

Dairy NSW THE MILK FLOW

June 2015



Your Levy at Work



From the Chair

Dairy NSW is pleased to be working in combination with the NSW Farmers' Dairy Committee, Dairy Connect Farmers Group, the Dairy Research Foundation and the University of Sydney to bring you an inaugural NSW Industry Forum on 16 June 2015 at the Liz Kernohan Conference Centre in Camden. Guest speakers include:

- The Honourable Niall Blair, MLC and Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water
- Bruce Christie, Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
- Charlie McElhone, Group Manager Trade and Industry Strategy, Dairy Australia
- Julie Iommi, Manager, Issues Management, Dairy Australia

Dairy NSW has been successful in securing NSW Dairy Industry Funds to support a new project: *Grow the NSW Dairy Industry: Project 2020 Pathways to Change*. 'Project 2020' is partnered with Dairy Australia, Subtropical Dairy and the Department of Primary Industries and aims to engage dairy farmers in NSW with exemplars, resources

and support systems to build their awareness, understanding and confidence to plan incremental and sustainable changes which result in improved farm business performance. Its objectives, methods and timeframes will be communicated via our website and *Snapshot* to keep you informed and involved.

Moving into a new financial year is exciting with an annual operating plan and project budget of \$371,000 to support the delivery of research, development, education and extension to farmers and the wider community. Significant projects include support of two Focus Farms, twelve Dairy Discussion Groups, DairyBase, feedbase and animal health and welfare programs, webinars to support dairy farm employers, *Cows Create Careers*, farm business management workshops and activities to engage the Young Dairy network and Project 2020.

Dairy NSW will continue to set clear strategies and objectives for the region which are consistent with the needs of NSW dairy farmers and Dairy Australia's funding requirements. We will continue to consult with regional groupings of dairy farmers and their advisors, hold two Members' Councils per annum and deliver positive results to NSW dairy farmers.

The Dairy NSW staff maintains records that provide a clear understanding of the programmes and projects approved and funded by Dairy NSW, Dairy Australia and other co-investors. We ensure these are managed and performance is regularly reviewed to achieve agreed milestones.

This year Dairy NSW seeks to fill three vacancies for its Board. The selection criteria and application process will be published and promoted the end of June. We anticipate a demand for Board positions.

Dairy NSW welcomes Vanessa Carlino to staff. Vanessa will perform the role of Office Administrator, providing much needed support to the team.

Finally, Dairy NSW farewelled Kate McGilvray on 15 May as a long-standing Business Manager and former Executive Officer. On behalf of Dairy NSW, I would like to acknowledge her commitment to the Board and the NSW dairy industry over the last eight years.

MICHAEL PERICH
CHAIR, DAIRY NSW

Director Profile – Delia Dray

Delia leads DPI's Livestock Research branch, which includes the dairy development team of Tim Burfitt, Kerry Kempton, Nicolas Lyons and Peter Havrlant.

She has 25 years' experience in Research and Development management, policy development and public sector governance, combined with a practical understanding of

the issues faced by farmers surrounding long-term productivity and profitability.

Having once share-farmed a dairy in Bundanoon, she also understands some of the barriers faced by young farmers who want to start a dairy business with limited capital and finance.

She maintains connection to the farming community through wide industry contacts and networks, and through the running of a fine wool farming business in the Hill End region.



DairyBase to improve farm business performance

Analysing and understanding your overall farm business performance has just become easier, with Dairy Australia's new web-based farm business management tool – DairyBase.

Available from June this year, DairyBase helps farmers analyse the resources they have and the way they are using them. Through comparative analysis, it allows farmers to track their own performance over time and compare with other similar farms according to factors such as farm size, region, production system, rainfall and irrigation system.

DairyBase is available to all dairy farmers through levy-funding. It is the first of a new range of farm business management tools and training initiatives Dairy Australia is developing for dairy farmers.

Dairy Australia program manager, Neil Lane, said the key benefit of DairyBase is to give farmers and their advisors the information and analysis they need to have well-informed discussions about farm performance.

“This is about having a better understanding of the numbers in the farm business, particularly how the physical aspect of the business relates to the financial,” he said. “They can then

discuss topics such as achieving short and long-term goals, opportunities to improve operations, how they stack up against other farms, whether their farm expenses are in line with similar farms and what decisions need to be made to improve their position.”

