

The Milk Flow

Spring edition – 2026



From the Chair and Executive Officer

As we have moved into spring, it is a good time to reflect on the year that has been and look ahead to what is next for Dairy NSW.

In finalising our **Annual Report**, the Board has reviewed the work delivered across the NSW dairy industry over the past year and progressed the development of our new Strategic Plan. This work has provided an opportunity to consider where Dairy NSW can have the greatest impact and how we can continue to support dairy businesses and communities through an increasingly complex operating environment.

Our new Strategic Plan, due to be released shortly, will provide the foundation for our work over the coming years, with a focus on practical support for farm businesses, building capability and resilience, and working collaboratively with industry and our partners. We look forward to sharing more about this direction as the Plan is finalised and released.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 29 October, providing another opportunity for the Board to come together with members to receive and seek further feedback from our farmers as the Board prepares for the year ahead.

Alongside this strategic and governance work, our regional delivery team continues to be active across NSW, working directly with farmers and communities. Our Extension & Engagement Advisors have been taking a more forward-looking approach to planning for the year ahead, developing their delivery plans through to June 2027 and providing greater visibility of planned activities and programs so farmers can see what is coming and plan their participation in advance.

Importantly, this planning is being undertaken with greater consideration of the seasonal demands of dairy farming, helping ensure programs and activities are scheduled at times that are practical and relevant to farmers in each region. This approach is about making it easier for farmers to engage with the support available, while also giving the regions greater transparency about what Dairy NSW is planning to deliver.

The dairy industry continues to operate in a changing environment, with seasonal conditions, farm business pressures, workforce and input costs, and broader industry changes all influencing decisions on farm. As we look towards the months ahead, our focus remains on being responsive to these realities, strengthening partnerships and ensuring our work is practical and relevant to the people and communities we represent.

Thank you to the farmers, Regional Development Group (RDG) members, industry partners and stakeholders who continue to contribute to Dairy NSW. We value the conversations, feedback and collaboration that help shape our work and ensure we remain connected to the needs of the dairy industry across the state.

We look forward to continuing that work with you through the remainder of the year and into 2027.

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Hunter Valley dairy innovation earns sustainability award

Scotts Flat dairy farmer Daniel Redgrove has won the NSW Sustainability in Agriculture category at the inaugural Australian Agriculture Awards, recognising his pioneering approach to waste management and cow comfort.

Presented in Sydney on 30 September, the award celebrates the fifth-generation farmer's investment in technology that connects environmental outcomes with herd health and milk quality.

Central to the family's Hunter Valley operation is a recycled manure bedding system. Manure is separated into liquid and solids, with liquid reused to irrigate pastures and crops. The solids are dried and pasteurised, then returned to the barn to provide comfortable bedding.

Shelter and fans help keep cows cool, while the integrated system recovers resources that would otherwise require disposal or alternative management.

Judges praised Daniel's leadership as the first Australian farmer to implement the system, highlighting its contribution to reducing waste, improving product quality and enhancing animal welfare. They recognised the broader example his work offers the agricultural sector.

His achievement demonstrates how rethinking everyday farm processes can create opportunities to use resources more effectively and support productive, comfortable cows.

Dairy NSW congratulates Daniel and his family on this recognition of their commitment to innovation and the future of NSW dairy farming.

Get more from your irrigation water this summer



Maximise the value of available water through verified system performance, root-zone scheduling and targeted investment in the paddocks that deliver the strongest feed response.

For NSW dairy businesses, effective summer irrigation depends on aligning water availability and delivery capacity with soil water storage, crop demand and feedbase requirements. The objective is to sustain productive growth and maximise usable homegrown feed while managing the combined cost of water, energy, and application.

This requires more than maintaining a regular watering cycle. Hydraulic performance determines how effectively water reaches the paddock; soil characteristics determine how much can be stored; and scheduling determines whether that water remains accessible to actively growing roots.

Verify system performance before peak demand

Begin with an assessment of the pump and irrigation system under normal operating conditions. Confirm that measured flow and pressure match the design duty point, then inspect suction lines, valves, strainers and filters for restrictions, damage, or air entry.

Repair leaks at seals, hydrants, pipe connections, and hoses. Check the accuracy and condition of pressure gauges and flow meters, and measure pressure at relevant points along the system. Excess pressure increases pumping energy requirements, while inadequate pressure can reduce sprinkler throw and distribution uniformity. Investigate departures from design specifications before changing operating settings.

Inspect sprinklers and nozzles against the manufacturer's specifications. Centre pivot nozzle sizes vary along the machine to deliver the designed application depth, so replacements must match the sprinkler chart.

Assess distribution uniformity using a catch-can test. Poor uniformity creates areas of under- and over-irrigation within the same paddock, restricting growth in dry areas while increasing runoff or deep drainage elsewhere

Record pressure, flow, water volume, and energy consumption together. Tracking kilowatt-hours per megalitre pumped provides a more useful performance measure than electricity consumption alone, although comparisons must account for pumping head and operating conditions.

Use Dairy Australia's checklists for bike-shift, centre pivot and lateral, K-Line, solid-set and travelling systems to establish a maintenance baseline. Repeat critical checks through summer, isolating equipment before maintenance and engaging qualified specialists where required.

Schedule irrigation within the effective root zone

Once system performance is established, irrigation timing should be governed by moisture availability within the effective root zone.

Readily available water, or RAW, is the water plants can extract before moisture stress restricts growth. It represents the range between field capacity, after excess water has drained, and the refill point at which irrigation is required.

Determine RAW for each relevant soil and crop combination. Texture, soil layering, rooting depth and crop characteristics influence storage capacity and the appropriate irrigation trigger. Compaction or restrictive layers may reduce the soil volume accessible to roots.

Locate sensors in representative management zones and monitor contrasting soils separately. Establish site-specific field capacity and refill thresholds, checking sensor readings against paddock observations.

Interpret moisture trends at different depths to assess depletion, infiltration and whether irrigation reaches active roots. A wet surface does not confirm adequate root-zone moisture, while water below the effective rooting depth may contribute little to current growth and will most likely be lost to the system.

Allow sufficient lead time to complete the irrigation cycle before the most vulnerable areas reach their refill point.

Translate the water deficit into an application depth

Soil moisture monitoring becomes more useful when combined with a water balance that accounts for effective rainfall, irrigation, crop evapotranspiration, and other losses. Crop evapotranspiration reflects atmospheric demand and crop characteristics; reference evapotranspiration alone is not necessarily the crop's water requirement.

Tools such as IrriPasture can support scheduling alongside sensor data and field observations. Use the estimated soil water deficit to calculate the net depth required, use soil moisture readings and a water balance to estimate the soil water deficit and guide how much irrigation water to apply.

For example, a net requirement of 24 millimetres at an assumed application efficiency of 80 per cent requires 30 millimetres gross. Use values appropriate to the system and paddock.

