

dairynews

ISSUE 14, SPRING 2010

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Tim Burfitt

Manager Intensive Livestock Industry Development

Welcome to the 2010 spring edition of Dairy News. This edition continues our efforts of choosing topical articles that will prepare readers for the Spring season across the broad and diverse NSW dairy industry. So the articles are nearly as diverse as the farming systems we work with and support. In fact with each edition we are tempted with the option of turning Dairy News into a book as we usually have more articles than we have space for — so diversity and interest are the two key selection requirements.

The newsletter also comes close on the heels of the annual Dairy Research Symposium held at Camden. The Symposium is an event put together by the University of Sydney with support from the dairy industry. It was heartening this year to see Dr Ian Lean receive the Milk Marketing Award for Dairy Science, for what has been many years of dedicated service to dairy farmers in the field as well as the laboratories as an eminent scientist. Congratulations to Ian from I&I NSW!

Another positive from the Symposium was the number of dairy farmer testimonials provided using video technology. Livestock Officers, Dairy from I&I NSW interviewed six farmers involved with the successful complementary forage system project running in the Hunter; as well as an interview with a South Coast dairy farming family on the keys to reproductive efficiency. Dairy farmers, like most people, find it easier to talk to one person and a camera in preference to a room with over 100 attendees. The farmers and their farms are very impressive on the big screen and this allows everyone in the audience to connect with the farm.

As Dairy News goes to press the Dairy Industry Group of I&I NSW are consulting on ways and means to continue an effective service to the NSW dairy industry in a time of declining staff resources. The group appreciates the great support shown from Dairy Australia, Dairy NSW, Subtropical Dairy, Murray Dairy, the NSW Farmers Dairy Committee and our processor colleagues, in our mission to continue to be an effective provider of beneficial services to our dairy industry.

All the best with what will be a bountiful spring and remember safety on farm, look up and think twice as hay and fodder making equipment is put into action.







2010 Locust campaign

Michael Cashen

Climatologist-Agriculture, Deniliquin



I&I NSW along with the Livestock Health & Pest Authority are currently preparing for what is expected to be one of the worst plague locust incursions for many years.

Large swarms of locusts travelled through New South Wales, south west Queensland and the northern parts of Victoria and South Australia earlier this year laying eggs. Landholders must be vigilant in protecting all crops and pastures from spring locust hatchings by using targeted applications of registered or permitted insecticides.

The use of insecticides in dairying areas can have significant consequences for production if not used properly. I&I NSW have produced a

Primefact titled "Controlling Plague Locusts in Dairying Areas". The Primefact includes information on:

- · checking the insecticide information;
- managing the milking herd accordingly;
- planning ahead for feeding of your stock;
- personal protective equipment and OHS requirements.

This Primefact and other dairy related resources are available on our website at:

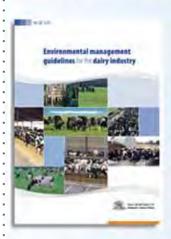
<u>http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/insects/locusts</u>

Another helpful fact sheet has been produced by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) titled "A Coordinated Approach to Control Plague Locusts" and is particularly good on chemical control, withholding periods and minimising damage.

The Plague Locust Control Fact Sheet can be downloaded from the GRDC website at:

http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/Plague_Locusts_Factsheets.pdf

Environmental management guidelines for the dairy industry



The guidelines released in 2008 were developed with the intention of assisting dairy farmers who are planning a new dairy development and/or a major re-development of an existing operation. They are also an essential reference for other stakeholders, including consent authorities, regulatory agencies, and industry consultants.

The guidelines provide:

- an explanation of the planning process in NSW, and relevant documents, approvals, requirements and legislation;
- · Information on siting and design;
- best practice advice for managing the environmental impact of the facilities.

The guidelines may be found on the I&I NSW website at http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/dairy-cattle/nrm.

Free copies may also be obtained by emailing tim.burfitt@industry.nsw.gov.au or phoning 02 6391 3729.

ROBOTIC ROTARY, A WORLD FIRST

Future Dairy 2 media release



The world's first robotic milking rotary, developed by DeLaval in collaboration with Australia's FutureDairy project, will be unveiled later this year.

