



dairynews

ISSUE 1, JUNE 2007

Welcome to Dairy News

NSW Department of Primary Industry's new state wide publication is the outcome of a rationalisation decided upon by the NSW DPI dairy industry group. The newsletter and its features were decided by the dairy industry group as the best means and style of providing relevant dairy information. We trust you will find it a good decision.

Mr Tony Dowman, Technical Specialist – Dairy, based at Kempsey has kindly consented to be the inaugural editor. Tony will welcome all feedback to help build this newsletter into a worthwhile source of immediate technical information for NSW dairy farmers.

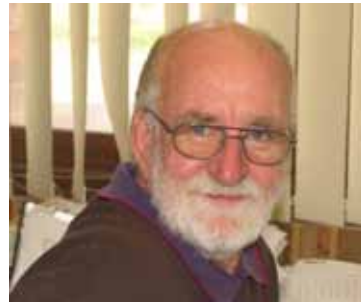
Tim Burfitt

Manager Industry Development Intensive Livestock

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EDITORIAL



Tony Dowman

Technical Specialist, West Kempsey

Welcome to the first edition of NSW Department of Primary Industries "Dairy News" state-wide newsletter. Over the last 50 years or so there has been a variety of local dairy newsletters and state-wide publications such as Dairy Topics that the DPI has produced to get the latest information and news into the dairy community. Some have survived; such as on the mid and far north coast, and the Hunter Valley and the rest have fallen by the wayside for a variety of reasons. Changing technology in the way people source information has also led people away from solely relying on printed material for information.

The use of the internet, e-mail, chat rooms, electronic discussion groups and the fax machine have all allowed instant access to the latest information anywhere in the world on any topic. Ask the younger generation (the under 40's) a difficult question, and the most likely answer will be "I'll Google it and get back to you". In other words, they will check the World Wide Web using the Google search engine for the answer. The down side of sourcing information from the web is the massive number of "hits" or references you get. It may take you all day to refine your question and then work your way through the mountain of information to find the answer to your enquiry.

So, there is still a place for printed dairy specific material that you can flick through over breakfast



that covers topical, interesting and to the point articles on herd, feed, environment, people and business management. The back page of our new newsletter lists coming events throughout the state and the contact details of the DPI Dairy Livestock Officers and Agronomists. The details for these events will still be circulated locally closer to the date.

The Dairy News will be published quarterly and direct mailed to all dairy farmers initially, with an option of receiving it via e-mail, or down loading it from the DPI web site if that is your preference.

Enjoy the first edition, and contact your local Livestock Officer if you have any suggestions on ways to improve your dairy newsletter.

FARMER TARGETS FOR CHANGE IN NSW

Ray Johnston

Dairy Livestock Officer, Taree

Since its launch in 2005, over 150 dairy farmers in NSW have participated in a Farmer Targets for Change (FTC) program which helps farmers set targets for natural resource management and matches them to funding sources.

The project provides an opportunity for farmers to work together to identify issues affecting their farms in local catchment areas. Comments from farmers indicate it is beneficial to their farm operation, and, in some cases, stimulates interest in farm planning.



Farmer Targets for Change was developed with input from members of the Mid Coast Dairy Advancement Group and NSW DPI staff based at Taree. As farmers know their farm better than anybody else, it makes sense to set up a flexible agenda to suit individual farmers within agreed timeframes.

Farmers in the group set their own targets and priorities to develop a list of farm works which address common issues.

Examples include:-

- Off stream stock watering
- Laneway upgrades
- Shade and shelter
- Creek crossings and
- Dairy effluent upgrades

Early in the development it was realised that without a team based approach there were barriers to farmers participating in sustainable practices on farms. Much previous effort in this area focused on compliance issues such as legislation and regulations. We have been able to turn these attitudes completely around so farmers are able to plan activities and projects on their properties, which not only improves on-farm production, but also benefits the broader community and catchment.

"Farmers are able to plan projects on their own farms"

Farmers are encouraged to work as a group to access funding and can influence agencies such as Local Councils, Catchment Management Authorities and Water Authorities.

There are three main components to FTC process with on-farm visits to identify farm sustainable issues and likely projects. Several workshops are conducted to allow farmers to freely express opinions on natural resource management and develop projects which are appropriate and timely for farm management.

All farmers are able look at their farms from a different angle using digital aerial photos to map out individual paddocks and areas. The maps have proved useful for better grazing management, calculating underground irrigation and stockwater pipe distances, and planning future farm development work.

Funding to run the project has been made available from Dairy Australia, Catchment Management Authorities, Landcare and Mid Coast Water.

Further information on Farmer Targets for Change is available from your nearest Dairy Livestock Officer.