Match application intensity to infiltration capacity. Applying water faster than the soil can absorb it increases ponding and runoff risk; exceeding root-zone storage increases drainage below the crop.

During heatwaves, compare crop demand with effective system delivery capacity across the irrigated area. Where demand exceeds capacity, reassess irrigation priorities before deficits accumulate. After rainfall, use gauges, sensor responses, and water balance records to estimate the contribution retained within the root zone before resuming irrigation.

Allocate water according to usable feed response

When supply is constrained, irrigation decisions should reflect the expected value of usable feed produced from each megalitre. Consider species, plant population, soil suitability, irrigation coverage, feed quality and grazing or harvest utilisation.

Maintain fertility through soil testing and targeted nutrient planning. Sample individual paddocks or group areas with comparable soils and management. Assess silage and effluent paddocks separately from routinely grazed areas.

Prepare water budgets for both unrestricted and constrained supply, incorporating expected demand, usable storage, and delivery limitations. Adjust the irrigated area as availability changes.

Where water is purchased, compare its full delivered cost and associated pumping costs with the expected additional usable feed and the cost of replacement feed.

Protect production by starting on time

Delaying irrigation can reduce feed availability before visible pasture stress becomes apparent. Smarter Irrigation for Profit reporting cites Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture researcher James Hills' estimate of a potential pasture utilisation reduction of approximately 105 kilograms of dry matter per hectare for each day irrigation start-up is delayed.

Using that estimate, a three-day delay across 20 hectares represents 6.3 tonnes of dry matter, equivalent to \$1,890 at an assumed replacement value of \$300 per tonne. This illustrates the potential exposure; actual outcomes depend on soil, pasture, weather, and management.

Bega case study links monitoring with system improvements

Will Russell’s family dairy farm at Jellat Jellat in the Bega Valley demonstrates how soil moisture monitoring and hydraulic assessment can inform more precise irrigation decisions.

Through Smarter Irrigation for Profit Phase 2, three 40-centimetre probes with telemetry were installed across contrasting soils beneath a 25-hectare centre pivot. Hourly readings, accessible by smartphone, showed how moisture changed at depth following rainfall and irrigation.

The project identified a RAW value of 19 millimetres for part of the farm. Understanding this storage range helped Will refine applications to between 12 and 19 millimetres per pass. These were site-specific settings, rather than application rates for other farms to adopt.

System testing also identified inadequate pressure and poor coverage over approximately 10 per cent of the area at the highest elevation. The findings informed plans to refurbish the pivot sprinklers for operation at lower pressure and improve uniformity.

Together, the measurements connected irrigation timing and depth with the system’s ability to deliver water consistently across variable terrain. Will identified more accurate timing, particularly at start-up, as a major benefit and reported growing pasture more consistently.

Five actions to implement now

1 Verify operating pressure and repair leaks.
Compare measured pressures with design specifications and address losses at seals, connections, and hoses.

2 Check application uniformity. Inspect nozzles against the sprinkler chart and use a catch-can test to identify uneven coverage.

3 Confirm irrigation triggers. Establish refill thresholds for each soil type and allow enough time to complete the cycle before moisture stress develops.

4 Prioritise productive paddocks. Allocate limited water according to usable feed response, soil fertility, and irrigation performance.

5 Record and review each application. Track water volume, operating hours, and energy use, then assess the soil moisture response before scheduling the next irrigation.

Strengthen your summer irrigation strategy

Review system performance, soil moisture triggers, and water availability before peak demand, then reassess them as conditions change. Use Dairy Australia’s resources with your irrigation specialist or agronomist to identify the improvements most relevant to your farm.

For more information

Visit **Irrigation System Check** for maintenance checklists, **Soil Moisture Monitoring** for root-zone guidance, and **Irrigation Scheduling** for water balance tools and scheduling support.



Regional Dairy Group Updates

Mid Coast Seasonal Update

Spring is looking very different across our region. The coast has received good rain which has not reached inland. The coastal plains have largely had a wet winter and early spring but it is drying out now with silage making in full swing. You only have to move off the coast and winter has been good but without the timely rain the coast has had, and conditions have turned dry and those with irrigation have been irrigating since August.

Silage making is still occurring but growth on the dryland has slowed right down. A mild winter with hardly any frosts has kept things green, so all hope isn’t lost, but as conditions warm-up rain is required soon.

Irrigators are scrambling to install meters ahead of the WaterNSW December 1st deadline.

We have had huge variations in temperature lately going from 35 degrees one day back down to 20 degrees on the next and plenty of wind, which is drying things out quickly.

Dairy NSW has run a successful Remote First Aid Course, and an informative day on managing flies, calf dehorning, plus Cash, Costs and Margins, and Our Farm Our Plan workshops.

Late September we had a good representation at the Women in Dairy Bale Up Conference and am looking forward to hearing feedback from that.

Also late September saw the Dairy Heifer Show and Camp at Wingham with over 70 heifers and youth traveling from all over NSW (and Qld) to attend. Organised under the MCDAGS banner but with a devoted committee of volunteers that do a wonderful job promoting our industry to the next generation.

Simon Scowen,
Mid Coast RDG Member

South Coast Seasonal Update

Within our region, encompassing both the South Coast and the Southern Highlands, there is quite a contrast. Conditions in the Highlands are drier than ideal with much of the area’s green spring growth being limited whilst still hoping significant rainfall can rescue the season. Closer to the coast things are looking well with adequate timely rain keeping grass growing with comfortable cow conditions.

Summer cropping preparation is under way and farmers are reminded to stay vigilant for pasture crop pests, like army worm, as spring progresses.

Increasing fuel and transport costs continue to put downward pressure on what should be a profitable time for farmers in the region.

Alex Good,
South Coast RDG Member

Central West

2026 Forbes Show – 150th Anniversary

The weather was ideal, and the cattle looked tremendous. While cattle numbers were slightly down this year, the overall quality remained high and the show was strongly supported. Rocky Allen was tasked with judging the interbreed competition, with Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Holstein and Jersey breeds all represented.

All Australian Class

1st – AFMG Lapeno Havenot, owned AFMG

2nd – AFMG Eeyore Yuki, owned AFMG

3rd – Callara JL Golden, owned Chittick Farming

Junior Champion: Classic Ray Robin, owned Dan and Erin Brown

Reserve Junior Champion: Classic Tank Grace, owned Dan and Erin Brown

Best Udder: AFMG Milky Marvellous, owned AFMG

Intermediate Champion: Cumberoona Warrior Twine, owned Ian and Lisa Hindmarsh

Reserve Intermediate Champion: AFMG Milky Marvellous, owned AFMG

Senior Champion Cow: Jamber VIP Crystal, owned Ian and Lisa Hindmarsh

Reserve Senior Champion Cow – AFMG Oxford Kaye

Supreme Champion Cow: Cumberoona Warrior Twine, owned Ian and Lisa Hindmarsh

Handlers

Under 7: 1st – Harriet Brown, 2nd – Ruby Chittick

8-10 Years: 1st – Charlie Gavenlock, 2nd – Britney Gavenlock, 3rd – Isaac Gavenlock

11-13 Years: 1st – Ingrid Smith, 2nd – Beau Chittick, 3rd – Burke Smith

14-18 Years: 1st – Bethany Eagles, 2nd – Kaylea Pengilly, 3rd – Isabel Shaw

Champion Handler: Ingrid Smith

Reserve Champion: Beau Chittick

Honourable Mention: Bethany Eagles

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Rocky Allen for judging, as well as to all the exhibitors, volunteers and generous sponsors whose continued support helps make the Forbes Show such a success. We greatly appreciate everyone’s contribution and look forward to welcoming you all back for next year’s show.

