

How Now Gippy Cow



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Leading Ladies in Dairy Melbourne Tour

By Belinda Griffin

In June 2025, eleven dynamic women dairy farmers from across Gippsland converged in Melbourne's lively Southbank precinct for the inaugural Leading Ladies in Dairy event.

Hosted by GippsDairy, this two-day experience was designed to celebrate the vital role of women in dairy, while offering a rare, behind-the-scenes look at Dairy Australia and its industry partners.

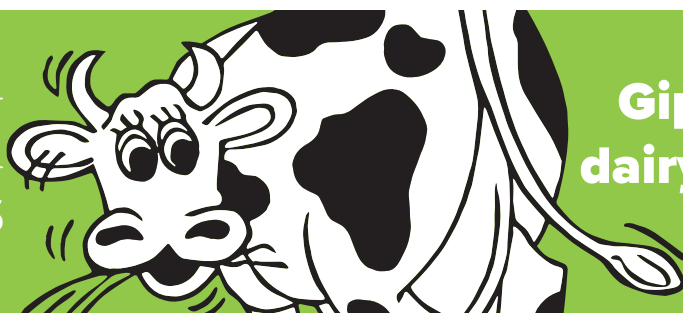
The event's purpose was to connect women in dairy with the broader industry, foster leadership, and inspire through direct engagement with the people and projects shaping the future of Australian dairy.

For many, it was a welcome opportunity to step away from the daily demands of farm life and immerse themselves in the innovation, research, and advocacy that underpin the sector.

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NOTMAN

PASTURE SEEDS



Gippsland's
dairy pasture
experts

Leading Ladies in Dairy Melbourne Tour

Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN Careers Expo – Lardner Park, 29 July 2025

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The program began at Dairy Australia's Southbank headquarters, where participants were welcomed by a line-up of accomplished female leaders:

- Glenys Zucco (Head of Marketing) shared how Dairy Australia's campaigns are building consumer trust and demand for Australian dairy.
- Heather McLaren (Market Insights Manager) unpacked the latest trends and data shaping the industry's direction.
- Rachel Jones (Stakeholder Engagement & Issues Manager) discussed the importance of advocacy and collaboration.
- Catherine Taylor (Sustainable International Trade Senior Manager) highlighted the global opportunities and challenges for Australian dairy.
- Eliza Redfern (Analysis and Insights Manager) explained how data-driven decision-making is supporting farmers.
- Jenny Wilson (Gardiner Foundation) spoke about leadership pathways and opportunities for women in dairy.

The presence of Sarah O'Brien, GippsDairy Board Chair, added further inspiration and a strong regional voice to the discussions.

Beyond the boardroom, the group toured Merieux NutriSciences Asure Quality (MNAQ, previously BVAQ) a leading laboratory for milk testing and quality assurance. Donning lab coats, participants followed the journey of milk samples from farm to finished product, gaining a new appreciation for the science and rigour behind every bottle of milk on supermarket shelves. One participant reflected, "Our tour of MAQ offered valuable insights into product testing and quality assurance. It was fascinating to follow the journey of our own milk samples after they leave the farm, and to better understand the rigorous testing processes that ensure quality from our raw milk through to finished products on supermarket shelves."

The adventure continued with a visit to St David Dairy in Fitzroy, Melbourne's only inner-city micro dairy. Here, the group met passionate staff who shared their story of artisan production, value-adding, and creative marketing demonstrating how small-scale dairies can thrive by connecting directly with urban consumers. As one attendee shared, "At St David Dairy, we gained a deeper appreciation for artisan dairy production and the value-adding potential when targeting specific markets. Seeing how an inner city milk factory has adapted their

processes and marketing to not only survive, but thrive was truly inspiring."

The impact of the event was best captured by the participants themselves: "One of the standout experiences was visiting the Dairy Australia head office. Hearing from truly inspiring female leaders and learning about the breadth of work happening behind the scenes at DA was eye opening. As farmers, it's easy to overlook the many layers of support, promotion and innovation being developed to strengthen our industry. This visit really highlighted the depth of work and support being provided at DA and through the regional teams."

