Dairy NSW Strategic Plan

2021-25 Final Results



Vision

A valued and trusted partner that empowers and enables dairy farmers and industry to thrive.

Mission

Collaboratively identify and deliver regional needs for education, extension, research and development, to advance the NSW dairy industry.

Strategic intent

To advance the interests of the industry by improving the prosperity, productivity, and sustainability of dairy farmers in the Dairy NSW region.

Values

Farmer first

- Farmer needs guide our purpose.
- We use farmer needs and insights to inform the development of activities.
- We ask ourselves – is the decision we are making in the best interest of farmers?

One team

- We work together to achieve great things.
- Respect and inclusivity is a critical part of how we work together.
- We take responsibility for our actions.
- We engage with expertise across the organisation to make decisions and deliver outcomes.
- We avoid an 'us and them' way of thinking as this works against teamwork.

Innovative thinking

- We embrace new ideas and learning as we go.
- We actively seek new ideas and perspectives to get better outcomes.
- We know that embracing new ideas means taking a risk and that's ok.

Decisive action

- We make informed decisions and move quickly to implement.
- We balance having sufficient detail with the need to deliver.
- We are solution driven and action orientated.





Dairy NSW is broadly divided into six regions

- Central West
- Far South Coast
- Hunter
- Mid Coast
- South Coast and Highlands
- Wagga and Inland

Introduction

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan sets the broad strategic direction for Dairy NSW from 2021 through to, and including, 2025-26.

It was developed by the Dairy NSW Board with input from stakeholders through multiple meetings including the members' council.

The strategy informed the activities Dairy NSW undertook, which was captured in each planning year's Annual Operating Plan (AOP).

This plan aligned to the Dairy Australia Strategic Plan, where appropriate, including measures of success. This created efficiencies while ensuring regional issues were addressed.

About Dairy NSW

Dairy NSW Ltd is one of eight Regional Development Programs (RDPs) throughout the nation's key dairy areas, and operates under the auspices of Dairy Australia.

Dairy NSW sets priorities, seeks submissions for dairy improvement projects and commissions these projects. It is also responsible for supervising the coordination and delivery of extension and education programs.

To do this, Dairy NSW works closely with New South Wales dairy farmers, Dairy Australia, other RDPs, farm policy organisations, Regional Development Groups (RDGs) and government agencies.

In doing so, it worked hard to ensure regional and national policies are linked and fully integrated so research and extension work carried out in the region provided productivity gains and efficiencies.

Dairy NSW is a dairy farmer and skills-based board of directors.



SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)

Factors that were taken into account in the development of this Strategy

Strengths
A committed team focused on quality service
Working relationships with broad range of external stakeholders
Regional dairy groups (RDG) network
Relationship and access to DA resources
Delivery of Dairy Australia (DA) training and programs to NSW farmers
Dairy Farm Monitor Project (DFMP) data
Committed and engaged board providing leadership to organisation and industry
Credibility across the supply chain

Weaknesses
Large geographic area to cover
Challenge of many competing priorities can lead to being reactive and a lack of focus
Recognition and capacity to access alternate funding streams
Provision of services across all regions
Challenge to achieve and maintain farmer engagement

Opportunities
Talent development and increase resources
Increasing appetite for change amongst farmers and industry
Alternate funding streams strengthening
Emerging extension techniques – online learning, Dairy business network (DBN), Dairy discussion group (DDG)
Greater industry collaboration

Threats
Declining farming numbers
Ability to attract relevant research and investment
Declining revenue for research, development and extension

2021–25 Strategic Plan at a Glance

5	12	21	2021–25
Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes	Success Indicators	Years of delivery

Delivering on our strategy

Between 2021 and 2025, Dairy NSW worked alongside dairy farmers, Regional Dairy Groups, Dairy Australia, government agencies, research organisations and industry partners to deliver the priorities set out in the Dairy NSW Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan established a clear direction to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of dairy farm businesses across New South Wales. Throughout the five-year period, the Board regularly monitored progress against strategic success indicators, adapting priorities where required to ensure the plan remained relevant in an evolving operating environment.