Rachel Eagles,
Central West RDG Member



Getting ahead of the summer feed gap

Dannylo Sousa, National Lead – Animal Nutrition, Dairy Australia

It is important to plan early, test often and buy well. NSW dairying covers almost every climate in the country, from subtropical Lismore down to the temperate south coast and out to the hot, irrigated Riverina. The details of summer feeding differ between those regions. Know your feed gap before it arrives, secure quantity, watch quality, and judge purchased feeds on cost per unit of energy.

Start with a feed budget

Feed is about half of a dairy farm's cost of production, so a few hours on a budget now is time well spent. The Dairy Australia Feed Budgeting tool takes you through three steps:

- 1 Work out demand.** Do an accurate head count of every class of stock. As a guide, a milking cow needs 70–95 MJ ME a day for maintenance, plus 6–8 MJ ME per litre of milk.
- 2 Work out supply.** Use realistic growth rates and include silage, hay and grain in the silo.
- 3 Find the gap.** Subtract supply from demand month by month. You'll see when the shortfall hits and how big it is.

Be conservative with summer growth rates. Once you can see the gap three months out, you have options: forward contracting, sowing a crop, or drying off and culling early. Without a budget you can end up buying feed in a hurry at whatever the market is asking.

Pasture quality drops faster than you think

Feeding Cool Cows research in northern Victoria found that for every 1 °C rise in the three-day maximum temperature (from 24 °C to 40 °C), irrigated ryegrass, tall fescue and lucerne lost about 0.2% in energy and sugars and gained about 0.2% in fibre. Through a hot week, the paddock your cows are grazing is worth less than your last feed test shows.

On the coast, kikuyu is the main summer pasture. It can grow plenty of feed, but milk production is held back by its quality unless it's well managed. Grazing management is the best tool available. Research done at the University of Sydney showed that when cows were offered fresh kikuyu at both grazings, they produced 8% more milk and 14% more milk protein.

Dairy UP monitoring on NSW north, mid and south coast farms found that, on average, farms grew more than 4 t DM/ha more pasture than they used. On a lot of farms, the first summer feed gap could be filled with pasture already growing.

Supplement the gap, don't overfeed

More grain doesn't always mean more milk. Supplements work best when they correct a shortfall. In an NSW study on well-managed kikuyu, milk yield increased from 14.2 L/day with no grain to 18.3 L with 3 kg of barley grain. However, when 6 kg of grain was fed, there was no extra milk. Every farm's response is different, so watch the extra milk you get from the last kilo, not the first.

Lush summer pasture grazed at the right time already supply more rumen-degradable protein than the rumen can use. During heat, extra degradable protein adds to the cow's metabolic load. Before buying an expensive protein meal for summer, get your diet checked.

Buy energy, not tonnes

When input costs are high, compare feeds based on cents per MJ of ME delivered, not dollars per tonne:

$$\text{Cost (c/MJ ME)} = \frac{\text{price (\$/t as fed)}}{(\text{DM\%} \times \text{ME in MJ/kg DM} \times 10)}$$

Example:
a feed at \$400/t, 90% DM and 12.5 MJ ME/kg DM
 $\text{Cost (c/MJ ME)} = 400 \div (0.90 \times 12.5 \times 10) = 3.6 \text{ c/MJ ME}$

Don't forget to account for wastage and storage losses. Feed test anything you buy.

Alternatively, farmers can enter their on-farm feed costs and feed test results into the Feed Cost Calculator developed by NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

Click the link to access this tool: dpird.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nutrition/costs-and-nutritive-value/feed-cost-calculator

Summer crops: establishment is everything

The choice of summer crops depends on your region, soil moisture and access to irrigation. Maize gives the highest yield and energy but needs the most water and investment. Millet and sorghum cope better with dry conditions but are lower in quality and require a different processing.

Fall armyworm has changed the risk. Since 2023 it has hit maize hardest, and it has also caused heavy losses in autumn-sown pastures. Monitor crops from emergence and plan your autumn sowing assuming summer crops nearby could be carrying the pest.

Don't forget the cow

Heat stress comes from heat and humidity together. Cows cool down mainly by evaporation, and humid air slows that down. A humid 28 °C-day can stress cows as much as a dry 35 °C-day. Shade comes first.

Nutrition can then help. Feeding Cool Cows research tested two options with interesting results:

- 1 Lower-fibre forage.** Cows fed fresh chicory compared to pasture silage ate the same amount but produced 4.7 kg more milk a day during heat. Chicory has much less fibre (34% vs 48% NDF), so the rumen makes less heat, and the cow gets more energy.
- 2 Betaine.** University of Melbourne work on grazing cows found a 6% lift in milk yield in summer when betaine was fed. Start feeding it about four weeks before hot weather, because cows take time to adapt.

What to monitor

- Pasture cover and growth rate, weekly
- Feed tests on home-grown forages and every new load of purchased feed
- Milk volume, fat and protein tests (a falling fat test often signals a nutritional problem)
- Body condition score, cud chewing and manure consistency
- Temperature and humidity forecasts for the next 3–5 days

Take-home actions

- 1** Do a feed budget now and update it monthly.
- 2** Feed test pastures, silage and all purchased feed.
- 3** Compare feeds on c/MJ ME and lock in part of your supply if prices suit.
- 4** Tighten grazing management before increasing grain rate.
- 5** Monitor summer crops for fall armyworm from emergence.
- 6** Have a heat plan covering shade, water, feeding time and diet changes.



A good summer starts with a good team

Tania Ketteringham – People Experience Lead, Dairy Australia.

Summer brings additional pressures for dairy farm businesses. Alongside the daily demands of milking, calf rearing and herd management, hot weather, seasonal workloads, staff leave and competing priorities can place significant pressure on farm teams.

While operational demands naturally take priority, taking time to review workforce arrangements, manage fatigue and support employee wellbeing can make a meaningful difference to productivity, safety and staff retention.

Managing fatigue starts with good workforce planning

Fatigue is both a workplace safety and employee wellbeing issue. The Rural Safety & Health Alliance's 2026 *Farming and Fatigue* research, which included Australian dairy farms, found that fatigue can reduce alertness and reaction times, affect communication and contribute to workplace incidents and near misses.