Networking and camaraderie were at the heart of the experience. Some attendees arrived as friends, others as strangers, but all left with new connections and a shared sense of purpose. The group navigated Melbourne together - sometimes without a booked bus, which led to plenty of laughs and spontaneous adventures as they made their way to each site. A group dinner in Southbank provided a relaxed setting to debrief, share stories, and reflect on the day's learnings. These informal moments proved just as valuable as the formal sessions, strengthening bonds and sparking new ideas.

Organiser Belinda Griffin reflected, "This event was especially valuable for participants, giving them the chance to hear about projects happening behind the scenes in the dairy industry. Many also discovered roles within Dairy Australia that they hadn't previously known existed broadening their understanding of the pathways, people and work that help shape the industry."

The Leading Ladies in Dairy event was more than just a tour it was a celebration of women's leadership, a catalyst for new ideas, and a reminder of the power of connection. Participants returned to their farms with fresh perspectives, new friendships, and a renewed sense of pride in their role within the dairy community. As the dairy industry continues to evolve, events like this ensure that women's voices are heard, their contributions recognised, and their leadership fostered for the future.

MORE INFORMATION

To express interest in future overnight tour, please register your interest here: tinyurl.com/53n6dm7s or to get involved in other Women in Dairy events, contact Belinda Griffin at belinda.griffin@gippsdairy.com.au



By Veronica McLeod

This year's Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN Careers Expo saw more than 2,200 enthusiastic Year 10–12 students from across the Latrobe Valley, Baw Baw, South Gippsland, East Gippsland, and for the first time the home-schooling community, attend a day dedicated to exploring career opportunities.

Representing the dairy industry were Jess Blackstock, Veronica McLeod, and dairy farmer and Young Dairy Network (YDN) committee member Luke Johnson. Together, they showcased the diverse range of careers available both on and off farm, while also introducing students to the YDN and the opportunities it provides for young people to connect, learn, and grow in the dairy sector.

The theme of this year's expo was "Shaping Tomorrow: Empowering Students to Take Charge of Their Career Journey" — and it was clear from the conversations had throughout the day that students are keen to explore what the dairy industry has to offer.

Luke Johnson reflected on his experience at the expo:

"I found it promising to see all the students actively looking at future options. Whether they were talking to us about dairy or exploring other career paths, it was encouraging to see them come through with such open minds."

When asked about the highlight of the day, Luke said:

"My favourite part was the constant stream of students asking questions about the dairy industry. It gave me confidence that there will be smart and skilled workers stepping into the industry in the years ahead."

Luke also encouraged other farmers and industry professionals to consider getting involved in future careers expos.



"Absolutely, I would recommend it. It gives you a snapshot of the local talent coming into the industry. It's also important to talk about the support roles, such as feed reps, because not every student will want to put cups on cows. I found there was a strong interest in those roles."

The Careers Expo highlighted the next generation's curiosity and enthusiasm for agriculture, and it was exciting to see so many young adults considering their future in dairy.



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Drought support for dairy farmers



By Australian Taxation Office

Drought is one of the most significant challenges facing Australian dairy farmers and their communities. Reduced rainfall, declining pasture quality, and rising feed costs can quickly impact productivity and profitability. As summer approaches, the risk of drought intensifies, and it's more important than ever to plan ahead.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is committed to supporting primary producers through tailored tax concessions and financial tools designed to help you manage your cash flow, protect your assets, and build resilience. If you're a dairy farmer manufacturing dairy produce from raw material that you produced, you're considered a primary producer and you're eligible to access these concessions.

Build a financial buffer

Farm Management Deposit (FMD) accounts are a great way to build up a cash reserve. They let you set aside some of your primary production income in good years and defer paying tax on it until you need to withdraw it. This can be especially helpful when facing unexpected expenses due to drought or natural disasters.

For example, a dairy farmer might deposit surplus income during a strong production year, then withdraw it during a drought year to cover feed costs or water infrastructure upgrades. This flexibility helps smooth out financial pressure when conditions change.

