to grant authorisation for 10 years, rather than the five sought by ADF,” he said.

ADF has sought to continue the conditions of authorisation that currently apply and which broadly limit the membership of bargaining groups to farmers with a “shared community interest” and prevent bargaining groups from using a common representative in negotiations with processors.

The ACCC proposes to maintain the conditions, although it has provided clarification around the use of representatives in negotiations, to make

For many years the ACCC has provided an accessible authorisation process for small business collective bargaining. ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel

it clear that third parties can provide legal or general advice, training and assistance to bargaining groups.

The ACCC now invites submissions from interested parties before making its final decision.

The ACCC may authorise collective bargaining arrangements

when it is satisfied that the public benefit from the conduct outweighs any public detriment.

Authorisation provides immunity from court action for conduct that might otherwise raise concerns under the competition provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

Alternatively, small businesses can obtain immunity from legal action under the act for such arrangements by lodging a collective bargaining notification.

“For many years the ACCC has provided an accessible authorisation process for small business collective bargaining,” Mr Samuel said.

“In 2011 five collective

bargaining arrangements have been authorised by the ACCC, demonstrating the ongoing interest amongst small businesses to work collaboratively to achieve improved efficiencies.”

In the ACCC’s experience, collectively negotiated contracts are more likely to be entered into where both sides of the negotiation process consider it in their commercial interests to do so.

Key benefits from collective bargaining include:

improving access to information and resources;

improving the level of input into contract negotiations by providing an effective mechanism through which productive contractual discussions can be achieved.

Generally, in relation to small businesses collectively bargaining with a larger business, the ACCC allows them to proceed.

Common features of collective bargaining arrangements approved by the ACCC have been:

their voluntary nature; and where the coverage of the bargaining groups is limited. Arrangements that have the support of the counterparty are also unlikely to be objected to.

The ACCC’s draft determination in relation to the ADF’s application will be available from the ACCC website, www.accc.gov.au/AuthorisationsRegister and by following the links to this matter.


WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

Managing resources

The latest updates from NRM

THE Dairy Natural Resource Management Reference Group was established to help dairy farmers to better manage their resources and to alert the industry of emerging NRM issues.

The group consists of farmers, representatives of processing companies, Landcare, catchment management authorities and the DPI, and is facilitated by south-west Dairying for Tomorrow regional co-ordinator Louise Sheba.

The group's May meeting at Port Fairy heard about the Environment Protection Authority's memorandum of understanding with Dairy Food Safety Victoria, Dairy Moving Forward, the Australian Dairy Industry, Research Development and Extension Strategy, the Carbon Farming Initiative, Moyné Shire's environmental work and updates on regional NRM projects.

EPA WORKING WITH INDUSTRY ON EFFLUENT CONTROL

NEW management controls are being developed to ensure dairy farm effluent does not impact off-site.

A memorandum of understanding between the EPA and Dairy Food Safety Victoria (DFS) will see a new compliance program implemented later this year.

EPA innovations catalyst Mae Ercolani told the NRM forum that the new controls would provide a more streamlined approach to effluent management. "It will build on the existing DFSV program and will be done in a way that will be supported by industry," Mae said.

An implementation framework, including a communication chain for reporting and investigating problems, will be established later in 2011.

Mae said the framework would ensure that farmers "doing the right thing" would not be unnecessarily burdened and there would be a reduction in duplication of on-farm audits.

Existing questions under the Dairy Gains program about effluent management will remain the cornerstone of the new system.

Information will be collected from farms by DFSV-approved auditors and communicated to the EPA, which will investigate and take further remedial or punitive action if needed.

Mae said the controls were designed to ensure there are no off-site impacts on ground-water or surface water from farm effluent systems.

"It is important that farmers manage their effluent well to ensure it doesn't cause any pollution and to also use it as a resource rather than a waste stream."

An education and communication program will be

developed as part of the new agreement.

