

WESTVIC DAIRYNEWS

WestVic Dairy Newsletter

March 2016

Great South West Dairy Awards announce major sponsors



GARDINER FOUNDATION

With the 2016 Great South West Dairy Awards fast approaching, WestVic Dairy are thrilled to announce the major sponsors for this year's event.

Coming aboard this year are Dairy Australia, the Gardiner Dairy Foundation and Murray Goulburn.

WestVic Dairy Project Officer Liza Fahey said it was encouraging to see major industry players getting behind the awards.

"These awards are of great importance to the south west community and the wider dairy industry. It is only with the support of these generous major sponsors that these awards can continue."

Along with the Great South West Dairy Awards, this year's Gala evening will include graduates from the National Centre for Dairy Education in what will be a fantastic night of celebration for the industry as a whole.

Gardiner Foundation Chief Executive Mary Harney said "The Gardiner Dairy Foundation is pleased to once again partner with WestVic Dairy as a Platinum Sponsor of the Great South West Dairy Awards."

"The Gardiner Dairy Foundation prides itself on investing in emerging leaders and practices to help develop a vibrant future for the Victorian dairy industry. Our sponsorship of the Employer of the Year award helps to endorse employers who are leaders in this area, creating a legacy others can aspire to in the future."

The Great South West Dairy Awards and NCDE Graduation gala evening will be held at Deakin University's Warrnambool campus on May 19th.



"In this issue"

- Great South West Dairy Awards Major Sponsors announced
- Regional extension update
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Don't forget the Great South West Dairy Awards are on May 19th. For more information go to www.westvicdairy.com.au

Revised policy on routine calving induction

From Australian Dairy Farmers

In April 2015, following a series of meetings and consultation with farmers, vets and processors the dairy industry agreed to phase-out routine calving induction nationally.

Revised Policy

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Dairy Australia, vets and processors have since been working on implementing the revised policy which is:

“ADF does not support routine calving induction and will work to phase it out through improved herd improvement practices, tools and technologies.”

Calving induction is already reducing in Australia and the dairy industry’s breeding programs such as InCalf and the improvement of fertility by genetic selection are making a difference.

A Steering Group, including dairy farmers, representatives from the Australian Cattle Veterinarians, Dairy Australia and the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF), was established to progress the phase-out.

A data survey of veterinary practices performing inductions was undertaken in 2015. The results confirm estimates from previous farmer surveys that the number of cows induced is declining. It is estimated that in 2015 less than 1.5% of the national herd were induced (approximately 24,000 cows) however there is considerable variation between farms and regions. The industry is now working to reduce even further the number of cows induced.

Target for 2016

After reviewing the 2015 induction data, ADF will introduce a target for 2016 that routine calving induction will be limited to a maximum of 15% of cows within a herd unless a dispensation has been granted.

The 15% limit will apply unless a fertility management plan has been implemented or dispensation is granted for exceptional circumstances beyond a farmers control such as herd health issues, severe weather events (floods, fire), AB failure as well as other issues.

A Dispensation Panel including representatives from ADF, the Australian Cattle Vets and ADPF has been formed. The panel, with support from Dairy Australia, will establish guidelines and consider requests for exemptions exceeding the 15% target set for 2016.

Farmers will apply to the Dispensation Panel via their vet for special dispensation to carry out inductions in excess of the 15% limit for routine calving inductions.

The Steering Group will work with the Dispensation Panel to monitor progress and review the target each year in order to establish updated annual targets.

For more information see the Australian Dairy Farmers website www.australiandairyfarmers.com.au

New Associate Board Member for WestVic Dairy

WestVic Dairy is delighted to welcome Daniel Meade as a new Associate Board Member. Daniel joined the board in December 2015. Daniel grew up on the family farm at Ecklin and is still involved with the farm to this day.

With a background in agriculture and agronomy, including studies at Glenormiston College, Daniel has worked as an agronomist for GrassGrowers in the south west since 2008.

He brings a wealth of knowledge and industry experience to the position as well as a desire to see the industry grow, develop and appeal to the younger generation.

“I’m enthusiastic about attracting young people to the industry and showing them that there is a pathway to their goals, whether that be farm ownership, share farming or whatever their own goals may be” .

Daniel currently lives on a small farm at Garvoc with his wife and two children.