The delivery period presented significant opportunities and challenges for the NSW dairy industry. Farmers navigated changing seasonal conditions, market volatility, workforce shortages, increasing expectations around sustainability and carbon, and the ongoing impacts of natural disasters. At the same time, the industry embraced innovation, strengthened collaboration and continued to invest in building resilient and profitable farm businesses.

In April 2024, the Dairy NSW Board completed a mid-cycle review of the Strategic Plan. This review reaffirmed the overall strategic direction while refining selected measures of success to better reflect emerging priorities, including climate resilience, carbon management and extension effectiveness. One strategic outcome relating to technology evaluation was removed where meaningful measurement was not achievable, while new indicators were introduced to strengthen reporting in priority areas.

This report provides a complete record of Dairy NSW's performance across the life of the Strategic Plan. It reports progress against each strategic priority, strategic outcome and success indicator, presenting baseline measures, annual results and final outcomes at the conclusion of the strategy[1].

While not every target was fully achieved, the Strategic Plan has strengthened Dairy NSW's ability to deliver evidence-based extension, support informed farm business decision-making, build industry capability and collaborate effectively across the dairy sector. Importantly, it has provided valuable insights into emerging industry needs and established a strong foundation for the development of the next Strategic Plan.

As Dairy NSW looks beyond 2025, the achievements and lessons from this strategy will continue to guide investment, partnerships and future priorities, ensuring the organisation remains focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for dairy farmers across New South Wales.

For more information on these initiatives and their impact, contact Dairy NSW Executive Officer, Natalie Campbell - **eo@dairynsw.com.au**

Interpreting the results

The targets established in the 2021–25 Strategic Plan were aspirational goals, designed to provide a clear direction and a basis for measuring progress over the life of the strategy. They were not intended to represent absolute or guaranteed outcomes. Results should therefore be considered in the context of the broader strategic journey, including changes in industry conditions, delivery priorities and measurement approaches.[2]

1 Where survey questions or methodologies changed during the reporting period, some final-year results may not be directly comparable with previous years. These changes have been noted where relevant and should be considered when interpreting long-term trends.

2 Targets were set as aspirational measures of intended progress and were not absolute or guaranteed performance requirements.



Strategic priorities

Dairy NSW had five strategic priorities over the five years.
Each priority was underpinned by an objective and key outcomes.

	1	2	3
	Culture of prosperous farm businesses	Our people, our future	Thrive in a changing natural environment
Objective	**Nurture a positive culture of prosperous farm businesses that are skilled, informed, and innovative in managing market volatility**	**Our passion for people enables farm businesses to attract great people, build their capability, careers, and foster a safe and caring work culture**	**Prosperous farm businesses that adapt to the changing natural environment and provide good stewardship of resources**
Outcomes	**a** Farm businesses understand their profitability drivers	**a** Dairy industry is seen as an excellent work choice with multiple career paths and opportunities	**a** Greater ability to accept and adapt to changes in the natural environment
	b Improved productivity through implementing business planning practices across key aspects of dairy farming	**b** A culture of businesses that foster progression, values growth, who inspire and encourage their people	**b** Efficient and profitable use of land, water, carbon, and energy resources which nurtures and sustains the natural environment
		c Access to capable service providers and skilled farm employees	**c** Proactive approach to positively addressing climate and environment changes to preserve or enhance our natural capital

4	5
Adoption of research and technology	Collaborative and responsive organisation
Improved adoption through higher engagement that leads to an increase in productivity and a culture of evidence-based decision making	**Collaborate effectively with stakeholders including farmers, regional and national entities to influence positive outcomes for dairy farm businesses**
a Better access and understanding of feed base and grazing management options	**a** A team committed to driving engagement and influencing practice change through quality extension and trusted service
b Commitment to continuous improvement in animal performance, health and wellbeing	**b** Regional needs are prioritised and actioned through collaboration with Dairy Australia and our partners