Tax averaging is another tool that helps smooth out the tax you pay over time. If your income fluctuates, tax averaging evens out your income and tax payable over a maximum of five years and ensures you don't pay more tax than others with similar, but steadier, incomes. FMDs and tax averaging can be used independently or together, depending on your financial goals.

Invest in drought resilience

If you're investing to improve your farm's productivity, sustainability, or drought resilience, you may be able to claim an immediate deduction for certain capital expenses used in primary production. This means you can claim the full cost of the asset rather than its decline in value over time. This includes:

- Fencing
- Water facilities (e.g. dams, tanks, troughs, irrigation systems)
- Fodder storage assets (e.g., feed bins, silos, storage sheds)

These deductions can help reduce your taxable income while supporting the long-term productivity, sustainability and resilience of your business.

Managing livestock and machinery in a drought

If drought forces you to sell livestock, you may be able to spread or defer the resulting profits for up to 5 years, helping to ease the tax impact during difficult times.

If you're selling or underutilising machinery due to drought, it's important to understand how this affects depreciation and deductions. Keeping accurate records of machinery use and livestock numbers can help you make informed decisions and access support faster.

Record keeping and compliance

Accurate record keeping is essential for claiming deductions and accessing support. Maintain detailed records of:

- Livestock numbers and movements.
- Machinery usage and maintenance.
- Water infrastructure and feed storage.
- Income fluctuations and seasonal impacts.

Good records not only help with tax compliance but also help make your business more resilient. Digital tools and farm management software can make this process easier and more reliable.

Know what support is available

You can also explore our free online learning resource, Essentials to strengthen your small business, which includes courses on cash flow, tax basics, and business growth. If you've been affected by an event or natural disaster such as a bushfire, cyclone, drought, flood, or storm, we can support you. The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) and the Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA) may be available if you have been affected by bushfires.

We understand that family and property will be your priority so we'll give you time to recover and help you sort out your tax affairs when you're ready. We'll work with you to understand your situation and identify the most appropriate support.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit ato.gov.au/primaryproducers or speak to your registered tax professional.

East Gippsland Agri-tech Youth Expo

By Jackie Aveling

Exposing students to the exciting technologies transforming agriculture—and the diverse career opportunities within the industry—was the driving purpose behind a recent event held at the Gippsland Agricultural Group (GAGG) Facility in Bairnsdale.

Farm tours were held on either side of the main Expo Day, giving students a first hand look at technology in action. Five schools from across Omeo to Bairnsdale took part, visiting local farms where they heard directly from farmers about their journey into agriculture, daily routines, and what they look for when hiring new team members.

Industry service providers also shared insights into their roles, how they entered the field, and what they love about working in agriculture.

The Expo Day itself drew more than 350 attendees, including 250 students. Young people were fully immersed in a wide range of hands-on activities from pregnancy testing a prosthetic cow and analysing sugar content in food, to learning how drones are used to spray crops and the licensing required to operate them.

These interactive sessions gave students a genuine taste of modern farming and highlighted just how innovative, high-tech, and diverse the industry has become sparking real excitement and curiosity.



The event was made possible through the support of Gippsland farmers, Swifts Creek Futures, East Gippsland Shire Council, and the Youth Ambassadors, along with a broad coalition of partners including Gippsland Agricultural Group, Southern Farming Systems, TAFE Gippsland, Central Queensland University Australia, Raising Aspirations in Careers and Education, Gippsland Morwell Tech School, the Victorian Department of Education, Gippsland East LLEN, Agriculture Victoria, Dairy Australia, GippsDairy, and apprenticeship providers.

YOUNG DAIRY NETWORK

LAC Chair Article

By Sarah Kelly

Hi, I'm Sarah Kelly. I'm a dairy farmer and chair of the Young Dairy Network for GippsDairy. I'm a sixth-generation dairy farmer and third generation working on our current family farm. I was born with dairy farming running through my veins and wanting to part of milking the cows. I had my own stool set up in the dairy from two years of age and I always felt a sense of belonging while I was there and it's stuck with me. Something inside comes to life when I start working with the cows and the land.