The research identified working hours, workload and opportunities for recovery as key contributing factors, reinforcing the importance of managing fatigue through effective staffing, work design and scheduling rather than relying solely on individual employees.

For dairy businesses, this presents an opportunity to review how work is structured and whether existing arrangements remain sustainable during periods of peak demand.

If a roster depends on one or two employees regularly covering additional shifts, it may be time to reconsider workforce capacity and scheduling. Alternatives such as full shifts rather than split shifts, shared responsibilities or employing two part-time workers may offer greater flexibility for both the business and its employees.

Providing consecutive days off, distributing weekend work fairly and offering predictable working hours can also strengthen employee satisfaction and make dairy employment more attractive.

Importantly, understanding what employees value is essential. While some may prioritise consistent finishing times, others may benefit from flexibility around family commitments, study or other responsibilities.

Retaining good people makes good business sense

Recruiting and retaining skilled employees remains an important consideration for dairy businesses, particularly when experienced staff are difficult to replace.

Employee turnover carries costs beyond recruitment advertising. Businesses also lose valuable operational knowledge and experience, while investing additional time in interviewing, onboarding, training and maintaining productivity during staff transitions.

Creating a workplace where employees feel supported, valued and involved in decision-making can help reduce these costs and strengthen long-term workforce stability.

The *Farming and Fatigue* research also highlights the importance of leadership, communication and workplace culture in managing workforce pressures.

Regular conversations provide opportunities to identify emerging challenges, understand employee needs and make practical improvements before issues escalate.

Building capability and creating career pathways

Attracting new employees may require dairy businesses to look beyond traditional recruitment channels.

People entering dairy from other industries can bring valuable transferable skills, while international workers may provide additional recruitment opportunities where visa conditions and employment requirements are met.

Clear job descriptions, structured onboarding and appropriate training help new employees understand expectations and build the confidence and capability needed to succeed.

Equally important is recognising and developing existing employees.

Providing opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, develop specialist skills or progress into leadership positions demonstrates that dairy farming offers meaningful career pathways.

These opportunities need not involve major organisational changes. Regular discussions about employee interests, development goals and operational challenges can help identify practical ways to build capability within the existing team.

Investing in employee development also helps retain valuable farm knowledge, strengthens business resilience and reduces reliance on external recruitment.

Creating a workplace where people want to stay

Positive workplace culture is built through everyday interactions, from how new employees are welcomed and trained to how instructions are communicated and concerns are addressed.

Clear expectations, constructive feedback, respectful communication and opportunities for employees to contribute ideas all influence how people experience their workplace.

For farm businesses competing to attract and retain employees, these factors can be just as important as remuneration and other employment conditions.

Being an employer of choice does not require offering a perfect workplace. It means providing realistic expectations, fair and manageable working arrangements, opportunities for development and a genuine commitment to employee wellbeing.

Take action before summer pressures peak

Now is an opportunity for NSW dairy farmers to review workforce arrangements and identify practical improvements before seasonal workloads intensify.

Consider whether current rosters are sustainable, where employees may be experiencing additional pressure and whether responsibilities could be better distributed. Conversations with staff can also identify opportunities to improve flexibility, strengthen communication and support professional development.

Small, proactive changes can deliver lasting benefits for workplace safety, employee satisfaction, productivity and business performance.

Build a stronger team and a more resilient dairy business

Good people are central to a productive, profitable and sustainable dairy business. Taking action now to strengthen workforce planning, improve employee experiences and develop your team can deliver benefits well beyond the summer months.

NSW dairy farmers are encouraged to register for Dairy Australia's upcoming Cows Are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff workshop. Explore practical strategies to attract, retain and develop employees, improve workplace culture and manage your responsibilities as an employer, while sharing experiences and learning from other farmers. Register for the Forbes workshop, 24–25 November 2026:

dairyaustralia.com.au/events-calendar?region=New+South+Wales®ion=National&startDate=2026-10-23

For additional workforce planning, recruitment, leadership and employee development resources, visit dairyaustralia.com.au/people.

Reference:

Rural Safety & Health Alliance, Improving management of fatigue risk on Australian farms: Research Short Report, June 2026.

Four calf-rearing lessons worth taking back to the shed



From understanding disease challenges to rethinking milk feeding and rumen development, new Dairy UP research and practical experiences from NSW dairy farms are providing valuable insights into raising healthier, more productive calves.

Raising healthy calves is fundamental to the productivity and profitability of a dairy business. Yet some of the greatest opportunities to improve calf health and performance may lie in revisiting established management practices rather than making major changes to calf-rearing systems.

That has been a recurring theme at recent Dairy Australia Rearing Healthy Calves workshops across NSW, where farmers, veterinarians and industry advisers have come together to examine emerging research, share on-farm experiences and challenge conventional approaches to calf management.

Following these workshops, Dairy NSW Farm Engagement Leads Jane Woolacott and Ali Briggs have continued working with farmers to assess their systems and identify practical opportunities for improvement.

Four important lessons have emerged, highlighting how a better understanding of disease exposure, early-life nutrition, milk consumption and rumen development can help farmers make more informed management decisions.

1 Calf scours: There’s more to the story than one pathogen

When a calf develops scours, the immediate priority is often identifying the pathogen responsible. However, recent Dairy UP research suggests the picture is considerably more complex.

The Dairy UP *Infectome* project (P2f) collected rectal swabs from sick and healthy calves across **72 NSW dairy farms**, using DNA analysis to investigate the viruses, bacteria and parasites present.

Researchers identified a much broader range of microorganisms than those routinely detected through standard calf scour testing.

Alongside established pathogens such as Rotavirus and Cryptosporidium, the research detected other viruses considered potential contributors to disease, including Kobuvirus, as well as viruses such as Bovine Hinnivirus, whose role in the disease process remains unknown.

Perhaps most significantly, the presence of multiple viruses was common in both sick and healthy calves.

At least 4 viruses were detected on most rectal swabs, with some calves carrying 9 or 10 viruses. These were not confined to animals displaying clinical signs of illness, with most healthy calves also carrying multiple viruses.

The findings challenge the assumption that identifying a particular pathogen necessarily explains why an individual calf becomes sick.

Veterinarian and Dairy NSW Extension Lead, Jane Woolacott, says the research reinforces the importance of managing the broader disease challenge.

“The take-home message is that calves are constantly being challenged by an array of bacteria, viruses and parasites simultaneously. It is not one bug that is responsible for most calf deaths, but the cumulative effect of multiple bugs. Our challenge is to consider how we can boost the ability of our calves to withstand this onslaught.”

For farmers, the implications extend well beyond disease testing and treatment.

Reducing microbial exposure through clean feeding equipment, hygienic bedding and appropriate stocking densities remains essential. Equally important is strengthening the calf’s capacity to respond through effective colostrum management, pre-calving vaccination programs and sufficient nutrition to support immune function.