MORE MILK... FEWER RESOURCES

THE NRM module of the Dairy Moving Forward strategic plan is bringing new emphasis on the need for farmers to work in an environment where access to low-cost natural resources cannot be guaranteed.

Dairy Australia's NRM program manager, Cathy Phelps, presented an update on the planning process to the NRM meeting where she advised farmers to further improve on their good NRM record.

"Scarcity will require additional increases in efficiencies if dairy farmers are to remain competitive against other sectors and other commodities," she said.

Farmers also need to recognise that food and drink companies regard soil fertility, water availability and climate change as part of their business and that governments are looking at policies to ensure resource use efficiency and environment protection.

All this is set against a backdrop of increasing demand for more milk to feed the world.

New national guidelines are being developed for nutrient management principles and an awareness campaign will be developed to inform farmers of the value of regular soil testing and monitoring.

There will be a particular focus on nitrogen efficiency. "Nitrogen is a key profit driver and its environmental impacts can be minimised if used efficiently," Cathy said.

FEW OPTIONS FOR FARMERS IN CARBON CREDITS

CATHY Phelps warned the meeting that the current Carbon Credits Bill offered few options for dairy farmers.

She said the high cost of dairy land made carbon-sink tree planting cost prohibitive; capture and flaring of methane as an abatement option was likely to be too costly; and the opportunity to sequester additional carbon appeared limited in dairy pasture soils.

The dairy industry submission to the Bill argued for inclusion of "emissions avoided" credits which would allow more farmers to contribute by agreeing to produce the same product at reduced emissions intensity.

The industry submission also highlighted concerns about the size of the potential carbon credit market, the high cost of projects, risks associated with permanence of bio-sequestration and carbon maintenance obligations, lack of education and the need for funding to develop new technologies for carbon abatement.

Cathy said dairy industry abatement strategies were

available but most were not cost effective. She said farmers would benefit by improving the diet of their herd to reduce methane emissions.

"Reducing emissions is about being more efficient and that will benefit farmers."

She added that some dairy systems were already close to best practice and had limited opportunities to further reduce emissions.

Farmers at the meeting said the abatement changes needed to be practical for the industry.

MOYNE ROADSIDE PLAN

WITH the NRM Reference Group meeting being held in Port Fairy it was timely to hear about Moyné Shire's environmental management projects.

Environment officer Richard Hodgins outlined some of the shire's ongoing projects with a particular focus on roadside vegetation management.

Richard said the shire was in the process of revamping its roadside conservation plan, and hoped to have it available for comment from farmers and the general public later this year.

Moyné was one of the first in the state to develop a roadside conservation plan which aims to ensure remnant vegetation is protected and detrimental activities controlled.

The revision has been ongoing for several years and a draft is expected later in 2011.

Richard was asked if farmers were allowed to spray pest plants, such as blackberries and gorse, on roadsides.

He said legislation clarification was needed to determine exactly who was responsible, but, in the meantime, the council was trying its hardest to control these types of weeds particularly on priority roadsides across the shire.

He reminded everyone that any native vegetation removal in the shire requires a council planning permit or, if on land managed by the shire, written permission if a relevant exemption applies.

Richard said the shire was keen to hear the dairy perspective on environmental issues, including those for the updated roadside conservation plan. "The wealth of the shire is based on dairy," he said.

DIGGING UP SOME NEW INFORMATION

THE meeting was updated on several important NRM projects happening in the region, including a sub-soil manure trial, life cycle analysis project, feed additive testing and Focus Farm groups.

A matrix is being prepared to list all relevant projects and to help the south-west group keep in touch with similar organisations around the country.



Minimise pugging damage by strategically grazing wet paddocks.

On-off grazing – the benefits for your farm

By MICHELLE RYAN

Dairy Services, DPI Warrnambool



SATURATED soils are susceptible to severe pugging damage, which can result in a significant reduction of both pasture growth and utilisation. We often hear about a winter management strategy called "on-off" grazing to reduce pugging damage, so what is it and how does it work? On-off grazing is the practice of grazing cows on very wet paddocks for a short period of time (two to four hours) and then moving them off pasture to a stand-off area to avoid damage to the paddock from pugging.