We aren't your traditional dairy farmers with our farm located within metropolitan Melbourne. We milk a 250 Holstein cross herd over 300 acres surrounded by industrial and housing estates. I like to think we have the best of both worlds - do the morning milk and then it's only a 3-minute drive for school drop off, McDonald's coffee or to get some shopping done.

I have a real passion for the dairy industry and the people in it—particularly the next generation already or wanting to give dairy farming a go! Hence why I decided to run for position as chair to put these ideas and energy into fruition. There are many opportunities to be taken up for our young dairy farmers to not only enhance their skills as a farmer but also as a leader that is aiming to run a large sized business. I have done many courses, study tours, webinars, workshops, conferences, meetings, farm meets etc to be able direct young farmers in what there is available to them if they're wanting to further their skills and I also build up their confidence to attend.



Beyond my dairy farming career, I am a mother to three girls. We love to travel abroad and enjoy the finer things in life. I'm extremely proud to be raising 7th generation farmers on farm and I look forward to being part of a prosperous dairy industry for the next generation to thrive in.

Regards,

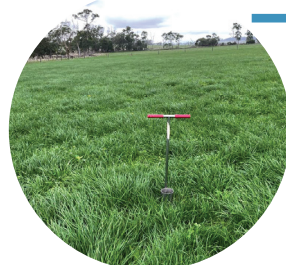
Sarah Kelly.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Gippsland's YDN program go to: www.dairyaustralia.com.au/gippsdairy/programs/young-dairy-network

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By Shanky Sungroya, GippsDairy

What is Facial Eczema?

Facial eczema (FE) is caused by cattle ingesting spores of the fungus *Pithomyces chartarum* through pastures. Once ingested the fungus produces a toxin called sporidesmin in the gastrointestinal tract. This toxin causes damage to the liver, mammary glands and leads to photosensitivity in animals. As a result of this cattle may develop red, swollen, and peeling skin, particularly around unpigmented areas like their face and udder. Therefore, identification and preventative management of this condition early is crucial for maintaining herd health.

Signs and Symptoms of Facial Eczema

Facial eczema can have huge impacts on animal health, symptoms may vary from mild to severe and can include:

- Cows are restless and seeking shade due to sensitivity to sunlight
- Reddening, thickening, or peeling of unpigmented skin, particularly around the face, ears, and udder
- Sudden drop in milk production (up to 50%)
- General signs of ill health, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, and weight loss

Conditions that Promote Facial Eczema

Facial eczema is of particular concern for Gippsland dairy farmers, as weather patterns create more favourable conditions for its occurrence. FE is most prevalent in late summer and early autumn when warm, humid conditions are optimal for fungal sporulation. High spore counts (>80,000 spores/gram) in pasture are particularly dangerous, so it is essential to monitor environmental conditions closely. But remember, risk is cumulative: several weeks of “moderate” counts can cause as much harm as one week of very high numbers.

Control and prevention strategies

Effective facial eczema management involves control and prevention strategies.

1. Pasture Spore Monitoring - Regular monitoring of pasture spore counts is vital during high-risk periods. The Facial Eczema Spore Monitoring Program is running again this season, funded by GippsDairy and supported by Dairy Australia. Samples from sentinel farms across the region are counted each fortnight, with results shared in the Friday summary and alerts when numbers spike.

How to use the fortnightly update:

- Think of the report as a traffic light.
- If your local line is low and flat, keep normal rotations but stay alert.
- If it's rising and passes ~20,000/g with warm nights forecast, it's time to start or tighten prevention (zinc, grazing height, buffer feeding).
- If it jumps or nears ~100,000/g, act immediately: avoid grazing cows too close to the base of the sward, provide extra buffer feed, and confirm zinc is being delivered consistently.
- One low number doesn't mean “all clear”, and one high number doesn't mean panic. Weather plus trend is what really matters.

If you would like to subscribe to the fortnightly spore monitoring report, please contact the GippsDairy office at info@gippsdairy.com.au or 5624 3900.