The research reinforces a central principle of calf health management: preventing disease requires attention to both the challenges calves encounter and their ability to withstand them.

2 Rethinking milk feeding: More nutrition when it matters most

How much milk should a young calf receive, and when will additional nutrition deliver the greatest benefit?

These questions have generated considerable discussion at recent calf-rearing workshops, particularly around feeding practices during the first **4–6 weeks of life**.

Traditionally, Australian dairy calves have often received milk equivalent to 10% of bodyweight from birth until weaning, typically around 4L/day for a Holstein calf.

However, young calves require nutrients not only for maintenance and growth but also to support their developing immune systems.

Calves are most susceptible to disease during their first **4 weeks of life**, coinciding with the period when they utilise milk most efficiently.

This has prompted discussion about the benefits of providing higher milk volumes during the period of greatest nutritional demand.

Feeding **8L/day or 20% of bodyweight, divided into 2 or more feeds**, may benefit calves during their first **5–6 weeks of life**, when milk remains their primary source of nutrition.

For Tumut dairy farmers, Kevin and Ryan Malone and their farm team, attending a Rearing Healthy Calves (In Practice) workshop in Tumut provided the opportunity to reconsider their feeding approach.

“After discussing milk feeding rates, we realised the goal is not simply to feed more milk between birth and weaning, but to front-load the first half of the pre-weaning period when the calf is most reliant on the nutrients it provides.

“We had always fed at least 4L of milk, but were worried that the calves would scour if we fed them 8L. Depending on milk availability, we are now feeding 6–8L (over 2 feeds) and have noticed that while there is more manure in the system and it is of a softer consistency, the calves are definitely not unwell – in fact they have been healthier, heavier and better able to cope with the stresses of moving to outdoor paddocks.”

Their experience illustrates how reviewing feeding practices can translate into improvements in calf growth, health and resilience.

However, higher milk volumes also place greater importance on managing the transition to solid feed.

Successful weaning depends on rumen development, which is driven by concentrate consumption rather than age or bodyweight alone.

In group-fed systems, Holstein calves should consistently consume a minimum of **1.5kg/day** of concentrate before weaning, while Jerseys should consume at least **1kg/day**.

Providing access to grain or pellets from birth supports early rumen development, with sufficient rumen function expected by **6 weeks of age** to begin gradually reducing milk volumes.

Reducing milk volume encourages greater concentrate intake and supports successful weaning by **10–12 weeks of age**, provided calves consistently meet the required intake targets.

The lesson is not simply to increase milk volumes, but to align feeding practices with the calf’s changing nutritional and developmental needs.

3 Milk intake: An early warning signal worth watching

A calf drinking less milk than expected may be providing one of the earliest indications that something is wrong.

Research through Dairy UP’s *Calf Husbandry* project (P2e) has highlighted the importance of early-life performance, identifying strong associations between calf development, subsequent lactation performance and longevity within the herd.

Using robotic calf-feeder data, researchers found that underperforming calves could be identified through their cumulative milk consumption during the first **5 days of robot feeding**.

In the study, **35L was the cumulative 5-day intake target**.

Calves that failed to reach this target were more likely to have lower weights at weaning, which is associated with reduced production when they eventually enter the milking herd.

For farms operating automated feeding systems, the findings demonstrate the value of routinely reviewing individual calf consumption records.

A calf falling below expected intake may require assistance learning to use the feeder or investigation for an emerging health problem.

But the implications are just as relevant to farms using conventional feeding systems.

Measuring the milk offered to each calf and observing whether they finish their allocation provides a simple, practical means of monitoring health and performance.

Importantly, **sick calves will often reduce their feed intake 4–5 days before displaying other clinical signs of illness.**

That creates a valuable opportunity for intervention before disease progresses.

A reduction in appetite should therefore prompt closer assessment, including checking the calf’s rectal temperature and hydration status.

Whether through automated feeding technology or careful daily observation, milk consumption is more than a measure of nutritional intake. It can also be a valuable early indicator of calf health and future performance.

4 Water: The overlooked nutrient supporting rumen development

Milk may be the foundation of early calf nutrition, but clean drinking water plays an equally important, and sometimes underestimated, role in supporting digestive development.

Because milk contains substantial water, it can be easy to assume that pre-weaned calves receive sufficient hydration through milk feeding alone.

However, milk and drinking water follow different pathways through the developing digestive system.

Milk largely bypasses the rumen, while free drinking water enters the rumen, supporting microbial colonisation, concentrate fermentation, prevention of acidosis and normal rumen development.

Research has demonstrated that **unrestricted access to drinking water can dramatically increase starter-ration intake and bodyweight gain during the first 8 weeks of life.**

This makes water availability an important consideration for farms looking to improve calf growth and the transition to solid feed.

Unlike more complex changes to feeding systems or infrastructure, reviewing water provision can be a relatively straightforward starting point.

Ensuring every calf has consistent access to clean, fresh drinking water supports rumen development and complements effective milk-feeding and concentrate-management practices.

It is a simple management principle, but one with important implications for early growth and development.

Small changes, lasting benefits

Across the research and conversations taking place in NSW calf sheds, one message is becoming increasingly clear: improving calf performance does not necessarily require a complete overhaul of existing systems.

Instead, meaningful improvements can begin with a closer examination of the fundamentals.

Colostrum management, hygiene, milk-feeding rates, individual calf monitoring, concentrate intake, water availability and the calf-rearing environment all influence the development of healthy replacement animals.

Crucially, these factors are interconnected. Nutrition influences immune function, environmental conditions affect disease exposure, and early feeding decisions shape rumen development and weaning outcomes.

Understanding these relationships allows farmers to identify where changes are likely to deliver the greatest benefit within their own operations.

Ultimately, the value of research is not in prescribing one approach for every dairy farm, but in providing the evidence and practical insights that help farmers challenge assumptions, refine management decisions and improve calf health, welfare and long-term productivity.

Find out more: Put the research into practice

Join a Rearing Healthy Calves (In Practice) workshop

Explore the latest research, discuss calf-rearing practices with industry specialists and identify practical opportunities to strengthen your own system.

Find upcoming NSW workshops and register through Dairy Australia’s events calendar.

Explore Dairy UP research and calf-rearing resources

Access Dairy Australia’s technical resources, including practical guidance on calf nutrition, colostrum management, disease prevention and rumen development.

Explore Dairy Australia’s calf health resources.