DISEASE RISKS ON LUSH RYEGRASS COMING INTO SPRING

Metabolic complications are common with changes in feed base. During winter ryegrass dominant pastures and fluctuating growth patterns can increase the risk of these occurring.



Other factors include:

- Fertiliser application and practice
- Moisture stress
- Nutrient stress or imbalance
- Ration carbohydrate (CHO) to protein ratio
- Stage of regrowth at grazing- young plants more toxic
- Time of day grazing occurs- afternoon high CHO concentration
- Rate of growth and seasonal variation- increase in lush feed following rain
- Cold overcast weather

You can reduce the risk of metabolic complication by sticking to the grazing rules!

1. Graze ryegrass close to 3 leaf stage (some exceptions)
2. Leave 4 - 6cm residual *between clumps*
3. Avoid back-grazing
4. Keep the ryegrass plant vegetative as long as possible particularly late in the season and during summer.

Common conditions to look out for when grazing lush ryegrass

Disease	What to look for	The triggers
Scours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severely loose manure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of effective fibre in the diet • Lush ryegrass dominant pastures • Nitrate poisoning • Poor rumen fermentation
Protein (ammonia toxicity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urine scalds in the paddock • Ammonia smell in the dairy • Fertility problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High protein levels in ryegrass • High protein to CHO ratio • Reduce energy levels of the diet • Unbalanced diet for energy • Young ryegrass pastures
Nitrate and nitrate poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle scour • Off their milk and feed • Cattle salivate excessively • Experience abdominal pain bloat • Difficulties breathing • Rapid pulse • Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High nitrogen fertilizer use • Grazing within 21 days of nitrogen fertilization • Short rotation and grazing young plants • Hungry stock • Decomposed silage • Low soil sulphur and molybdenum • Low fibre content in the diet
Grass tetany – Hypomagnesaemia – low blood magnesium levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous response, stagger, bellow and charge • Loose coordination • Muscular twitching and collapse • Hyper-sensitive to noise • Off feed and agitated over 3-4 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low calcium in soil • During a pasture growth spurt after rain nutrient uptake is slower than growth • Use of potash (potassium) fertilizer • Stock stress, yarding movement, starvation • Cold windy conditions • Low body condition and fresh cows • Older cows most vulnerable
Ryegrass staggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head nodding during resting • Staggering gait • Severe cases convulsion and tremors leading to death • Often high stepping and flexion of limbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grazing young plant shoots and seedlings • Alkaloid poisoning from plants • High endophyte grasses

ALWAYS WORKING FOR GREENER PASTURES

Ray Johnston and Lesley Penfold

Editor of the North Coast Town & Country

THE grass is always green on the Dingo Creek flats. It's a picture postcard view of the dairy farm situated at Killawarra, on the western outskirts of Wingham as you drive across the bridge on Gloucester Road. For dairy farmer Mark Morris though, there's plenty of work and cost behind the scenes to keep the pasture to the quality and quantity required to maintain his 80 Holstein Friesian milking herd.

The 20 hectares of creek flats is the core of the dairy farm which the Morris family has farmed for 40 years. The eldest son of Geoff and Evelyn Morris, Mark grew up on the farm which he and his wife Debbie have now purchased. They lease the neighbouring 61 hectares of rougher ridge country to give them enough grazing land.

Apart from a short stint with a sawmill company and three years as noxious animal inspector with the Rural Lands Protection Board, Mark has milked cows all of his life.



And he says he never stops trying to work smarter to improve his farming practices, a job he is committed to seven days a week.

Mark and Debbie have just entered into a program conducted by the DPI with financial support from MidCoast Water and Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA). The Farmer Target for Change (FTC) project helps dairy farmers to set achievable targets for natural resource management and match them to funding sources.

The FTC process involves farmers working together in sub-catchment to identify high priority projects for their own farm and gets them working together in a group to achieve them.

Each farm has a list of works that are realistic and achievable. Farmers actively work towards common targets for their sub-catchment, solving environmental issues on farm as they become more aware of the impacts of farming practices.

The farming family receives skills and tools which involve farm mapping and planning with environmental issues. The project offers help with a computer program to be used as part of the farm management.



Although the Dingo Creek farm fronts almost two kilometres of the creek, Mark is installing water troughs for off-stream watering. The investment in a new hose-out system has made effluent disposal simpler and uses less water and time, taking only 14 minutes after milking rather than the previous system which gobbled up 40 minutes twice a day.

The farm map allows the paddocks, laneways and areas to be worked out and new software can record planting and fertiliser regimes, how much pasture will be available for silage and herd management and recording.