Research from both New Zealand and south-west Victoria has shown that cattle can consume about six to 10 kilograms of dry matter in a two to four-hour grazing, provided that pasture cover is high.

Extending the grazing beyond this time frame can result in severe pasture damage due to pugging, which, in turn, can reduce regrowth rates by up to 50 per cent.

Trials undertaken in the south-west showed that after two hours of grazing, the cattle had eaten about 70 per cent of the pasture they would eat over a full 12-hour grazing period.

By four hours they had eaten 88 per cent of the pasture.

After four hours, cattle then started to wander the paddock and this was when the majority of the pugging

damage occurred. It is important to note that if you are going to use on-off grazing, you should aim to have pastures at least at the 2.5 leaf stage or 2200 kilograms of dry matter per hectare (kg DM/ha), and preferably at the 3-leaf stage or 2500kg DM/ha.

This allows for fast grazing with maximum intakes and minimal damage to pastures. Depending on pasture cover and how long the cows graze, the herd may have to be offered supplementary feed to top up their total intake.

If the paddocks are extremely wet and/or subject to heavy rain and at risk of serious pugging damage, then removing cows after two hours can be warranted.

Also note that some soil types are more prone to pugging damage after varying periods of grazing at the same moisture content. So knowing how your soils cope with wet conditions will also come into deciding how long to leave the herd in the paddock.

Experience has shown that there is only a slight negative effect on daily milk production when implementing this strategy, as long as the following issues are managed well:

- Pasture cover must be sufficient to maintain or extend the first (and possibly second) rotation to avoid a feed shortage;
- Pastures being grazed must have good length and density to allow high and rapid intakes. Pastures should be at the 2.5-3-leaf stage;
- Cows should be healthy with no lameness and low mastitis incidence;
- Cows must be in good condition; and
- Magnesium supplement may be necessary.

Effluent run-off from any stand-off area must be prevented from entering waterways; preferably by entering the existing dairy effluent system.

The area required for animals in the stand-off

area will depend on their size, how long they are there for and how much supplementary feed must be eaten while "off".

If all animals are to be fed at once, allow at least 750 to 800mm/cow (for 600kg Friesians). If feed is ad-lib, reduce spacing to about 350mm/cow.

Where cows are to be held in a restricted area such as a feed pad, allow about four to six cubic metres per cow for short-term use (for one or two days) and half as much again for continuous use.

Another option for stand-off areas is sacrifice paddocks.

With this option, choose a paddock that has an existing problem, such as bent grass invasion, so that it can be included into an existing renovation program. With this option, ensure that you minimise feed wastage by using hay feeders or feed under an electric wire.

A hard standing area — such as a tree lot, unused track or laneway, sand banks, quarries or silage pits — is a useful option.

It is important to make sure that when using these areas, cattle are moved slowly so they don't track small stones into the area and cause hoof damage, and that there is enough supplement available so that cattle don't go hungry.

The key to minimising pugging damage is make sure that the pasture you offer your cows is as close as possible to the 2.5-3-leaf stage or 2200 to 2500kg DM/ha and ensure that you offer supplement to maintain total intake.

To discuss options for your farm, contact your factory field staff, advisor or local DPI Dairy Services Officer at Colac 5233 5504 or Warrnambool 5561 9946.

For more information on wet soil management go to <http://new.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/dairy/managing-wet-soils> or the Dairy Australia website and search for wet conditions notes.


WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

Retreats help managers

Large herds provide special challenges for workforces

WHEN it comes to managing people, large herds provide special challenges and new industry workshops are providing support.

Dr Pauline Brightling, who manages The People in Dairy program for Dairy Australia, says specific challenges emerge once a dairy business requires a team of people, many of whom are not family members.