This revolutionary automatic milking solution was developed to suit various types of dairy systems starting with Australia's large herd and pasture-based systems. However, it is flexible enough to operate in a variety of dairy farms including free-stalls and loose housing typical of overseas industries.

FutureDairy's collaboration involved Dairy Australia, the University of Sydney, Industry & Investment NSW and DeLaval. The new dairy is located at I&I NSW farm at the Elizabeth MaCarthur Agricultural Institute at Camden. FutureDairy Chairperson Shirley Harlock said the robotic rotary is one of the most exciting recent developments for Australia dairy farmers.

Automatic milking technology makes significant changes to the daily routine on the dairy farm.

"Although it won't suit all dairy farmers the robotic rotary offers considerable benefits in terms of enabling more flexible working conditions and improved lifestyle", said Mrs Harlock.

The flexible working conditions allow farmers to spend more time on their priorities.

Automatic milking systems have been available and widely adopted overseas for more than a decade.

"We know from research conducted by the FutureDairy team at Camden that Automatic Milking works under Australian, pasture-based systems. The existing AMS technology will still be a good option for smaller herds", she said.

I&I NSW Dairy Livestock Officer Ray Johnston, will be working closely with FutureDairy and Dairy Australia to integrate the technology into mainstream dairy farming in NSW.

The robotic rotary offers a better solution for larger Australian herds in terms of cost and capacity.

"In the long term, this is the beginning of a completely new way of milking cows and running a dairy business", said Mrs Harlock.

DeLaval will unveil the robotic rotary in November under the brand name DeLaval AMRTM (Automatic Milking Rotary) in Camden, Australia and at the RuroTier 2010 show in Germany.

For more information contact Dr Kendra Kerrisk: Kendra.kerrisk@sydney.edu.au

FutureDairy is an example of your dairy service levy at work. For more information about the Dairy Australia levy go to www.dairyaustralia.com.au

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

UP TO DATE WITH PEOPLE

Michael Ison

Dairy Officer - Human Resources, Tocal, Paterson

All State Governments [except for Western Australia] have handed over their powers to make industrial laws to the Federal Government, so they no longer have a state industrial relations system for the private sector.

This means that all employers in the NSW dairy industry will either be operating under the Pastoral Award 2010, or transitioning into this New Modern Award. This has lead to some confusion and adjustment, but will ultimately be very rewarding for both the employee and employer.

So, if you are a company then you are probably already operating under the Federal system. If you are a sole trader, partnership or trust without a company trustee, you have until 1 January 2011 to move to the Pastoral Award.

What are the benefits for employers in the dairy industry in NSW?

When creating the Pastoral Award 2010, over 40 Awards were taken into account and so this Award will provide more uniform employment laws across agriculture in Australia.

The Pastoral Award 2010 now has specific sections relating to dairy farming and there are five classifications for employees and separate pay rates for each.

Importantly for dairy farmers, the modern Pastoral Award 2010 retains the hours of work terms of the current Pastoral Industry Award which allow for 152 hours over four weeks before overtime is payable. This will make the payment of those who work over weekends more equitable and fair for all

The Pastoral Award also has a 'flexibility term' which enables employers and employees to agree to vary the effect of some Award terms and put in place conditions of work which are tailor-made to suit the needs of their business and their employees. This is called an Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA). However, any agreement must not undermine employee entitlements, and must pass the "Better Off Overall test" (BOOT) for employees.

To lessen the financial impact of the new Award terms on employers and employees, the Pastoral Award 2010 contains transitional provisions which allow increases and decreases in minimum conditions affecting pay to be phased in. The transitional rates apply from the first full pay period after 1 July 2010.

There are detailed explanations of the new arrangements on The People in Dairy website, under the Engagement and Reward button in the Live Library. Visit www.thepeopleindairy.org.au

What reviews should farmers carry out?

Now is a good time to review your arrangements with employees and prepare for the changes in January 2011.