Like all dairy farms in the region, the drought has had an impact on Mark's operation. He knows what it's like to run out of irrigation water and when the stored silage also runs out he and Debbie have to buy in hay at the same time everyone else is paying premium prices. Mark says the feed bill for grain alone has changed dramatically, with a silo now costing \$4000 to fill, when it used to be \$3000.

The recent rains have at least made the pastures greener and have provided an opportunity for silage making. All the fodder stored will be fed out during winter.

DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS FOR FEEDING

How do you know which is the best value-for-money feed? Is your milking cow ration delivering all of the required nutrients? How much does it cost you to feed your herd?

NSW DPI Dairy Officers have a number of tools available to help you make decisions and keep track of farm feeding and financial performance.



RATION CHECK is a program designed to check whether your current ration is delivering all of the required nutrients. Rations can be checked for milking cows, dry cows or heifers. A report detailing any shortfalls or excesses is generated, and you can also use the program to check Margin Over Feed Costs. Ration Check is available from your Livestock Officer – Dairy.

MINI-RATION CHECK was developed for use on our website (where it will be very soon!) It is a simplified version of Ration Check, and will give you a very quick and simple overview of major nutrients that may be lacking or too high in your ration. Mini Ration Check is not yet available on the website, but should be very soon – watch this space!

The **FEED COST CALCULATOR** allows you to compare up to four feeds at a time, on the basis of energy and protein levels. For example, a protein meal may be very expensive in terms of cents per megajoule of energy, but will probably be very economical in terms of dollars per kg protein. The Feed Cost Calculator is available at <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/choosing-feeds/dai201b.htm>

FEEDBIZ is a financial analysis tool which only takes into account your milk income and feed

costs. Report shows total feed costs, margin over feed costs, feed use efficiency. Available through your Livestock Officer – Dairy.

THE FEED QUALITY SERVICE is open for business – feed samples can now be sent to the laboratory in Wagga Wagga. Standard Forage package - \$53.30; Premium Silage package - \$90.00; By-Products package - \$85.00; Grain and Mixed Feed package - \$53.30. To feed cows to their requirements, it is important to know the quality of each feed. See the website for more information, or phone 02 6938 1957.

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/services/diagnostic_and_inspection/diagnostic_and_laboratory_services/feed-quality-service

GROWING CONFIDENCE

Regan Johnson

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the National Australia Bank and Dairy Australia Dairy Business of the Year conference and awards dinner. I was truly inspired and motivated by the keynote speakers. Below I have summarised a presentation given by Keith Woodford.

Moving Forward in Dairy

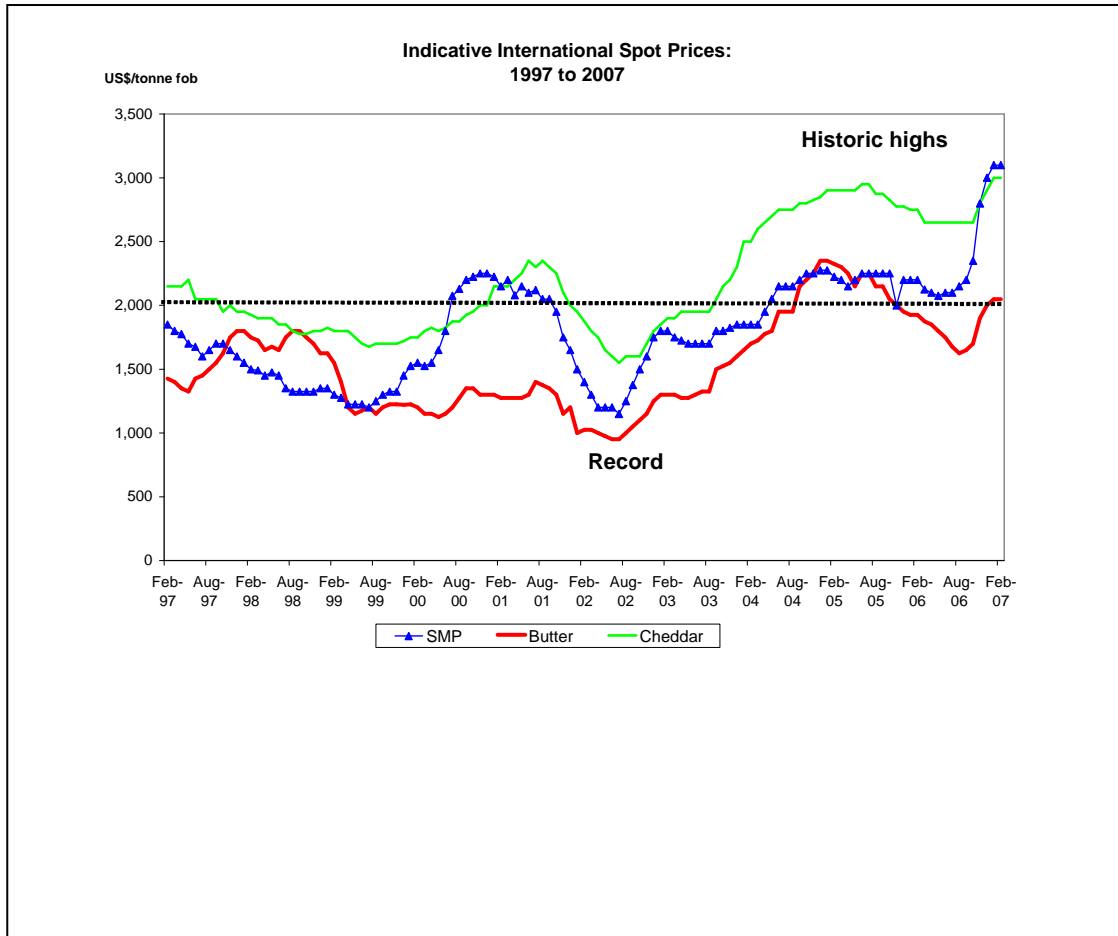
Keith Woodford a Professor of Farm Management and Agribusiness at Lincoln University in New Zealand, illustrated that we have many exciting opportunities ahead, although they maybe challenging.