How to get started

Dairy farmers and service providers can access DairyBase through the website

www.dairybase.com.au

The website also has supporting resources to help with this process, including:

- Getting Started guide for first time users
- DairyBase user guide
- Case studies
- Input check list/preparation guide
- FAQ's
- Key events such as webinars and seminars

For further support there is a help line

1800 548 073

or email dairybasesupport@dairyaustralia.com.au. For information about Farm Business Management and DairyBase activities and resources in your region, contact your extension coordinator.

Regional Dairy Group updates

Dairy NSW has five member groups who are led by six passionate and committed farmers. They provide a much needed conduit to Dairy NSW in regard to providing regional requirements, issues and concerns and feedback.

Please support these volunteer leaders in your sub-region and become involved in these worthwhile local groups:

Far South Coast Dairy Development Group

Debbie Platts

Mid Coast Dairy Advance Group

Tim Bale

South Coast and Highlands Dairy Industry Group

Tracey Russell

Inland Elite Dairy Network – Wagga Wagga

Simone Jolliffe

Inland Elite Dairy Network – Forbes

Clayton Alley

Hunter Dairy Development Group

David Williams

Their six monthly updates follow.

Mid Coast Dairy Advancement Group



Achievements

The past six months has seen increased participation with attendance including farms that haven't represented in the past couple of years. Our regional group encompasses several dairying sub-regions (list them?), and all have been active in the events held throughout this time.

Major programs that have been provided to the region have been *Churn Milk into Money* with John Mulvany, and the final farm-based field days for *Feeding Pastures for Profit* with Phil Shannon, (the program began earlier in 2014).

Feeding Pastures for Profit has had sub-regional groups of 10-15 people, with consistent continued involvement at each of the days. Feedback has been positive, particularly around

the reinforcement provided through the continuation of dairy discussion groups.

Churn Milk into Money was attended by 22 farmers (10 dairies represented) and 3 service providers, with a driving interest to continue and so a follow up day (co-funded through our local LLS and the farmers attending) was held 5 weeks later, with an on-farm comparison of the financials as shown in the workshop compared to the corresponding physical indicators, as well as a comparison of 12 local farms' current general costs using John's benchmarks.

Additionally, we've hosted a Legendary workshop and a subsequent Social Media day out of the success and interest in the Legendary presentation; this interest has

created an ongoing schedule of Technology Days which will be hosted in various sub-regions to cover pertinent issues/questions at the time of delivery, such as learning how to use smartphones as effective tools, looking at farming applications and email accessibility.

Another success was a group viewing of the November *InCalf* webinar, with an informal pub dinner and local application of the webinar subject matter. Those that attended commented positively about the ability to mix a social exchange with the webinar.

The MidCoast Dairy Advancement Group (MCDAG) and Dairy NSW supported the local Rotary's annual Rotary Youth AG Camp, as it has regularly in the past, with volunteer help, provision of heifers, on-farm presentations and support of the financial costs to operate the Camp. This year's Camp had 16 high school youth from Bowraville to Gloucester.

The Young Dairy Connection group represented the dairy industry at one of the sub-regional shows which no longer has a dairy section, handing out milk samples, answering questions and providing Dairy Australia and milk processor materials/merchandise.

Recent changes

It has been a continued period of change for the MCDAGs, with the transition to a Management Committee and introduction of a paid position for a formal Executive Officer in 2014 and then going through another evolution as Geoff LeMessurier resigned to accept a full time position with the North Coast LLS.

The membership chose to retain some of those changes, through a formalised volunteer Executive Committee with a DairyNSW Coordinator seat and paid administrative support. The Management Committee sought to begin MCDAGs own succession planning through transitioning positions to the younger generation, and in the interim of a nomination for Chairman from that successive generation, Tim Bale accepted nomination.

Regional issues

Increased rainfall has been a blessed change with a good season, but overall the regions are seeing flood situations as the rain continues. The southern sub-regions saw significant damage as a result of the major rainfall event in April this year.