Listen to The Business of Dairy podcast

Hear Dr Sarah Legge discuss calf-rearing practices and research insights to help inform on-farm decisions.

thebusinessofdairy.buzzsprout.com/1781329/episodes/19713994-why-is-heifer-weaning-weight-so-important?t=0

Key takeaways for dairy farmers

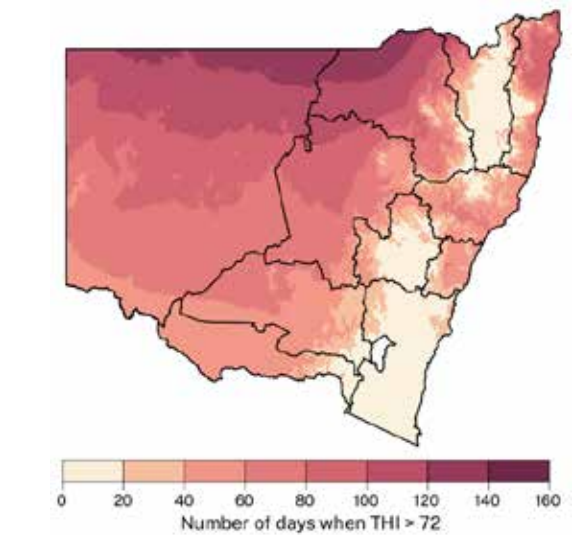
- 1 Look beyond individual pathogens when managing calf disease.** Review hygiene, bedding, stocking density, colostrum management, vaccination and nutrition together to reduce microbial challenges and strengthen calf resilience.
- 2 Review milk-feeding rates during early life.** Consider whether calves are receiving sufficient nutrition during their first 4–6 weeks, when disease susceptibility is greatest and milk utilisation is most efficient. Higher-volume feeding may offer benefits when supported by appropriate management.
- 3 Make concentrate intake the foundation of weaning decisions.** Provide access to grain or pellets from birth and monitor consumption before reducing milk. In group-fed systems, Holsteins should consistently consume at least 1.5kg/day and Jerseys 1kg/day before weaning.
- 4 Monitor individual milk consumption every day.** Reduced appetite can precede other clinical signs of illness by 4–5 days. Use automated records or direct observation to identify underperforming calves early and investigate changes promptly.
- 5 Make clean drinking water a non-negotiable.** Ensure every calf has unrestricted access to fresh water from an early age to support starter-ration intake, rumen development and growth.



Heat stress and cow comfort: practical steps for the warmer months

Authors: Jane Kelley, Rachael Young, Ken Garner, Sheena Carter, and Juan Gargiulo from NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Hot weather is already a challenge for dairy businesses across NSW, and reducing the impacts of heat stress has become increasingly important in recent years. New modelling by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development’s Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Dairy teams shows that heat stress is likely to increase during some months and is likely to extend further into spring and autumn in some regions by 2050.



All regions currently experience some days of moderate heat stress. This map shows the average number of days per year where Temperature-Humidity Index (a measure of heat stress) values have exceeded 72 (moderate heat stress) in the recent past (2006-2025).

Climate risks vary between regions and seasons

The Climate Vulnerability Assessment examined how climate conditions for Holstein dairy cows are likely to change across NSW by 2050. It found that the number of months with highly suitable climate conditions is likely to decrease by up to approximately two months a year across most of the state under both emissions scenarios assessed. Increasing heat stress during these months is the main reason for the projected decline in climate suitability. This means some dairy businesses may need to begin heat-management practices earlier in the season and continue them for longer.

The timing and duration of these changes into the future, differ between regions.

- The Inland, Riverina Murray and Hunter regions are likely to face increasing heat-stress challenges during parts of late spring, summer and early autumn.
- North Coast dairies will need to continue to manage the combined effects of heat and humidity during the warmer months.
- The South Coast region is expected to remain highly suitable overall, but some areas may experience an increase in heat stress during lactation in warmer months.

These regional differences mean that heat-management strategies will need to be tailored to local conditions and timed carefully. Planning for heat stress should remain a priority across all dairy businesses. It should be noted that when heat stress occurs, its effects often extend across the entire production system, from calves and replacement heifers to lactating and dry cows.

Heat stress affects the whole herd

Heat stress occurs when cows cannot lose enough of the heat they have gained from the environment and generated through eating and digestion. Hot, humid conditions are particularly challenging because humidity reduces the effectiveness of evaporative cooling, which is one of the main ways cows lose heat.

The way we calculate heat stress reflects this relationship between temperature and humidity. The Temperature Humidity Index, or THI, combines air temperature and humidity to help us understand the level of heat stress cattle may experience.

The higher the THI, the greater the risk to cow comfort, health, production and reproductive performance.

During periods of heightened heat stress, farmers should consider using the heat stress reduction measures they may have on farm. Each heat stress event will be different and its impact on the herd will be determined by the combination of:

- airflow – is there a breeze or are fans available
- overnight temperatures – is it remaining hot and still or hot and breezy overnight and
- duration of hot weather – it is only a day or a run of hot days and nights.

All these factors and how they are experienced influence the **severity and accumulation** of heat stress and help guide which management strategies are needed.

The effects of heat stress extend beyond an immediate reduction in milk production. Heat stress can reduce feed intake and affect milk composition, fertility, body condition and overall animal health.

Heat-management plans should consider the whole herd, not only lactating cows. Dry cows, calves and replacement heifers also need protection. Research has found that heat stress during the dry period can reduce milk production in the following lactation, lower calf birth weights and affect the future health and productivity of calves. It should be noted that high-production lactating cows are the most vulnerable to heat stress and heat management plans that support these cows will also support the rest of the herd.

These impacts highlight the importance of managing heat stress, dairy farmers today have access to many practical steps that can be taken before and during hot weather to reduce and protect cow comfort, health and production impacts.

Prepare, monitor and act early

Practical preparation should begin before hot weather arrives. Priorities include:

- checking that cows have reliable access to clean, cool fast flowing water,
- reviewing shade across the farm,
- ensuring sprinklers, fans and other cooling systems are working and ready to operate,
- providing high-quality, easier-to-digest forage and
- considering heat load reduction strategies such as adjusting milking times, feeding strategies and cow movements to cooler parts of the day.

Monitoring cows during times of heat stress remains essential. An increasing breath rate is often the first visible sign of heat stress. The *Cool Cows Manual* recommends checking at least 20 cows by counting flank movements for 20 seconds and multiplying the result by three. A breathing rate above 60 breaths per minute indicates that action is needed. Other warning signs include: bunching, seeking shade or water, reduced feed intake, drooling and open-mouth breathing.

While observing cows is essential, you also do not need to wait for signs of heat stress to occur before acting. Forecast tools can now provide several days’ warning, allowing heat-management strategies to be put in place at the right time.

Use forecasts to get ahead of the heat

The success of heat-management strategies is highly dependent on the timing of their deployment. Leave it too late and their effectiveness can be compromised.

The **Temperature Humidity Index Forecast** allows you to find your farm and view forecast cattle thermal-stress conditions for up to a week ahead for your location. This provides valuable lead time to:

- check sprinklers and fans,
- adjust milking and feeding schedules,
- potentially move stock to shaded paddocks, and
- plan for reducing walking distances if possible.

For a broader view of conditions expected over the coming 1-3 months, the **State Seasonal Update** provides NSW climate outlooks, seasonal indicators, drought information and regional breakdowns. Using the seasonal outlook for forward planning, together with the cattle comfort forecast for short-term decisions, can help dairy businesses put heat-mitigation measures in place at the right time.