Strategic Priority 1: Culture of prosperous farm businesses	
Goal Nurture a positive culture of prosperous farm businesses that are skilled, informed and innovative in managing market volatility	
Outcomes/strategies	**Actions**
a Farm businesses understand their profitability drivers	• Deliver 90% of foundational programs in AOP with average rating of 8 or above e.g. Our Farm Our Plan (OFOP) and Farm Business Management (FBM) programs • Deliver two applied programs each year e.g. DFMP workshops, Focus Farm • Integrate FBM principles into technical program delivery • Meet delivery target for OFOP each year to improve number of plans each year • Establish and promote clear process for formation, evaluation and ongoing support of DDG/DBN • Successful DDG/DBN operating with Dairy NSW support – participant evaluation (can report improvement in productivity/practice change) & DDG meeting stated goals
b Improved productivity through implementing business planning practices across key aspects of dairy farming	

*DFMP data

Strategic Priority 2: Our people, our future	
Goal Our passion for people enables farm businesses to attract great people, build their capability, careers and foster a safe and caring work culture	
Outcomes/strategies	**Actions**
a Dairy industry is seen as an excellent work choice with multiple career paths and opportunities	• Support promote and adopt school programs • Implement programs as part of DA leadership strategy • Review Young Dairy Network year 1, and implement recommendations to improve the development of young people in the industry • Deliver 90% of foundational programs in AOP with average rating of 8 or above e.g. Farming My Team • Increase awareness of share farming leasing and equity partnership resources and approaches • Collaborate with external stakeholders to deliver at least one farm safety and/or capacity building program per year • Support and promote existing and emerging initiatives which seek to improve people capability • Build service provider network, capture in database, include in training opportunities and extension activity • Engage a mixture of attendees at training events including farm staff, service providers, not just owners • Identify skills gaps and prioritise development needs
b A culture of businesses that foster progression, values growth, who inspire and encourage their people	
c Access to capable service providers and skilled farm employees	

Strategic Priority 3: Thrive in a changing natural environment	
Goal Prosperous farm businesses that adapt to the changing natural environment and provide good stewardship of resources	
Outcomes/strategies	**Actions**
a Greater ability to accept and adapt to changes in the natural environment	• Deliver 90% of foundational programs in AOP with average rating of 8 or above e.g. Fert$mart and Feeding Pastures for Profit (FPFP) • Undertake Dairy businesses for future climate project and wide communication of outcomes • Water use efficiency assessment/partnership • Explore partnerships in NSW to deliver opportunities to reduce methane emissions and carbon sequestration under current dairy systems • Embed climate risk into extension delivery including OFOP, Focus Farm, FPFP etc. • Energy Efficiency Project – deliver and communicate • Smarter Irrigation for Profit • Small project applications that support Land, Water, Carbon (LWC) initiatives
b Proactive approach to positively addressing climate and environment changes to preserve or enhance our natural capital	
c Efficient and profitable use of land, water, carbon, and energy resources which nurtures and sustains the natural environment	

Success indicator	Unit	Baseline	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 target	Achievement	FY25 results
Farm decision makers can accurately state the profit metrics for their farm	% of farms	40%	40%	21%	57%	60%*	Exceeded	76%
Dairy farm businesses make key decisions using a documented business plan	% of farms	12%	65%	43%	28%	80%	Not achieved	33%
More than 50% of farms achieving an average five–year profit (earnings before interest and tax) of at least $1.50 per kgMS	% of farms	22%	66%	69%	67%	50%	Exceeded	66%
Improvement in kgMS per labour unit	Median kgMS per labour unit*	37,400	38,438	36,747	37,430	45,000	Not achieved	41,740

Success indicator	Unit	Baseline	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 target	Achievement	FY25 result
Dairy farm employers and employees can describe why dairy is rewarding to work in	% of employers and employees	82%	81%	80%	73%	85%	Not achieved	79%
Employers report that the time taken to find a new employee was less than three months	% of employers that employed someone in the last 12 months	84%*	75%	73%	74%	90%	Not achieved	59%
Employers were able find an employee with the right capability for the role in the last 12 months	% of employers	52%	49%	44%	79%	70%	Not achieved	53%
Dairy farm businesses agree they have sufficient access to skilled service providers to meet their needs	% of farms	74%	77%	74%	n/a	85%	Not achieved	59%