2. Zinc Supplementation - Zinc is a proven preventative if managed well. It binds with sporidesmin to stop cell damage and also reduces copper uptake that drives the reaction. Zinc must be started 2–3 weeks before the risk period. It can be delivered through feed, water, or boluses, but each method has pros and cons. Always follow veterinary advice on timing and dosage and confirm protection with a blood test mid-course. Over-dosing can be toxic, so regular checks are essential.
3. Pasture Management - Managing the build-up of soft litter by avoiding topping and managing pasture quality in late spring and avoid grazing below 4cm pasture height during the high-risk period to reduce spore intake and growth. Feeding cows with alternative forage, such as silage or hay, during high-risk periods can also help to reduce grazing pressure and minimize exposure to spores.
4. Shade and Skin Care - Affected animals should have access to shade to prevent further skin damage due to sunlight exposure. In cases of severe skin irritation, topical treatments and supportive care may be necessary.

Our Local Monitoring - What We Did and What We Saw

To move faster and cover more ground, GippsDairy brought the FE testing in-house overseen by veterinarian and GippsDairy staff member Lauren Foster. We set up sentinel farms across MID, East, West and South Gippsland, posted sampling kits, counted on samples early in the week, and aimed to have the regional summary online by Friday (fortnightly). When early summer looked warm and wet, a small subset of spore testing was completed in December 2024. At the back end of it when warm days and mild nights lingered, so we extended monitoring into May instead of stopping mid-April.

What worked on farm last season was watching the rise over weeks, not waiting for a single “red-hot” figure. Farmers who started zinc early, avoided hard grazing into litter and buffer-fed on spike weeks reported fewer cases and smaller milk dips. Simple, timely communications and alerts when counts jumped has helped decisions happen quickly.

If You Suspect a Break-Through

Move affected cows out of sun (shade by day, graze by night). Work with your vet on pain relief and skin care, especially teats and udders. A GGT blood test helps pick up liver stress early and checks whether your prevention plan is working. Expect some cows to need time; prevention is still cheaper than cure.

MORE INFORMATION

Regional FE spore reports run from January to April, and will extend if the weather stays warm and humid. Subscribe to the GippsDairy update to get the fortnightly summary and in-season alerts. For zinc dosing plans, blood testing, bolus suitability and class-specific advice, speak with your vet or nutritionist. Subscribe for the updates: www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animals/health-and-welfare/facial-eczema/spore-count-monitoring

By Trish Hammond and Veronica McLeod

For 2025, three Cows Create Careers programs were undertaken at the Fulham Correctional Centre. These programs were proudly funded by GippsDairy, Gardiner Foundation and GEO. Each program had 6 participants, giving a total of 18 successful completions for this year.

In comparison to previous years where some of the participants had previously come from and worked on the Dhurringile prison farm, the participants who participated in these programs had very limited experience with dairy cattle or knowledge of the dairy industry. This has been one very exciting aspect and a highlight for those undertaking the course.

There were various reasons for the participants registering to be involved in the programs this year. Word of mouth and recommendations from previous participants was a common reason, which complemented the new participants desire to learn about the dairy industry with the potential to gain future employment and a start a career in dairy.

Program 1- April

At the commencement of each program, on day one participants are taught not only how about calf milk replacement and feeding of calves, but also about the Australian Dairy Industry and Biosecurity. On day two, participants undertake the Dairy Australia course of Rearing Healthy Calves. After two days of classroom theory, the participants go out on farm to put learnt theory in to practice and experience calf rearing facilities. In program one, the participants put their well learnt skills into practice as the group of calves became unwell 1 by 1 throughout the program.

The participants were able to pick up the signs of illness early and work with the facilitator and veterinarian support to voice their concerns and explain what they were seeing. Over the three-week period, the calves had all returned to their farm where they received treatment of antibiotics and where the participants got to see them again during the on-farm excursion.

With all 5 of the study units undertaken including Dairy Industry and Biosecurity, Technology on Farm, Marketing and Careers, Natural Resources and Environment and Farm Safety that were delivered as part of the program, the feedback showed that all units were thoroughly enjoyed by the participants.

