



Your Levy at Work

MEDIA RELEASE

COLAC EXPO TO HIGHLIGHT MATHS AND SCIENCE IN DAIRY

Larpen dairy farmer Mark Billing sees maths and science at work on his farm every time he calculates his cows' feeding rations or his pasture fertiliser rates.

With two computers running his dairy and an increasing focus on the biology of his plants, Mr Billing knows that a good grounding in maths and science is essential to good dairy farming.

Speaking at the launch of the Maths & Science @ Work expo in Colac, Mr Billing said he couldn't operate a successful business without this technical background.

"It's more important now than ever before with farms using more technology and needing to make sure everything is as perfect as possible," Mr Billing said.

"I use maths and science on a daily basis in calculating cow nutrition, fertiliser rates, budgeting, cost analysis, grazing management and the biology of plants. A good knowledge of maths and science is essential."

The fourth generation farmer from just north of Colac said his main message to young people was that they need to aim to complete year 12 and have a good grounding in 'reading, writing and arithmetic'.

Although he left school after year 10, Mr Billing says times have changed.

"My teachers said I was crazy because my grades were good but I always wanted to go farming," he said.

"However, I did a four year farm apprenticeship where you learnt everything from the ground up and then I did an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture at Glenormiston College. It covered a lot of bases and helped me to understand science and apply it in a practical sense on the farm."

"The two-year traineeship is different these days so you need the theory and the basics."

Mr Billing's two farm employees have both completed year 12. "Having gone through secondary school gives you a better grasp of what you need to know for the farm," he said.



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“Having year 12 is almost a must these days.”

He also stressed the importance of sound reading skills. “We keep learning all our lives and you need good reading skills for that.”

The interactive expo in Colac on May 28 will highlight the role maths and science play in agricultural jobs and encourage more students to consider working in the field. It will feature more than 20 presentations which will give Year 7 students from Colac Secondary College, Timboon P-12 and Camperdown College experiences of how maths and science apply in a range of dairy industry occupations.

The expo is part of the Maths & Science @ Work program developed in partnership between the dairy industry, the three schools and South West Local Learning and Employment Network.

WestVic Dairy has secured funds from Schools Connect Australia to deliver the program which will feature further expos in Timboon and Camperdown in 2014 and 2015.

The Maths & Science @ Work program was formally launched in Colac on May 3.

The project is the first of its type in Australia and could be used as a model for similar events in other agricultural regions to promote maths and science education.