Daniel Meade, Associate Board Member



Feeding Pastures for Profit

One of the key ways to maximize profit on a dairy farm is to produce milk using the cheapest feed source available. If well managed, pasture can be the cheapest source of feed and the key to profitable farming. Maximising profit can be achieved by getting the pasture management right and using supplements to complement the base. To achieve this we need to make two main decisions on the farm each day:

- How much feed do I allocate to the herd today?
- How much supplement should I be giving the herd today?

If we get the answers to these questions right then you are well on the way to maximizing profit from your farming system. Feeding Pastures for Profit (FPFP) is a simple system that will help you to achieve this goal by giving you a 'tool' and some skills that will allow you to:

- Grow the maximum amount of high quality pasture on your farm (within your farming constraints)
- Gain a better understanding of how to use supplements profitably.

The program runs over twelve months, starting with two theory days and five on farm days throughout the year to help participants apply the principles of profitable feeding. This includes one-to-one consultations with the program deliverer for all participating businesses. There is a small fee for each participant, which includes all materials for the program, lunch at the two theory days and a farm visit to assist with adapting your grazing management system to increase the proportion of home grown feed in the diet of your herd.

Start Date: 12 or 13 or 14 April (depending on location)
Location: Cobden/Panmure/Koroit (subject to participants location)
Time: 10:00am- 2:30pm
RSVP: amanda@westvicdairy.com.au or 5557 1000



Lime can correct soil acidity and boost pasture growth.

Lime to boost your pastures

Alex Goudy, Dairy Services, DEDJTR Warrnambool

Soil acidity is a common factor in south-west soils which can limit pasture production. Right now is a good time to check the acidity levels of your paddocks with soil tests and if necessary take corrective action by applying lime.

Soil acidity is a natural and induced chemical condition of soils that has a number of undesirable effects. Acid soils can reduce the plants ability to take up water and nutrients and can cause aluminium levels to become toxic. It also effects soil biological functions and can make paddocks more vulnerable to soil structure decline and erosion. All of which reduce pasture growth and are a good reason to check the status of your soils.

Most plants can handle a certain amount of acidity. As most of our soils are acidic and become more so over time, we need to know the trigger points on a soil test that indicate that pasture production is likely to be affected. A pH_{Ca} figure of 5.0 or less is the trigger point to consider the application of lime to correct soil acidity in ryegrass/clover pastures. Lime can restore productivity in acid soils and should be considered once pH_{Ca} drops below 5.0.

Always look at aluminium levels on soil tests in conjunction with pH. As soils become more acidic aluminium becomes more available and is toxic to plants. Using lime will increase the pH and reduce the availability of aluminium. In a ryegrass/clover pasture an aluminium level of less than one per cent of cations is desirable. At a level less than three per cent most pasture species are unaffected. Paddocks above these levels will definitely benefit from lime which will reduce the effects of aluminium toxicity on plants.

Lime is relatively insoluble and moves slowly through the soil profile. Incorporation, where possible, is the most effective way to correct acidity so pasture renovation is often the best time to incorporate lime into the paddock. Conducting a soil test to see if lime is needed well before the paddock is ploughed is ideal. If the paddock is around or below the trigger point for lime (pH_{Ca} 5.0) and is unlikely to be ploughed for some time, a surface application of lime should be considered.

Rates of lime applied will depend on lime quality, soil type and the pH_{Ca} level to be corrected. While lime and liming is an inexact science, as general rule of thumb, applying 2.5t/ha of lime (a tonne to the acre) has been used as a general recommendation. A sandy soil will require less lime to raise the pH than a clay soil.

You are unlikely to get responses to lime if other nutrients are lacking or if there is another issue that is restricting growth. These issues may show up in a soil or plant tissue test analysis, other visual indicators and paddock history can assist to solve these issues.

A soil test to confirm your soil acidity levels can help determine if lime will help boost pasture production. It will also provide great information to assist with fertiliser decisions.

For more information on soil acidity and lime contact your agronomist or advisor, visit Dairy Australia's Fert\$mart website <http://fertsmart.dairyingfortomorrow.com.au> or contact Alex Goudy at DEDJTR Warrnambool on (03) 5561 9935.

From the Regional Manager

Lindsay Ferguson, Regional Manager, WestVic Dairy

It has been busy times here at WestVic Dairy since I commenced in late January. It has been good to get out and meet numerous farmers and service providers at extension activities and with individual visits. We have been active in the office planning and starting to deliver on new extension activities for 2016.