South Coast and Highlands Dairy Industry Group



Achievements

- **Service Agreement with the South East Local Land Services (SE LLS)** – Co-jointly signed by SE LLS and DIG in January, this agreement enables a closer local working relationship for the dairy industry.
- **Feeding Pastures for Profit** – A large number of DIG members undertook the first of the five informative workshops on 11 and 18 February. These workshops were funded by SE LLS, DairyNSW and farmer contributions.
- **Victorian Farmers Tour Visit** – DIG hosted three local farm tours with 11 Victorian farmers. Dinner, combined with a DIG meeting, was well attended with over 35 in number on the 5 March 2015.
- **Tyre storage on farms** – Clarified legislation regarding the storage and use of tyres on farms with a meeting with the Economic Development Officer from Shoalhaven City Council (and EPA). All DIG members were subsequently advised via DIG news of the outcome.
- **Safer Communities Farm Presentation** – Workcover extended an invitation to all dairy industry members to attend a one-hour farm safety information session on 10 March in Jamberoo.

- **Hoof care and lameness identification and prevention** – Karl Burgi presented a well attended workshop funded by DairyNSW on 19 March in Brundee.
- **Clarifide launch** – DIG members attended a launch of Clarifide convened by Zoetis at a local farm on 26 March 2015
- **Annual Dairy Industry Dinner** – Members have held three social evenings to discuss the annual Dairy Industry Dinner. Currently work is in progress to obtain a venue, speaker and funding details.

Recent changes

- **Formation of South Coast and Southern Highlands Dairy Advancement Group (Sub-committee)** – Representatives from Dairy Australia, Shoalhaven City Council, SE LLS, Dairy Connect, and NSW Farmers Association met in late 2014 to discuss future investment opportunities for the dairy industry and to develop a proactive, informative prospectus for potential investors to the local area. Representatives attended an "Engaging China Seminar" on the 21 October at Wollongong, and on 8 December Mike Logan presented on the opportunities around the Orange Milk Processing Plant in Nowra. A copy

of the group's Mission Statement will be available at the Council for viewing.

- **Strengthening of the “Younger” Dairy Network** - The “younger” dairy members are continuing to meet socially and attend informative training sessions, such as workshops by John Mulvany (regarding farm finances) and Neil Moss (regarding nutrition and finance). The group also attended a Focus Farm in Victoria in late 2014. The tour and nutrition and finance events were supported by Dairy NSW Young Dairy Network and Dairy Discussion Group funds.

Regional issues

- **Excessive rainfall** – Farmers dealing with soft cow feet/sore to walk; newly sown ryegrass paddocks now pugged and sacrificed; loss of corn crops and/or delayed harvest with subsequent delayed plantings for winter pastures
- **Instigating Workcover Dairy Assessment Workshops** – DIG

Executive members have met with Workcover staff to discuss various issues with work, health and safety and to work towards better relationship Between the two groups. Issues include motorbike safety and providing a safe working environment on-farm.

- **Q-fever vaccination programs** – The need for on-going regular vaccinations should be addressed/arranged, particularly for new entrants to the dairy industry.
- **First Aid Training and Certification** – Require First Aid Training courses and re-certification to be conducted for farmers and services providers to the industry to enable compliance.
- **Chemical Users Certificates and/or Re-accreditation** – Working with TAFE or another local Education provider to deliver this initiative.

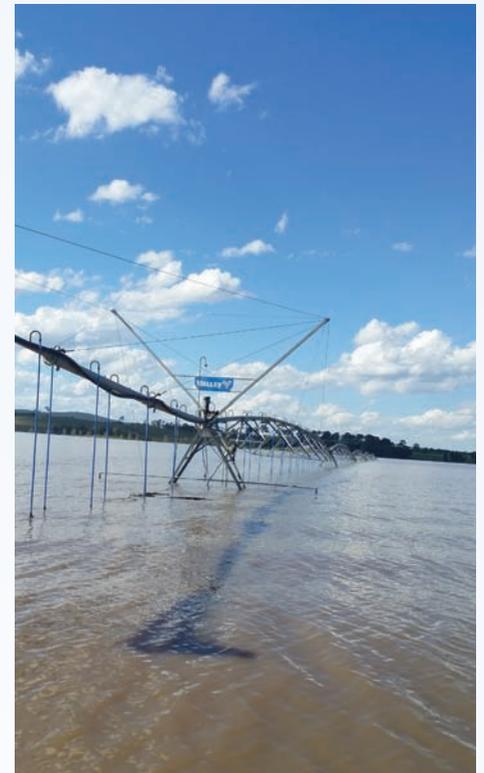
Hunter Dairy Development Group



Achievements

In the last six months, the group:

- Held a successful AGM combined with a Farm Field Day at Vacy with great attendance. The day focussed on results from a recent Soil Testing program undertaken with funding from Hunter LLS. The program achieved improve pasture utilisation on the Williams' farm.
- Had representation at the Hunter LLS community consultative group meetings.
- Completion of Dairy NSW/Dairy Australia's *Feeding Pastures for Profit* (Muswellbrook/Tamworth) workshops, *Churn Milk into Money* (Tocal), *Unpacking the ESKi* (Muswellbrook/Tamworth) workshops and *Livestock Euthanasia*.
- Held post flood dinners in Dungog 9 June and Singleton 10 June. These were held in response to the devastating Lower Hunter Floods enabling farmers to have a social get-together with entertainment and the opportunity to meet industry contacts who may be of use as they progress through the recovery phase of the floods. Entertainers will be Craig Hamilton (local Newcastle identity and ABC radio journalist) and Greg Scott (renowned local bush poet).



- HDDDG Field Day – looking at Herd Recording data and its uses (Dairy Express), ADHIS and the new breeding indices, Zoetis and their genomic testing tool, Clarifide, and Stewart Scott looking at how he uses herd recording data for herd management.

Regional Dairy Group updates

Recent changes

There have been no significant changes, but service provider and farmer interest in the group continues.

Regional issues - Seasonal Conditions

- **Upper and Lower Hunter** – spring/summer began on the dry side but during summer good rain was experienced in most areas. Devasting winds and record rainfall (452mm in 4 days) resulted in a natural disaster area being declared in the Hunter in April. Dungog and other Lower Hunter areas were the worst hit with not only bad flooding (Williams and Paterson Rivers especially) but also power outages for up to a week in some areas. Communications were also cut due to the power outages and mobile towers running out of battery reserves

There were approximately 59 farms affected with an estimated loss of 90,000+ litres of milk, 470km fencing lost, about 37 dairy head lost and significant areas of pasture damage (many had just finished autumn sowing). Pumps and machinery were also lost with an estimated damages and loss value of approximately \$12 million to the dairy industry. This was

just the immediate effect – follow on effects will include a decline in milk production for those farms that were unable to milk for up to 3 milkings, potential reductions also in milk income due to decreased quality issues and the anticipated major shortfall of feed on farms come late winter early spring due to the usage of reserves on hand and loss of newly sown pastures.

- **Tamworth region** – Tamworth continues to struggle with tough seasonal conditions and a shortage of irrigation water.

Reliance on purchased feed continues for some farms while others had the opportunity to conserve some fodder

Chaffey Dam is still below 50% (~32.6% - down from 39% as of last DairyNSW report). It also looks like those farms who access irrigation water from Split Rock Dam (5.9% of capacity) may be facing cuts to their allocation at the end of June, unless big inflows occur.



Inland Elite Dairy Network



Achievements

Managing Microbes project – The second LLS funded on-farm workshop was delivered in February 2015 on the Cowhan family dairy farm with Dr Chandra Iyer of Green Microbes Australia presenting, and 17 dairy farmers and 2 service providers attending. Inland Elite Dairy Group Network (IEDN) is currently waiting for two case studies to be completed with test results from the laboratory and the evaluation of this project for final reporting to Dairy NSW and Central West (CW) LLS due when the case studies are done.

Feeding Pastures for Profit – Forbes and Wagga – The Forbes workshops held in February 2015 had 16 farmers and service providers attend. The Wagga event had 17 dairy farmers and service providers attend. Funded by Dairy NSW, Dairy Australia, CW LLS and the Riverina LLS, early reports indicate a positive uptake by those present.

Request from Zoetis – IEDN has received a request from Zoetis to present a new dairy genomic selection tool to IEDN farmers at their next meeting. This will be arranged in due course.

Recent changes

All preparation and formal documents were prepared and submitted to NSW Fair Trading in February 2015 to cease being an incorporated organisation. Correspondence received stated the process is approved to close IEDN and its bank accounts. Jess Jennings, the IEDN coordinator, is working on this with Wagga-Forbes Treasurer contacts. Dairy NSW is developing a Memorandum of Understanding to manage a handover of



IEDN accounts. This is to be completed next quarter in collaboration with Dairy NSW.