Some areas to review would be;

- Are all your people employed under the correct Award? – Check with www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au or www.fairwork.gov.au
- 2. Do you have a written contract of employment with each person?
- 3. Do you have up to date job descriptions for all staff? This will help with recruitment and performance reviews, and also ensure the position matches the right employee classification under the Award.
- 4. Check employee classification and rate of pay conditions – are you meeting Federal Pastoral Award 2010 obligations?
- 5. Compare your current situation to the 10 National Employment Standards laid down in the new Modern Awards – this information can be found at www.fwa.gov.au
- 6. Do you keep up to date with changes and pay rates under the Award?
- 7. Do you have your employment policies written down?

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Many farm employees have no written employment agreement. However, there will still be an enforceable common law employment contract based on the verbal agreement made when the employee started work, the relevant Award, and the State or Federal industrial laws. Employees can take action for non-payment of Award or other legal entitlements up to six years later and employers can be prosecuted for breaches of the Award or industrial laws. Remember that if there is disagreement about non-payment of agreed over Award payments it will be more difficult to prove what was actually agreed (sometimes years later) if there was no written agreement.

Where do you find more information?

A great starting point is The People in Dairy website found at www.thepeopleindairy.org.au. Also look to NSW Farmers Association, NSW Industrial Relations Commission at www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au and also Fair Work Australia at www.fwa.gov.au

For more information and questions contact Michael Ison at I&I NSW Tocal.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SAVE ENERGY IN THE DAIRY

Energy audits were carried out on 33 dairy farms in the Hunter and South coast regions recently as part of Industry & Investment NSW, Dairy NSW and Landcare Australia Climate Change Mitigation Project.

The auditors, Nick Bullock and Associates (NBA), found that cooling milk, heating water and operating milking machines account for around 80% of the total power cost at the dairy.

Listed below are some recommendations from the project for saving energy and reducing power costs that farmers could consider:

Cooling milk:

- Switch to Time of Use metering where morning milking activities are complete by 7am.
- Use a plate cooler with a single pass of cool water that is not recirculated back into the source.
- Use a second plate cooler or double bank plate cooler with water chilled via an off-peak glycol chiller or ice-bank.
- Avoid using glycol chillers and ice-banks on peak tariff as a pre-cooling option.
- Where recirculation is unavoidable, use of a cooling tower can help reduce costs in low humidity areas.

Heating water:

- Minimise the volume of water used to wash the plant and vat and wash at the lowest temperature possible without compromising hygiene.
- Install a water heater with capacity for all daily wash requirements so that all heating can occur on the overnight tariff, Controlled Load 1 (CL1).
- Where Time of Use (TOU) tariffs are in use and CL1 is not available, install a timer to ensure water is only heated during the overnight off-peak period.
- Install a hot water pre-heating device such as a heat recovery unit or solar hot water heater so that most of the heating occurs without using extra electricity.

Milk harvesting:

- Install a Variable Speed Drive (VSD) on the vacuum pump(s) where there is sufficient excess vacuum being produced for the motor to be able to reduce power output.
- Reduce milking times by streamlining milking process or increasing size of milking plant

Dairy farmers who would like to have an audit carried out on their dairy, and access the grants available through the Small Business Energy Efficiency Program should contact Dr Jess Jennings on 0423 224750 for contact details of the accredited auditors.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SOLAR POWER PAYS OFF

Kerry Kempton

Technical Specialist Dairy, Tocal

One of the farms who participated in the Climate Change Mitigation Project was the Williams family from Vacy in the Hunter Valley.

David & Peter Williams were already considering installing solar hot water systems before doing the audit, knowing that reducing water heating costs would make a big difference to their energy usage.

"We've had the new system up and running for about 3 months now, and we reckon we are saving at least \$300/month on our power bill", said Peter Williams. "And I expect that to be about \$600/month over the summer months."

"At that level of saving, the system will have paid for itself after 18 months".

After researching the types of solar panels on the market, the Williams' brothers chose the Evacuated Tube Solar System technology because of the increased efficiency. They shopped around and purchased the equipment over the internet at a lower price.

David said "We buy lots of things for our business on-line, from silage wrap to spare parts for machinery and fertiliser. You can save yourself a lot of money that way."

Two of the solar system panels pre-heat water which feeds into the electric hot water system, on off-peak power. When there is plenty of solar radiation available, the electric hot water system has very little heating to do. The third panel heats water for the vat wash and for rinsing milking machines.