"Having and keeping people who are willing and able to

do the jobs done on the farm is a necessary part of having a sound dairy business," Dr Brightling said.

The People in Dairy program has developed a workshop and a set of tools to help large dairy businesses address these challenges.

Called the Large Herds Business Retreat, the workshop helps owners and managers of large herds review their business vision and identify any weak links in achieving

their desired outcomes. Each retreat involves the owners and managers from up to six large herds.

Run over three days, the retreat covers a range of "people topics" relevant to large herds, including farming systems and the people effort required in farm operations, performance management programs, industrial relations, business culture, teamwork, ethics, work-life balance for all staff, communication and

business strategies. Much of the value for participants comes through discussing their experiences with other farmers, and hearing ways different people have approached the challenges of managing a large dairy herd.

"Large herds do have some common challenges related to people, such as rostering, training and work-life balance for all staff," she said.

The Large Herds Business Retreat is being offered

progressively across dairy regions. To date three retreats have been held involving about 30 people from 11 dairy businesses.

"The feedback we've had from participants is that the workshops provide a much-needed opportunity to share ideas with people facing similar issues and to discover some tools that are particularly useful for large dairy businesses," Dr Brightling said.

"Once a dairy business grows to a team of people, it is helpful to have more formalised, documented procedures and systems in place.

"It also becomes more important for dairy owners and managers to be able to clearly explain the business vision and manage the farm's people resources to progress towards this vision," Dr Brightling

Visit www.thepeopleindairy.org.au or phone 9620-7283 for more information.

Transition diet tips can improve lactation

A RECENT Dairy Australia survey has revealed that more than half of dairy farmers do not feed a transition diet for enough days before calving.

Many dairy herds use transition feeding as a powerful management tool for setting up the cows for a healthy, fertile and productive lactation, according to Dairy Australia Grains2Milk program leader, Dr Steve Little.

"An important tip is to feed for long enough. A transition diet should be fed for 21 days before calving," said Dr Little. Now is a good time to review how the 2011 calving season preparation went.

Cows and heifers go through dramatic hormonal and metabolic changes as they adapt to lactation.

A good transition program will prevent milk fever, reduce other animal health problems around calving, boost in-calf rates and increase milk production over the entire lactation.

Dr Little said there

were ways to maximise the benefits from transition feeding, and Grains2Milk has a checklist to get most out of a transition program.

"Transition feeding has been around for 20 years, and the benefits are well proven. But about a third of dairy farmers still don't feed their springers a transition diet," he said.

"The use of transition feeding varies greatly between regions. Gippsland, Queensland and New South Wales have the lowest use of transition feeding; while it is higher in Northern Victoria, Western Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

"It is important to get the nutrition right but a successful transition program also involves working out the logistics so that it is a straightforward task that fits smoothly into the routine."

The checklist helps farmers and their advisers think through the details of how to set up a program including animal



Feeding cows a transition diet before calving sets them up for productive lactation.

management, feed management, infrastructure and how it will involve the people working on the farm. The checklist is available on the web at www.dairyaustralia.com.au/Farm/Feeding-cows or contact Steve Little 0400 004 841 email slittle@dairyaustralia.com.au

The Grains2milk program provides dairy farmers with the training,

resources and support they need to make better decisions about using grains and concentrates in their businesses. The program is funded by dairy farmers through Dairy Australia.

Guide to keep farmers on top of calf rearing

AUSTRALIAN dairy farmers will continue to stay on top of the changing world of calf rearing thanks to a new guide developed by Dairy Australia and Australian Dairy Farmers.

Rearing Healthy Calves — How To Raise Calves That Thrive, covers all aspects of caring for calves from pre-calving right through to weaning. It will help farmers keep abreast of industry best practices and recent changes in livestock standards.

Rearing Healthy Calves is a practical guide to the essential components required to rear strong, healthy calves and ensure sale calves are fit to be transported and are residue-free.