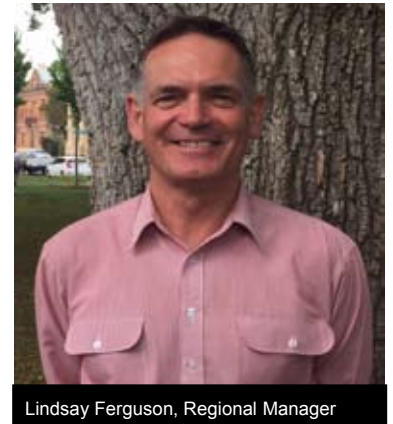
We have also been busy in adjusting to changes in things such as new policies and regulations (eg. privacy); staffing movements and new technology. A re-structure of long-standing extension delivery platforms across the state is also in play. We have been adapting through more planning; implementing new systems and practices to improve how we work; and in training up staff in areas of key skills.

Just like farming, it seems that change is constant and inevitable. We could try to ignore it but sooner or later we would become inefficient if our business practices had not kept pace with others. More importantly, we would eventually fall foul of the law if we had not been compliant with laws that reflect the view of the rest of society.

On farm too you have a range of changes to cope with such as new standards and regulations, prices and technologies as well as the seasonal conditions. In all situations the old scouting motto of "Be Prepared" remains great advice.

Farming needs to be practiced profitably and responsibly - the extension programs of WestVic Dairy can help you do that. To highlight some upcoming programs, the Feedbase programs are particularly useful at this time of year. Feeding Pastures for Profit (FFPP) is a foundation course that will provide a life-long skill in pasture management. Likewise, as cow fertility is an on-going area for improvement for most, the InCharge Fertility program will provide good information about getting more cows in calf at the right time. It will also help reduce the need for calving induction which is an area of practice that needs to change, especially in this region, not only to improve profitability but also as we consider the issue of social licence to farm. On the business management side of things we encourage all farms to utilise DairyBase, to plan and budget in a better way. Please check this newsletter and our website for a range of other helpful programs and activities.

As you manage your way through this challenging season, I hope to see you 'about the traps'!



Profit Prophet Tips for March

While you wait for rain it might be worth getting your bookwork and planning up-to-date. With cash-flow extremely tight on many farms it is really important to understand where the money is going and what is driving production and profitability. Any cost that you can cut without affecting production is worth considering but make sure that you consider what other ramifications there might be first. With feed costs it is important to ensure that the diet is balanced for maximum feed conversion and this will mean feeding appropriate forages and grain for stage of lactation, body condition, and milk production targets.

Some forages (particularly the high protein hays) are simply too expensive at the moment unless you only have fresh cows in the herd donating body condition to help cover the cost. There are other forage and grain combinations that could potentially save you money without costing very much production (income), if any. Seek help from a nutritionist if you need it.

One of the major profit drivers will undoubtedly be home grown feed consumption and that is why you need an immediate plan for maximising pasture and/or crop production as soon as the season provides the opportunity. Cutting corners on getting your pastures and/or crops growing will not be a profitable decision over the rest of the year. You don't necessarily need the latest and greatest annual or Italian seed, it just has to be sown into properly prepared ground at the right rate and time, and then look after it with fertiliser and by controlling pests (crickets and slugs mainly). Pasture production has to be the number one focus from now on.

Regional extension update

Laurie Hickey, Extension Coordinator, WestVic Dairy

The last two very dry springs have led to concerns from farmers in the South West Region that stock water is running incredibly short.

WestVic Dairy in conjunction with the major water authorities and farmer agencies have devoted considerable time in determining the real situation. The group focused on the region east of the Curdies River – an area that has little ground water at viable depths, and relies totally on the surface water runoff to catch stock water.

A survey was conducted with respondents indicating that most had made arrangements to ensure that stock could be watered over summer and into autumn. It would seem that potable water for washing plant is in short supply, with some farmers carting water for this purpose.

Other findings by the group indicated that on a 200 – 300 cow farm, the cost of water cartage for stock water would range between \$2.50 - \$3.50 per head per day. This cost on top of the feed costs of around \$4.00 – \$4.50 would need to be budgeted carefully before considering stock water cartage.

Participation in the survey by farmers is appreciated and future updates will be provided as the situation is monitored.