The audit with Sean Faichney, from Nick Bullock & Associates, also highlighted that milk harvesting consumes 28% of energy at the dairy.

David & Peter are now intending to install a variable speed drive vacuum pump which will provide estimated energy savings of around \$2,000 per year. It is estimated that the energy saving will be equivalent to 10t of CO₂ per annum.

They will apply for the \$5,000 rebate from Department Environment, Climate Change & Water to help offset the cost of this technology.



<u>Top</u>: 2 panels have 250 litre tanks on the roof, the third recirculates to a tank in the dairy.

<u>Above:</u> David & Peter Williams and their new solar hot water heating system at the dairy.

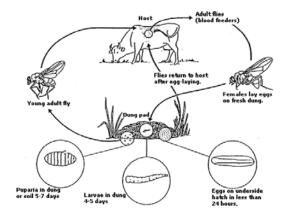
HERD MANAGEMENT

THE FLIES ARE COMING!

Julie Dart, Livestock Officer Dairy, Coffs Harbour

Michael Cashen, Climatologist-Agriculture, Deniliguin

This summer is set to be a bumper season for biting flies throughout NSW. Recent rains and a mild winter will help Buffalo flies get an early start on the North Coast. It is likely that they will build up numbers earlier in the season than usual.



Above: Life cycle of the buffalo fly

On the North Coast Buffalo flies can be controlled with strategic use of insecticides and trapping. The Primefact "Buffalo Flies and their Control" is available on the internet at http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/health/specific/cattle/buffalo-flies-control

The Primefact also has some ideas for trapping flies at the dairy. This is an opportunity to reduce fly numbers twice a day that should not be overlooked. Simple things like using overhead sprinkling in the holding yard offer some respite to cows waiting to enter the dairy.

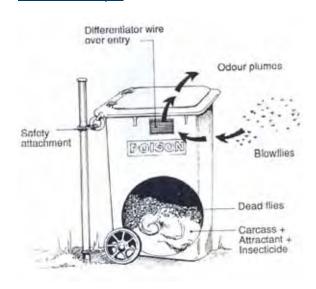
In southern NSW, biting flies such as stable flies and march flies could again be a significant issue for both cattle and people.

Stable flies are the main problem near feedlots and in dairies with feed pads. Stable flies are attracted to manure, but will breed up where they also have access to rotting vegetable matter such as spilled feed, silage and Mixed Rations. Poultry litter used to fertilize pastures and piles of lawn clippings in the garden are also attractive to stable flies.

In the US stable flies are a significant pest of beef feedlot operations. Their numbers are greatly reduced when manure and spilled feed are removed at regular intervals.

March flies are mainly found around freshwater creeks and inter-tidal estuaries and mangroves. There's not a lot that can be done to prevent them apart from insecticides.

Another approach for fly control is bait trapping. A recent Primefact "Trapping Blowflies", produced by the sheep group of I&I NSW has some good ideas for fly traps. You can download it from the website http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf fil e/0020/300467/9093-Trapping-blowflies---Primefact-842.pdf



Large bait bin fly trap

A bit of modification and bush ingenuity may just result in an effective trap for biting flies on cattle- perhaps there is a profitable use for that spoiled silage after all!



Mesh excluder fitted to bait bin fly trap

HERD MANAGEMENT

REV-UP REPLACEMENTS - ON THE ROAD

Vicki Smart

Livestock Dairy Officer, Berry

With herd sizes getting bigger in NSW and so many things to do each day on a busy modern dairy farm, it is often the heifers that get treated like second class citizens! After weaning they are often sent away from the main farm to grow up, checked periodically and generally left to fend for themselves.

Is it any surprise then, that on many farms heifers don't calve till 2 ½ to 3 years old?

I&I NSW Dairy team are currently delivering Rev-up Replacement workshops, with more to come across most dairy regions before the end of the year.

The workshops look at the opportunities that exist on farms to improve heifer rearing and the benefits of calving heifers down bigger and younger. Farmers are provided with some great tools and practical exercises to help assess how well their heifers are growing.