It will be distributed free of charge from the end of June to all dairy farmers, dairy vets and dairy industry advisors, and will also be available online at www.dairyaustralia.com.au

The guide is based on experience of leading dairy farmers, animal scientists and vets.

It includes clear and concise explanations, together with practical examples to help farmers see the concepts in action.

It complements Dairy Australia's Healthy Calves farmer workshops, and plans are under way for other industry service providers to provide further workshops across Australia to ensure all farmers have access to the latest information about good calf management.

For more information contact Dairy Australia Animal Health Manager Kathryn Davis on 9694 3723.

Fun times on city train trip

More than 120 dairy farmers went on the dairy train trip to Melbourne on the Queen's Birthday holiday weekend in June.

The trip was on Monday, June 13 with participants boarding the morning train at Warrnambool, Terang, Camperdown and Colac.

The party split up when they got to the city. Some went to the Zoo, some to the museums, the aquarium, the footy and ice skating.

They all were given free "cow ponchos" provided by WestVic Dairy.

Pictured (right) are four ice skating dairy farmers from Simpson: Julie, Nina, Drew and Chloe Barake.





WESTERN VICTORIAN DAIRY NEWS

Drakes at home in Terang

FROM PAGE 7

"I had a holiday on a dairy farm when I was in New Zealand and was offered a job so I came back," Theres said.

"I was a trained horticulturist and had never milked a cow before but I got hooked on dairying," she said. "I loved the cows and enjoyed the work."

She also got hooked on Jamie who was working on the property as a farm hand and when Theres had the opportunity to work in Australia Jamie also crossed the Tasman.

Theres secured a work placement job on the Collins farm in 2004 and Jamie went to work with their daughter, Tammi, and her husband, Mat Logan, at their grain mill, starting a friendship that eventually lured them back to the country.

In the intervening years, Theres and Jamie worked in New Zealand and Switzerland, married and brought two children into the world.

However, they were finding it difficult to move towards their goal of farm ownership.

"You have to move jobs if you want to climb the ladder but there were limited opportunities in New Zealand," Jamie said.

"We needed to build equity but didn't have that opportunity in New Zealand."

They had maintained contact with Jeff and Barb and in May 2010 decided to return to Australia to take up an offer to work on their farm. "There were plenty of opportunities in Australia and

we were happy to work our way up through the system," Jamie added.

With Theres concentrating on raising a family and Jamie working for the Collins farm, they are slowing building their herd and equity.

"The aim is to build the herd and try to stay debt-free," Jamie said. At the moment they have about 60 calves and heifers, and plan to raise more and sell them at a profit.

"It's great that Barb and Jeff have given us this opportunity and supported us along the way. We can discuss options openly with them and they are very motivating," Jamie said.

"They know we're keen to move on to a share farming arrangement. We realise we have to work hard to get a good herd but we're willing to do that.

"We definitely want to stay here. It feels like home to us."

Barb Collins said the arrangement was working well for both families. "This is an excellent way for young farmers to build up equity and it eases the load for us on the farm," Barb said.

The farm has been in the Collins family since 1952. Son Brad and his wife, Nicki, are already share farming with Jeff and Barb and they agree that young farmers need a pathway to ownership.

"We have an excellent relationship and Jamie is a really hard worker. Eventually the plan is for them to become farm owners and if we can help them with a pathway to that outcome all is good," Barb said.

Strategies for rainfall change



Host Farmer John Martin discussing his approach to managing climate risk.

Unusual forage crops make the most of moisture stored in soil

By RACHAEL CAMPBELL
DAIRY SERVICES, DPI COLAC



Lucerne is one of the crops that John is trying on his dairy farm to manage climate variability.



DPI's Rod Eldridge exploring weather variability issues.

JOHN and Jodie Martin milk about 180 cows on Wolverston Park at Irrewarra, near Colac. Their farming system is based upon low to medium fertiliser inputs and, unlike most dairy farmers in the district, they rely solely on home-grown feeds for their herd.