Manufacturing Scholarship students visit the region



2016 Dairy Manufacturing Scholarship students taking in the view during their visit to the region

WestVic Dairy welcomed students from the 2016 Dairy Manufacturing Scholarship program this month as part of their on-going training and education within the industry.

The students represented a multitude of different disciplines and backgrounds and expressed a keen interest in many areas of the dairy industry.

Highlights of the day included workshops and information sessions with various WestVic staff and dairy industry representatives, a visit to the Municipal Saleyards and an information session at the Camperdown Historical Society.

They visited a farm where dry conditions were seen and feeding plans and the tight times being experienced were discussed. Students took up placement the following day at local processing plants.

WestVic Dairy Extension Coordinator Laurie Hickey said that the benefit of the scholarship program was plain to see. "It was wonderful to meet students who have achieved excellence in their field of study, and hear of the passion and enthusiasm which will be applied to relevant aspects of Dairy Manufacturing."

Focus Farm Data

WestVic Dairy Business **FOCUS Farms**

Heathmere	
Date	8 February 2016
Milking Area (ha)	305
Production	
Cow Numbers	450
kg Milk Solids/cow/day	1.35
Litres/cow/day	15.9
Fat%	4.95
Protein%	3.55
Grazing and Supplement Feeding	
Pellets 43.9c/kgDM (\$395/t)	4.5
Silage Cereal/Pasture Mix Costing 12c/kgDM (\$120/t)	11
Pasture/Lucerne (kgDM) approx.	0
Area in rotation (ha)	291
Rotation Length (days)	0
Grazing area (ha/24hrs)	Semi-sacrifice
Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)	
Feb Milk Price (\$/kgMS)	\$5.47
Income/cow	\$7.38
Supplementary Feed costs/cow	\$3.30
IOSFC/cow	\$4.08
IOSFC/ha	\$6.02

Cost of pasture has not been included. This will range from 10c - 20c per kg DM during the year

The herd and feeding have remained unchanged over the last month, possibly taking a little more silage to support the current production. The farm received 25mm of rain for January, all on the 31st. The maize has benefited from this and the pasture will have been kept alive. Cricket baiting is planned for this week. 15 hectares of sorghum silage is going to be cut in the week, looks good and tonnages will be reported in future. Drying off is due to start on the 25th of February with 400 cows to dry off and 108 heifers CIC. The farm is watching costs carefully and only doing what is necessary.

Timboon	
Date	16 February 2016
Milking Area (ha)	303
Production	
Cow Numbers	600
kg Milk Solids/cow/day	2.16
Litres/cow/day	29.3
Fat%	4.22
Protein%	3.16
Grazing and Supplement Feeding	
Grain 40.9c/kgDM	9.0
Pasture silage (approx. 0.15c/kgDM)	7.0
Pasture(kg DM appx)	0.7
Cereal Hay (23.5 cents/kg as fed)	2.5
Turnips (15 cents per kg DM)	2.0
Area in rotation (ha)	288
Rotation Length (days)	35
Grazing area (ha/24hrs)	8.2
Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)	
Feb Milk Price (\$/kgMS)	\$5.88
Income/cow	\$12.70
Supplementary Feed costs/cow	\$5.90
IOSFC/cow	\$6.80
IOSFC/ha	\$13.47

Cost of pasture has not been included. This will range from 10c - 20c per kg DM during the year

Milk price is current announced total package and inclusive of productivity and quality.
About 300 fresh cows calved since 1st January. Doing 31.6 litres. IOSFC \$7.19 per cow.
Spring calves doing 25 litres IOSFC \$5.78 per cow. 180 calves on the ground with effectively no disease issues. Have had some metabolic issues with this calving that has required some attention. All under control now. Crops have survived but has been tough going with almost zero rainfall in the past two months. Needing to address dropping protein test with improvements in dietary energy density.