Farmers attending the Hunter workshops run in August mostly admitted that they don't often weigh their heifers, so were only guessing about whether they were achieving target weights for age. Farmers found the resource kit developed mainly by I&I Dairy Officer Vicki Smart, to be a really useful guide for assessing how well their heifers are growing.

So keep your eye out for a RUR day near you in the next couple of months, and make sure you come along.

For more information contact Vicki Smart or Ray Johnston.

Rev-Up Replacements Action Checks



FEEDING

FUTURE DAIRY HUNTER PROJECT – 1 YEAR ON

Kerry Kempton

Technical Specialist Dairy, Tocal

The Future Dairy 2 Hunter Farm Monitor Project has now completed the first year, and the results were presented at the recent DRF Symposium at Camden.

Six farms have been working to increase the amount of home grown feed they produce, with support from the research team at Future Dairy and the I&I NSW dairy extension team in the Hunter.

Each farmer had designated approximately 15% of their milking area to implementing a Complementary Forage Rotation (CRF). The yields across the farms on the CFR areas ranged from 18t to 34t DM/ha.

These higher yielding areas contributed to lifting the utilisation of home grown feed across the whole farm compared to the previous year, by a range of 3% to a huge 26%. On 3 of the farms.

their feed costs in \$/t DM were lower then last year; for two the costs remained about the same; and on one farm cost of home grown feed increased, as a result of implementing CFR.

Each of the six farmers was interviewed at the end of Year 1. They all felt that apart from the benefits to the business from growing more feed, they had learned new skills and gained confidence from working with each other and the project team.

"Achieving high fodder production is a challenge and requires focus, good timing and attention to detail to make sure everything happens at the right time", according to Kerry Kempton. There is also more risk involved when growing crop such as maize and the yield of the crop will greatly affect the cost in \$/tonne DM harvested.

So has the extra effort involved in implementing the CFR been worth it? Well, after completing the Milk Biz farm analysis, all farms have shown an increase in Operating Profit per cow over the previous year. And all found that their feed costs in cents per litre (including cash costs and inventory changes) had remained about the same.

The farms did not need to purchase new equipment or change their farm system to apply the CFR principles. Contractors were used for sowing and harvesting maize; and they mostly made do with existing feed out equipment.



Above: Associate Professor Yani Garcia and I&I Dairy Officer Anthea Lisle with Denman farmer Ian Simpson, discussion feeding options during a farm walk with the Future Dairy farmer group.

In a separate project, a survey of 22 Hunter farms and their feed usage for 2008/09 found that the average home grown feed utilisation was around 9t DM/ha. The home grown feed on the six monitor farms ranged from 11.5 to 14 t DM/ha.

So, this indicates that there is potential on many farms to improve home grown feed production and improve profit at the same time.

NEWS

Early cut high quality silage and hay shows its worth

The NSW Hay and Silage awards for 2010 were presented at the recent NSW Grassland Society Conference held in Dubbo.

The winners of the top award for best overall hay or silage was presented by sponsor Integrated Packaging to John and Belinda Cole from Forbes. They made an early decision last spring to cut a wheat crop affected by stripe rust for silage. With a favourable seasonal outlook clouded by the risk of locusts this spring, it was very timely that John showed what could be done if a high quality forage is conserved early and well. John said the wheaten silage was stored in a pit and has been fed to lambs with very good results.

Also recognized at the awards:

Brian Berry and Kelly Garland from Wirralee Partnership at Dungog produced a very good baled ryegrass silage which again showed the value of an early decision.

Brian cut his ryegrass last October before any seed head were visible. The crop was cut with a mower conditioner, turned with a tedder twice, then baled and wrapped all in less than 24 hours. Brian said it is always worth using the tedder to reduce wilting as it usually saves him at least a day which is important when aiming for high quality.

The full list of award winners is:

Section	Sponsor	Winner
Winter/temperate pasture	New Holland	Wirralee Partnership, Dungog
Summer/tropical pasture	New Holland	Bangalara Dairies, Coffs Harbour
Winter crop	New Holland	John Cole, Forbes
Maize	Pioneer Hi-bred	Philip & Robert Ensbey, Grafton
Other summer crop	New Holland	Williams Family, Vacy
Other crop	New Holland	Andrew McRae, Ungarie

This year no award was presented for lucerne hay or silage.