Regional issues

Wagga Ag Inspirations Program with Yr 9-10 students – This is an on-going activity with four dairy farms involved. The Ag Inspirations program is working on developing awareness of agriculture career pathways that includes dairy. Simone Jolliffe is on the steering committee for “Ag Inspirations” (which was the camp run through Compact) and the program is this year being auspiced by the local NSWFA District Council, with a funding application currently being prepared for LLS. The steering committee consists of people from a variety of agricultural industry sectors, including high school and TAFE representatives.

IEDN-CSU Joint Activities – Three farmers in the Wagga subregion are engaged with CSU in an on-going basis with farmers participating in research related to pregnancy testing, herd health, and cow nutrition training. Other farms assist in an ad hoc basis with various CSU teaching programs and student research.

Far South Coast Dairy Development Group



Debbie Platts, Chair of the Far South Coast Dairy Development Group (FSCDDG), thanks all the farmer volunteers that work tirelessly for the greater benefit of the dairy community and acknowledges the in kind contribution from many service providers and corporates in the region.

The Development Group on the Far South Coast continues to have a very good working relationship with the SE LLS, consultants, service providers and the main processors Bega Cheese and Murray Goulburn. Activities that have occurred and are continuing to progress include Discussion Groups, Ladies Lunches, rollout of DA programs and various grant funded projects. Our role is crucial in the running of our own activities and supporting the initiatives of others.

Achievements

Discussion Groups - Monthly discussion groups are occurring in the region where producers are able to attend and discuss the monthly topic. Only farmers are permitted to attend these and this has been a key to their success, with people becoming very familiar with each other's circumstances and comfortable having discussions about a variety of topics over time. Issues covered range from animal health, pasture sowing and management through to looking at new installations in the district and heifer rearing.

A second dairy discussion group supported by DairyNSW is running bi-monthly in Bodalla to the far north of our area. The group is proactive in determining the topics that they are interested in and include issues such as



Men's Mental Health and programs such as *Livestock Euthanasia* and *Unpacking the ESKi*.

A Specialised Nutrition workshop was very well attended with discussion surrounding the basic principles of dairy cow nutrition, incorporating feed budgeting and quality assessments. An advanced nutrition workshop will occur in the future.

Heifer Rearing Project – A very successful joint venture between the Beef and Dairy Industries is developing in the Region. As a direct result of the *Heifers on Target* Program running in the region, several dairy farmers wanted to engage with beef/grazier counterparts for them to rear the dairy heifers. This project is funded by SE LLS, DairyNSW, Bega Cheese and the FSCDDG.

The inaugural discussion day saw over 40 beef and dairy farmers attend the event with much discussion about the concept of rearing dairy heifers and how it is slightly different to normal beef activities. Future relationships between the two industries hope to be nurtured as part of the ongoing activities of the funding. Several private relationships already exist and there are

win:win opportunities for many producers in the future.

Dairy programs – Like most regions across NSW there have been many DairyNSW/ Dairy Australia programs occurring over the past months. These include *Unpacking the ESKi*, *Feeding Pastures for Profit*, and *Livestock Euthanasia*. These have all been well attended with good feedback from most of the participants.

The FSCDDG plays an important role in helping these programs to be successfully run in the region. We have effective networking systems that encourage people to attend. Over thirty farmers attended at least one of the *Unpacking your ESKi* sessions which is a great result considering that there is only approximately 85 farms in the region and approximately two thirds of them employ some staff.

Pasture Trials – The development group has made a strong commitment into the pasture trials activities, with the purchase of two specialised machines. The group will be working closely with the SE LLS to conduct pasture trials in the local region under both



dryland and irrigated conditions. This is the accumulation of several different funding sources and we hope to sow the first trials in Autumn 2016.

Regional issues – seasonal conditions

The past six months have been very busy in the Far South Coast Region. The seasonal conditions have been very good to excellent for growing grass and producing milk. We have

generally had good rains with only one major flood event in December 2014. The events of December were scary and damaging for some farmers with two farms requiring the assistance of the Helicopter Rescue services as the waters rose very quickly and people became stranded whilst attempting to move pumps to high ground.



Drink more Milk and Eat more Cheese!

Dairy NSW Ltd. Directors

Michael Perich – Chair (dairy farmer)
 Simone Jolliffe – Deputy Chair (dairy farmer)
 Ken Baxter – Director
 Delia Dray – Director
 Ken Garner – Director

Dr Ian Lean – Director

Sue McGinn – Director (dairy farmer)
 Jane Sherborne – Director (dairy farmer)

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