Take-home message

Every farm, season and heat stress event will be different, but the message is consistent: prepare early, monitor conditions and watch cows closely, and act before heat stress becomes severe. Combining longer-term planning with timely management during hot weather can help protect the comfort, health and productivity of the whole herd.

Priority actions prior to and during a heat event include:

- 1 Review shade, water and cooling systems before summer heat begins.
- 2 Use forecasts to identify higher-risk periods and act early.
- 3 Monitor cow breathing rates and behaviour during hot conditions.
- 4 Protect dry cows, calves and heifers as well as the milking herd.
- 5 Adjust milking, feeding and movements to avoid peak heat.
- 6 Review the effectiveness of management actions after each hot period.

Resources list

Climate Vulnerability Assessment
dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/climate/climate-vulnerability-assessment/dairy

State Seasonal Update
dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate_applications/state-seasonal-update/summary

THI forecast tool
nacp.org.au/cattle_thermal_stress_forecasts?index=thi

Cool Cows
dairyaustralia.com.au/issues-and-emergencies/dry-conditions-droughts



Get your summer feeding plan in place now.

Use Dairy Australia’s **Feed Budgeting tool** to identify potential feed gaps, explore the **Feeding Cool Cows fact sheets** and **Cool Cows booklet** to review your hot-weather feeding and heat stress management strategies, and use **DairyBase Budgeting** to assess the financial implications of your plans. For support tailored to your farm, contact your Dairy NSW Farm Engagement Lead, who can connect you with local advisers and help you take the next step.

Facial eczema: A growing risk and a new project to strengthen prevention

Dr Stephanie Bullen – National Animal Health & Welfare Lead, Dairy Australia

“Facial eczema often causes hidden production losses before visible signs appear. Early risk identification and prevention remain the best tools available to protect animal health, welfare and farm profitability.”

Facial eczema has traditionally been considered a risk for dairy farms in Gippsland and the Bega Valley of southern New South Wales. However, reports of cases occurring further north in recent years, combined with changing seasonal conditions, have highlighted the need to better understand the disease and how farmers can prepare for future risk. A new Dairy Australia and GippsDairy project aims to review the latest Australian and international knowledge on facial eczema prevention and identify practical ways to help farmers reduce risk and protect herd health.

Why should dairy farmers care about facial eczema?

Facial eczema is a pasture-related disease caused by a toxin produced by spores of the fungus *Pithomyces chartarum* and *Psuedopithomyces toxicarius*. These spores can be present in dead plant material at the base of pasture, particularly during warm, humid conditions.

The disease damages the liver. Despite its name, many affected animals never develop the obvious skin lesions associated with “facial eczema”. Instead, the impacts can be hidden and include reduced milk production, poorer reproductive performance, slower growth, weight loss and compromised animal welfare. In severe cases, cattle may die.

One of the challenges for farmers is that liver damage can occur well before any clinical signs become obvious. By the time animals show symptoms, production losses may already have occurred. That is why prevention and early risk identification are so important.

Is facial eczema becoming more important?

Historically, facial eczema has been most commonly associated with Gippsland and the Bega Valley of southern New South Wales, where environmental conditions can favour the development of facial eczema spores. However, cases have been reported further north in recent years, raising questions about whether the disease may become relevant to a broader range of dairy farming regions. There is increasing concern that changing climatic conditions could create suitable conditions for facial eczema over longer periods and across a wider geographic area, highlighting the importance of improved monitoring, prevention and preparedness.

Interest from farmers is also growing. Dairy Australia has seen increasing engagement with facial eczema resources and spore monitoring information, reflecting the industry’s desire for up-to-date advice on monitoring, prevention and management options.

What do we currently know about prevention?

The good news is that facial eczema can often be prevented when risks are identified early and action is taken before liver damage occurs. Current prevention strategies include:

- Monitoring pasture spore counts to understand risk periods.
- Using zinc supplementation where appropriate.
- Managing grazing and pasture exposure during high-risk periods.
- Maintaining awareness of seasonal conditions that favour spore development.
- Working with veterinarians and advisers to develop a farm-specific prevention plan.

GippsDairy currently operates a facial eczema spore monitoring program across approximately 20 sentinel farms in Gippsland and southern NSW. Pasture samples are collected and analysed between January and April, with results shared to help farmers make timely management decisions. While these approaches provide valuable tools, international research continues to find new information about the effectiveness, practicality and adoption of different prevention options. Farmers have also expressed interest in understanding alternatives to zinc-based prevention strategies and what emerging technologies or management approaches may become available in the future.

What is the new project aiming to achieve?

The project will conduct a comprehensive review of Australian and international evidence relating to facial eczema prevention, monitoring and management. It will examine the latest science, explore what can be learned from countries such as New Zealand where facial eczema is common, and assess which approaches may be relevant to Australian dairy systems.

The project will also:

- Review existing Dairy Australia and GippsDairy facial eczema resources.
- Identify new knowledge that should be incorporated into recommendations.
- Investigate barriers that may prevent farmers from adopting effective prevention practices.
- Examine both zinc-based and non-zinc-based prevention approaches.
- Develop practical recommendations for farmers, advisers and industry.

Importantly, the focus is not on creating an entirely new set of resources. Instead, the project aims to ensure current advice reflects the best available evidence and remains practical and relevant for Australian conditions.

Why is industry involvement important?

A steering committee made up of farmers, veterinarians, advisers and industry representatives will help guide the project and ensure recommendations remain grounded in real-world farming conditions.

This group will provide feedback throughout the project and help ensure that any recommendations are practical, economically sensible and relevant to dairy farming businesses. Farmer input will be particularly important in understanding what works on farm, what barriers exist and where future improvements may be needed.

What can farmers do right now?

While the review is underway, farmers should continue to remain alert to facial eczema risk and make use of available monitoring information. Practical steps include:

- Keeping an eye on seasonal conditions that may favour spore development.
- Following local facial eczema spore count monitoring results where available.
- Discussing prevention options with your veterinarian or adviser before risk periods occur.
- Including young stock in prevention planning where appropriate.
- Reviewing current farm prevention strategies to ensure they can be implemented quickly when risk increases.

Prevention is generally far more effective than trying to manage the consequences after liver damage has occurred.

While the highest risk areas remain Gippsland and the Bega region, dairy farmers across southern Australia should remain aware of facial eczema and understand the conditions that can increase risk.

What happens next?

Over the next 12 months, the project team will review evidence, engage with industry stakeholders and update recommendations where required. Findings will be shared through extension activities, including farmer events, adviser workshops and a national webinar.

The aim is simple: give Australian dairy farmers access to the best available evidence and practical advice so they can make informed decisions to reduce risk, protect animal welfare and maintain herd productivity. As climate and farming conditions continue to evolve, having current and trusted guidance will become increasingly important.

For more information and resources on this project, visit [Facial Eczema | Dairy Australia](#).