NEWS

Engineering services for dairy farmers



The NSW dairy industry requires a significant degree of engineering support to enable it to function effectively and profitably while meeting a range of legislative requirements.

The contact details and services offered by engineering firms are not always apparent to the dairy farm businesses of NSW.

Industry & Investment NSW has compiled a booklet which is a compilation of engineering firms who responded to a request by Industry & Investment NSW for tenders to provide an on farm service to dairy farmers in the Hunter Valley and South Coast dairying districts of NSW.

The Engineering Services for Dairy Farmers booklet is available for free download on the I&I NSW website:

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/dairy-cattle/nrm

Finding good bulls fast



Hot off the press: the Good Bulls Guide will simplify bull selection decisions for dairy farmers.

Selecting bulls to breed better dairy herds is set to become easier than ever, with the release of the Good Bulls Guide in association with the August release of Australian Breeding Values.

Produced twice a year, the Good Bulls Guide lists bulls by popular breeding objectives such as type, longevity, mastitis resistance, production and profit.

Pick the table that reflects the needs of your herd with the confidence you will be improving the genetic potential of your herd. Michelle Axford from the Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme (ADHIS), said the Guide was designed to dramatically simplify the selection process, while still giving farmers a wide range of choice so they can use bulls which meet their herd's specific breeding objective.

"The Guide provides farmers with a quick, simple way to compare bulls that may be suited to their herd," said Mrs Axford.

All the bulls listed in the guide are good bulls. Their inclusion in the guide is an independent assessment by ADHIS, which is based on world-leading science.

"This means dairy farmers can make selections from the Guide with confidence."

The Good Bulls Guide includes bulls from every company and from both Australia and overseas. Each bull is listed with its relevant breeding values and reliability, making it easy for farmers to compare their options.

Those farmers who wish to make more detailed comparisons of bulls can continue to use Selectabull and detailed bull pages available on the ADHIS website. ADHIS is an initiative of Australian Dairy Farmers', with most of its funding coming from Dairy Australia through the Dairy Services Levy.

For more information contact Michelle Axford at ADHIS ph (03) 8621-4240 or email maxford@adhis.com.au.

COMING EVENTS

October 4 - 9		RYAG Camp Taree
October 19, 20, 21	Day 1	Mastitis Refresher Course, Hunter & Tamworth
November 10, 11, 12	Day 2	Mastitis Refresher Course, Hunter & Tamworth
October 27, 28		Dairy NSW Member's Council Forum, Berry

INDUSTRY & INVESTMENT NSW - PRIMARY INDUSTRIES - CONTACT DETAILS

BEGA	Ph: (02) 6492 1733	KYOGLE	
Hayden Kingston District Agronomist	0427 401 532	Vacant	
BERRY	Ph: (02) 4464 6000	TAREE	Ph: (02) 6552 7299
Vicki Smart – Livestock Officer Dairy	0427 107 058	Ray Johnston – Livestock Officer Dairy	0411 119 613
Amanda Mather – District Agronomist	0427 102 793	Peter Beale – District Agronomist	0427 007 468
CASINO	Ph: (02) 6662 2288	SCONE	Ph: (02) 6544 4900
Bede Clarke – District Agronomist	0427 102 314	Anthea Lisle – Livestock Officer Dairy	0427 102 798
COFFS HARBOUR	Ph (02) 66503111	TOCAL	Ph: (02) 4939 8940
Julie Dart – Livestock Officer – Dairy	0427 007501	Kerry Kempton – Technical Specialist Dairy	0427 114 602
DENILIQUIN		Michael Ison – Livestock Officer Dairy	0409 983 667
Vacant		Neil Griffiths – District Agronomist	0427 007 425
KEMPSEY	Ph: (02) 6562 6244	ORANGE	Ph: (02) 6391 3729
Carol Rose – District Agronomist	0427 001 903	Tim Burfitt – Manager Intensive Livestock I	ndustry Development 0427 401 552

Dairy News is a newsletter for dairy farmers throughout NSW.

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www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dairy-news

ISSN 1834-948X (Print)

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