The Martins use a range of alternative forages to complement the ryegrass.

These help fill feed gaps, make use of stored soil moisture and help to manage the risks associated with dairying in a marginal area.

During the past 15 years they have experienced significant rainfall declines but their farm can also get very wet.

John and Jodie recently shared their knowledge and experience with an enthusiastic group of farmers and service providers during a field day organised by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

Rod Eldridge, from the DPI climate change team, discussed the risks and potential impacts of changing

rainfall trends and longer periods of hot weather on stored soil moisture.

This got the audience thinking about how the changing weather patterns can really affect their farming practices. Rod's address also provided a great introduction into John's discussion about what they do on their farm to manage the risks associated with a variable climate.

John described some of the many different forage crops and pasture types they use, some of which have become regular components of their forage base, while others have failed and were not grown again.

John said forage choices depended upon the amount of moisture stored in the soil and the seasonal rainfall outlook. He takes into account the species best suited to each particular soil type on his farm.

John has had success with growing high-yielding maize crops on his sandy banks that in the past had plenty of deeply stored soil moisture.

For the past eight years he did not grow maize due to insufficient subsoil moisture going into spring/summer.

John has tried many different types of forages including lucerne, phalaris, fescue, chicory, cereals, medics, swedes and some lesser known species, such as fodder beet mangels and Melilotus albus. The group quizzed John on how he fitted these unusual species into his whole farm system.

John said it had not always been dry soil profiles that caused concerns. Some soils are poorly drained and get wet, with some paddocks periodically becoming inland lakes.

This creates its own management challenges.

On one saline waterlogged area he has sown tall wheat grass and a little-used species, Melilotus albus.

He said Melilotus albus provided a good source of protein and balanced the nutritional qualities of the tall wheat grass, but could become quite toxic under particular conditions.

John said that while the mix was not generally valued as a nutritional crop choice, it worked well in this saline, heavy clay area where other species would not grow.

Another way the Martins manage risk is by having long-term silage storage pits, which John said got them through the 2006 drought.

As a general rule they always have at least 12 months' stored feed on hand and, as they don't generally buy in feed, this storage is essential.

John said having several different species was a great way to manage risk but the management did become complex because of different establishment techniques and grazing management requirements.

He stressed that forward planning was one of the keys to managing risk and "don't put all their eggs in the one basket."

Notes from the workshop are available by contacting Rachael Campbell at DPI Colac on 5233 5507 or rachael.campbell@dpi.vic.gov.au

WHAT'S ON

JULY 28

EVENT: Breeding for Success.

WHERE: Macey's Bistro Warrnambool.

CONTACT: Liza Fahey 5592 2477 or 0408 141 820.

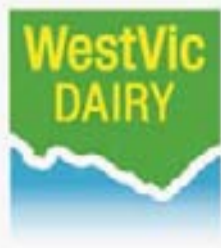
AUGUST 31

EVENT: Milk it 4 More Expo.

WHERE: Glenormiston College.

CONTACT: Liza Fahey 5592 2477 or 0408 141 820.

Funded by
Dairy Australia
and your
dairy service
levy



WESTVIC DAIRY INC. (WVD) is the dairy industry development body for Western Victoria and aims to help advance the dairy industry in the region.

WVD regularly collects the priorities of the region's dairy farmers and allocates part of their service levy (collected by Dairy Australia) to those research and development priorities. When the service levy is invested WVD creates partnerships with other agencies and attracts other funds to make these priorities happen faster. When the work is completed WestVic Dairy makes sure the findings are communicated to all dairy farmers to increase the profitability and sustainability of the region's dairy industry.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER MIKE WEISE: mike@westvicdairy.com.au PO Box 67, Terang, 3264; Ph 5592 2477; Fax 5592 1342; www.westvicdairy.com.au ABN 86 401 992 319

EDITOR LISA CHESSHIRE: dairynews@westvicdairy.com.au