Barongarook West	
Date	16 February 2016
Milking Area (ha)	249
Production	
Cow Numbers	215
kg Milk Solids/cow/day	1.56
Litres/cow/day	20.0
Fat%	4.51
Protein%	3.3
Grazing and Supplement Feeding	
Pellets 39.8c/kgDM (\$362/t as fed)	5.4
Silage 8.4cents kgDM	5.5
Oaten hay 27.3c/kgDM	5.5
Pasture (kgDM) approx.	0.0
Rape 12.2c/kgDM	2.0
Area in rotation (ha)	219
Rotation Length (days)	
Grazing area (ha/24hrs)	1.0
Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)	
Feb Milk Price (\$/kgMS)	\$5.52
Income/cow	\$8.61
Supplementary Feed costs/cow	\$4.36
IOSFC/cow	\$4.25
IOSFC/ha	\$3.67

Cost of pasture has not been included. This will range from 10c - 20c per kg DM during the year

Milk price is current announced total package and inclusive of productivity and quality.
Sixty seven cows were culled in January due to worsening dry conditions, negative seasonal outlook and a feed budget short fall of 200t DM of silage. As a result production has been revised downwards by 10,000kgMS to 190,000kgMS. 113 cows have been dried off over the last month and there is 108 heifers to calve this Autumn. 18ha of slotted pipe and mole drainage has been completed.

DemoDAIRY Terang	
Date	26 February 2016
Milking Area (ha)	140
Production	
Cow Numbers	128
kg Milk Solids/cow/day	1.24
Litres/cow/day	15.5
Fat%	4.44
Protein%	3.54
Grazing and Supplement Feeding	
Pellets 37c/kgDM	6.3
Pasture	0.0
Silage 0.14c/kgDM	5.3
Pasture demand kgDM	0.0
Rotation length (days)	60
Grazing area (ha/24hrs)	2.0
Daily Income over Supplementary Feed Costs (IOSFC)	
Feb Milk Price (\$/kgMS)	\$5.54
Income/cow	\$6.87
Supplementary Feed costs/cow	\$4.23
IOSFC/cow	\$2.64
IOSFC/ha	\$2.42

Just dried off 68 cows that calve mid to late April. Expect to offer 1 bale of cereal hay and 3 bales of silage on the feed pad. Using a sacrifice paddock at night and 1.5 Ha per day. Dry cows to be offered 15 kg of hay as fed and 0.3Ha/day. Calves being offered 2 kg of pellets and ad 1b silage and cereal hay. Heifers are due home from alignment mid March to calve from mid April.



What's on March 2016

MARCH 21 APRIL 11, 18, MAY 9

EVENT Plan and Manage Infrastructure Requirements (from AHC60110 Advanced Diploma of Agriculture)

WHERE Terang
CONTACT Michelle Easterbrook, (03) 5592 2437 or 0407 552 011

MARCH 21, APRIL 11

EVENT Establish pastures and crops for livestock production (from AHC30210 Certificate III in Agriculture (Dairy Production))

TIME 9am – 3pm
WHERE Terang
CONTACT Michelle Easterbrook, (03) 5592 2437 or 0407 552 011

MARCH 15, 22

EVENT Plan and Manage Infrastructure Requirements (from AHC50110 Diploma of Agriculture)

TIME 10am – 3pm
WHERE Terang
CONTACT Michelle Easterbrook, (03) 5592 2437 or 0407 552 011

MARCH 10, 17, 24

EVENT Establish pastures and crops for livestock production (from AHC30210 Certificate III in Agriculture (Dairy Production))

TIME 9am – 3pm
WHERE Colac
CONTACT Michelle Easterbrook, (03) 5592 2437 or 0407 552 011

MARCH 22

EVENT Heathmere Focus Farm Field Day

WHERE Taylors Farm, 234 Wilsons Rd, Heathmere

CONTACT amanda@westvicdairy.com.au (RSVP essential for catering purposes)

APRIL 13

EVENT Barongarook West Focus Farm Field Day

WHERE The Scott's Dairy Farm 875 Irrewillipe Road

CONTACT amanda@westvicdairy.com.au (RSVP essential for catering purposes)



Daisy's a calendar girl at age 18!

At age 18 most cows are in their twilight years, but not Daisy, from near Bega in New South Wales, who's now a national pin-up girl.

Daisy has been named the inaugural 2016 Legendairy Calendar Girl, part of the dairy industry's celebration of the connection between Australia's Legendairy farmers and the special bonds they have with their animals.

Owner Mary-Anne Lucas of Lucasvale Farm said "We always found the Jersey calves required a little extra care so we'd take them home to Mum's garden and she would raise them for the first six weeks when they needed a couple of extra feeds each day before joining the rest of the herd."

Daisy relished the extra attention and instantly become part of the family. It was clear right from the start that she was a special cow.

Mary-Anne said they were "over the moon" about Daisy's sudden fame.

To read our Legendairy stories, head to legendairy.com.au

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