Dairy NSW Calendar of Events

Financial year 2026-27

Industry goals

Working closely with industry, Dairy Australia has identified an overarching goal to ensure that dairy farms achieve competitive returns on total assets of five to six per cent², supported by four shared goals that describe the outcomes we're aiming to achieve for Australian dairy.

These goals are deliberately ambitious and will require focus, coordination and investment right across the sector.

Lifting profitability means working across the full cost base, but the biggest step-up will come from feed and herd productivity.

Setting this level of ambition is about lifting performance and delivering real impact for farmers. These goals sit at the heart of our Strategic Plan and guide where effort and investment are directed.

Through to 2030, achieve average return on total assets (ROTA) in the range of 5-6%², ensuring dairy farms continue to generate competitive returns.



Increase profitability

By 2030, the majority of dairy farms increase earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) by 30 cents per kilogram of milk solids – delivering up to A\$190 million in additional total annual profit for dairy farmers.



Increase feed productivity

By 2030, the majority of dairy farms increase homegrown feed utilisation by one tonne per milking hectare – delivering up to A\$230 million in total annual gross benefits for dairy farmers.³



Increase herd productivity

By 2030, the majority of dairy farms increase genetic gain by A\$90 per cow entering the herd – delivering up to A\$78 million in total annual gross benefits for dairy farmers.



While remaining focused on sustainable practices

By 2030, the majority of dairy farms increase the number of heifers reaching third lactation and beyond by 12% – delivering up to A\$90 million in total annual gross benefits for dairy farmers.

Deliver a proud and successful industry that celebrates dairy, attracts great people and strengthens communities.

² Excludes capital growth

³ Total Mixed Ration (TMR) or contained housing farms may choose to increase one tonne of homegrown feed on useable hectares

Calendar of events

October 2026	Cows are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff Bega - Wednesday 28 October	\$	Dairy NSW Annual General Meeting (AGM) Online via Zoom - Thursday 29 October	
November	Cows are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff Nowra - Wednesday 4 November	\$	Cows are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff Taree - Thursday 19 November	\$
	Cows are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff Singleton - Wednesday 18 November	\$	Cows are the Easy Part - People, Payroll and the Hard Stuff Central West - Wednesday 25 November	\$
December	Feeding Pastures for Profit - Day 5 (Summer) South Coast - Monday 7 December		Cool Cows Taree - Thursday 10 December	
TBC - Q2 Events	Nutrition Fundamentals Central West - TBC		Farm Business Fundamentals Far South Coast - TBC	\$
February	Rearing Healthy Calves Fundamentals Tocal - TBC		Rearing Healthy Calves in practice South Coast - Wednesday 24 February	
	Rearing Healthy Calves in practice Cowra - Tuesday 16 February		Rearing Healthy Calves in practice Far South Coast - TBC	
March	Rearing Healthy Calves in practice Mid Coast - TBC		Milking & Mastitis Management South Coast - Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 March	
TBC - Q3 Events	The Heat Detective Mid Coast - TBC		Dairy Farm Business Analysis TBC - TBC	\$
	Managing People Online via Zoom - TBC	\$	Rearing Healthy Calves in Practice Tamworth - TBC	
	Employment Basics Online via Zoom - TBC	\$		
May	Heifers on Target Hunter - w/c 3-14 May		Heifers on Target Mid Coast - TBC	
	Heifers on Target South Coast - Wednesday 12 May		Heifers on Target Far South Coast - TBC	
June	Pasture Fundamentals Wagga - w/c 7 & 18 June		Milking & Mastitis Management Taree - TBC	
	Pasture Fundamentals Central West - TBC		Managing People Online via Zoom - TBC	\$
	Pasture Fundamentals Far South Coast - TBC		2IC Program (statewide invitation) TBC - TBC	\$
	Pasture Fundamentals Mid Coast - TBC		Farm Business Fundamentals Far South Coast - TBC	\$
	Pasture Fundamentals South Coast - TBC		Employment Basics Express Online via Zoom - TBC	\$
	Ahead of the Curve: National Farm Business Forum Geelong, Victoria - Wednesday 16 & Thursday 17 June	\$		
TBC - Q4 events	Milking & Mastitis Management Taree - TBC		Farm Business Fundamentals FSC - TBC	\$
	Managing People Online via Zoom - TBC	\$	Employment Basics Express Online via Zoom - TBC	\$
	2IC Program (statewide invitation) TBC - TBC	\$		

Connect with Dairy NSW



Dairy NSW works alongside farmers and industry to deliver practical support, trusted information and regionally relevant opportunities that help dairy businesses improve productivity, profitability and long-term sustainability.

Guided by a farmer-first approach, Dairy NSW collaborates with industry partners to deliver education, extension, research and development activities that create value on-farm.

Farmers are encouraged to connect directly with local Dairy NSW team members to discuss farm business challenges, technical questions, workforce needs, upcoming workshops, discussion groups and industry opportunities relevant to their region.

Whether you are looking to improve feed efficiency, strengthen business performance, build skills or connect with other farmers, the Dairy NSW team is here to support practical outcomes for your farm business.

Click here dairyaustralia.com.au/dairy-nsw/team to connect with the Dairy NSW team.

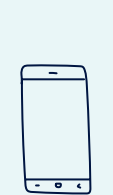
Contact us:

- 

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dairyaustralia.com.au/dairy-nsw
- 

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Sign up to receive Snapshot – our monthly email newsletter
qr1.be/QUGTF6
- 

Call us
1800 004 377



Dairy NSW Annual Report: the year in review

Dairy NSW’s 2025–26 Annual Report is now available, outlining how regional investment, education and partnerships are helping farmers strengthen their businesses.

Nearly 70 events attracted approximately 1,000 attendees during the year, complemented by more than 300 direct farm contacts beyond extension activities. Topics ranged from business planning and feedbase management to animal health, workforce capability and environmental practices.

Delivery responded to local needs, including a shift towards flood recovery on the Mid Coast, reflecting the diverse seasonal challenges facing NSW dairy farmers.

The report also reviews outcomes against the completed 2021–25 Strategic Plan, acknowledges the contribution of Regional Dairy Groups and presents the organisation’s financial statements.

Together, these insights provide farmers with an overview of Dairy NSW’s performance and the lessons informing future priorities, partnerships and services across the state.

Download and read the 2025–26 Annual Report here to see what was delivered and how it connects with your business.



Plan ahead: upcoming dairy workshops and events

Make time to build your skills, connect with other farmers and explore practical ideas for your business with the Dairy NSW calendar of events.

The coming months offer opportunities for NSW dairy farmers and their teams to access expert advice and learn alongside industry peers. Choose a workshop that aligns with your priorities, whether you’re looking to improve farm performance, develop your team or plan for the season ahead.

Click to download your copy, save the dates and RSVP to the workshop that best suits you and your farm business needs.

Dates may change; check event details before attending.

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