On their release, there are participants from program one who are interested in working on farm, in the milk transport field and in dairy marketing.

Program 2- August

There were several firsts in program two. For the first time, there were three pure bred jersey calves as the focus of this program. The participants were spending much time petting these calves outside of feeding times and were showing the calves to their relatives during weekend visits.

On the first farm visit excursion, the participants were able to witness an assisted birth of a calf and the veterinary aftercare of the cow. It was a highlight and an event spoken about by the participants for the remaining time of the program.

For some of the participants in this program, the farm visit excursions were the first time they have left prison since being convicted, which was an eye-opening experience for them in respect to how much an area has changed as well as farming practices.

One recurring theme in the feedback that came from this group of participants was that they did not realise how much work and effort goes into the production of milk and how hard farmers work. The participants were in awe of the farmers they met by seeing what they can achieve and they were proud to tell their relatives about their experiences in the course, teaching their families and friends about everything they have learnt.

One participant from this program is actively wanting an on farm position upon his release in February 2026. It was throughout this program also that the facilitation team began working with a participant from a 2024 program, who released in September and is now working on a Dairy Farm. He had successfully been participating in a correctional permit program which involved undertaking work placement once a month and was participating in fortnightly zoom meetings with the farmer prior to his release.

Program 3- September

There were three different breeds of calves (jersey cross, angus cross and Holstein Friesian), brought to Fulham for this program. This created great discussion and learning amidst the participants. Close relationships were well established with the calves for this program, with one of the participants becoming tearful on the calves departure.

One of the participants had previous cattle experience but no experience in rearing calves on milk replacement powder. This was his main reasoning for doing this course for the intent to implement this skill and knowledge in his work upon his release.

As with the other groups, the on-farm excursions were a highlight, with all the participants commenting on how they find the technological aspect of the industry mind blowing. A lot of time was spent talking with the participants about transferrable skills and helping them understand that they can utilise previous skills for different pathways within the dairy industry.

There is a participant on parole in prison from course three who is actively seeking work on a dairy farm. He hopes to have a position organised prior to his release. He commented that this course has provided him with a fresh outlook from what he had once heard and knew about the dairy industry. With the positive messages he received during this course, is excited to become a part of ‘something pretty good’!

2025 has been another successful year of programs. Not only has it provided participants with the learnings, skills and ability to be placed on farm for employment, second to this, the facilitators have seen other impacts and benefit. The participants are viewing the industry in a positive light and sharing this positivity with their friends and families. They are explaining how they are thinking differently about how dairy is produced and recognise farmers for their hard work and commitment. Lastly, all participants are completing the course and feeling inspired and capable with what they have learnt. With the application of further funding, we hope to be back teaching and inspiring more participants in 2026.

Hoofing around Gippy town



GIPPSDAIRY EVENTS – SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2025

Thursday 6 November	Understanding Farm Carbon Workshop	Bairnsdale
Thursday 6 November	Industrial Relations Update	Online
Thursday 6 November	Regen Ag Discussion Group: Understanding BBAM – Brewing Beneficial Anaerobic Microbes	Newry
Friday 14 November	Trailblazers in Gumboots: Women who drive change	Traralgon
Sunday 23rd November	YDN Gippsland Festive Farm Day	Mirboo North
Monday 17 November	Orbost Discussion Group – Technology in grazing systems	Newmerella
Tuesday 18 November	Technology in grazing systems	Bairnsdale
Wednesday 19 November	MID Discussion Group – Technology in grazing systems	Nambrok
Thursday 20 November	West Gippsland Yarra Valley Discussion Group – Technology in grazing systems	Ellinbank

Upcoming events

To view and register for any of our upcoming events, visit the GippsDairy events calendar:
<https://bit.ly/GippsDairyEventsCalendar>
 or scan the QR Code.



Hay and Grain reports

Scan the QR codes or visit the Industry Statistics page of the Dairy Australia website to view the most recent hay and grain figures.

Hay Report



Grain Report



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