**small sample size*

Success indicator	Unit	Baseline	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 target	Achievement	FY25 result
Farmers have access to enough information to understand the likelihood and impacts of changes in the environment	% of farms	67%	75%	73%	84%	90%	Not achieved	44%
Farmers have the right information and skills to thrive in increasingly volatile climatic conditions	% of farms	TBD	84%	85%	92%	75%	Not achieved	44%
Dairy farm businesses have adopted at least three new technologies and management practices to achieve land, water, carbon and energy efficiency	% of farms	59%	46%	59%	98%	70%	Not achieved	68%
Dairy farm businesses have access to and have adopted three commercial solutions for reducing on farm emissions	% of farms	17%	20%	60%	84%	40%	Exceeded	88%
Dairy farm businesses understand their carbon footprint.	% of farms	22%	12%	19%	24%	30%	Exceeded	47%

Targets were set as aspirational measures of intended progress and were not absolute or guaranteed performance requirements.

Strategic Priority 4: Adoption of research and technology	
Goal Improved adoption through higher engagement that leads to an increase in productivity and a culture of evidence-based decision making	
Outcomes/strategies	**Actions**
a Better access and understanding of feed base and grazing management options	• Deliver 90% of foundational programs in AOP with average rating of 8 or above e.g. FPFP, Smarter Irrigation for Profit (SIP) • Support Dairy UP projects on unlocking potential of Kikuyu and feedbase for intensive systems • More extension of DA funded Regional dairy groups (R&D) e.g. DairyBio where applicable to NSW • Prioritisation of regional research needs – what is different about NSW e.g. coastal forages, annual sowing, water efficiency, intensive cropping systems
b Commitment to continuous improvement in animal performance, health and wellbeing	• Monitor and communicate key animal welfare practices • Deliver 90% of foundational programs in AOP with average rating of 8 or above e.g. Rearing Health Calves, Healthy Hooves • Evaluate development of a program like taking stock for herd performance – identify productivity barriers in herd performance

*DFMP data

Strategic Priority 5: Collaborative and responsive organisation	
Goal Collaborate effectively with stakeholders including farmers, regional and national entities to influence positive outcomes for dairy farm businesses in NSW	
Outcomes/strategies	**Actions**
a A team committed to driving engagement and influencing practice change through quality extension and trusted service	• Continued development of Dairy NSW team's skills and knowledge with a focus on improving • Have an offering to support a range of learning styles to improve engagement and adoption e.g. online, webinars, hybrid and DDG's • Implement targeted evaluation of program impact/adoption • Implement best practice extension techniques – follow up to embed learning, incorporate 1:1 delivery where appropriate
b Regional needs are prioritised and actioned through collaboration with Dairy Australia and our partners	• Consultation to identify needs • Review and prioritisation of R&D needs • Ideas submitted to DA and partners • Actively network and collaborate with key regional stakeholders to leverage resources, streamline service delivery and create alignment

Success indicator	Unit	Baseline	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 target	Achievement	FY25 Result
Increase in tonnes of dry matter (TDM) utilised per hectare	Rolling three year average TDM utilised per usable hectare*	5.4	7.8	7.5	5.3	6.0	Not achieved	5.5
Farmer engagement and attendance at feed related programs	Number of people at Feedbase related programs	117	216	151	88	135	Exceeded	171
Improvement in measures for NSW against target 7.2 of the Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework	%	As reported in framework. DairyNSW achieved an above national average result of 93%. The Dairy Australi national result was 82%.						
Improved median kgMS per kg bodyweight	%	88%	93%	91%	93%	95%	Achieved	95%
Farmer engagement and attendance at animal related programs	Number of people at animal related programs	107	303	347	216	125	Exceeded	413

Success indicator	Unit	Baseline	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 target	Achievement	FY25 Result
Employee engagement score increase	Employee engagement score	70%	84%	52%		80%	Exceeded	83%
Farm businesses feel Dairy Australia (Dairy NSW) has an effective relationship management and service delivery model	Levy payer response	70%	66%	61%	54%	80%	Not achieved	67%
Programs are delivered collaboratively, including co-funding	Number of programs	12	9	15		15	Not achieved	9

Targets were set as aspirational measures of intended progress and were not absolute or guaranteed performance requirements.

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