What's the world doing?

Our current global population is going to grow from 6 billion to 9 billion; China continues to grow at 10% per annum, India is growing at 8% per annum. However, China is where our immediate future lies. Within another generation China will be the biggest economy in the world.

The US is constructing ethanol plants by the dozen, particularly in the mid west. This is not due to oil prices or climate change, but because of national security. The US government has decided that the nation must reduce its dependency on foreign oil; so we are going to see 25% of the US corn crop used for ethanol. These bio-fuel plants are not economic, they will be subsidised and these subsidies will continue until 2010.

World grain inventories have been declining, with consumption exceeding production. This was happening before the drought and world supplies have 50-70 days left. There were also huge butter and skim milk stocks but they have gone, world milk prices for milk powder are at \$US4000 tonne.



What does this mean for dairying at the farm gate and beyond?

Firstly we are living in a volatile world, however some people say that the golden era is upon us. We may have reached a change point where demand increases faster than supply. Farmers all around the world will do their best to increase production in response to the increased prices. However history has been there before, where increases in production outstrip increases in demand and prices spiral downward. Will this time be different?

The New Zealand dairy industry is looking forward to a good year. Fonterra is telling farmers that the milk solids payout could be closer to \$6. The medium to long term outlook is better than it has ever been, although there is no expectation that international prices of late can be maintained.

Keith Woodford's key message was that we have to stay nimble on our feet. We have to position ourselves to take advantage of the exciting prospects ahead, but we also have to be prepared for some cold winds that blow unexpectedly across the world economy.



NITRATE AND NITRATE POISONING

(Extract from *Primefact 415*)

Dr Sarah Robson

What is nitrate/nitrite poisoning?

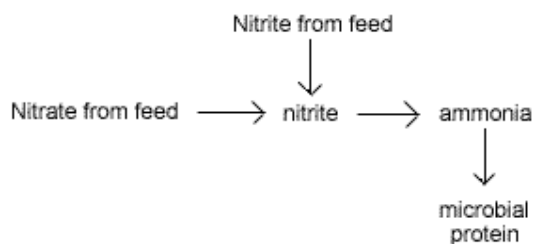
During periods of drought, the amount of nitrate in the soil can increase greatly because of:

- a lack of leaching;
- reduced nitrate uptake by plants;
- decomposition of organic matter.

When a drought breaks, nitrate uptake by plants may be high, especially in the first week after rain. If hungry animals are allowed free access to such plants, stock losses from nitrate/nitrite poisoning may be disastrous.

Nitrates and nitrites are closely linked as causes of poisoning. Nitrate is not always toxic to animals. When feed containing nitrate is eaten by ruminant animals, nitrate is converted to nitrite, and then to ammonia, by rumen microbes. Non-ruminant animals are unable to do this.

RUMINANT:



Nitrates have a direct, caustic effect on the lining of the gut if consumed in large quantities. Signs of poisoning include diarrhoea, salivation and abdominal pain.

Nitrites are much more toxic. These are formed from nitrates during ruminant digestion and may also occur if stored plant materials heat up or are attacked by bacteria or fungi. When high levels of nitrites accumulate in the gastrointestinal tract, they are absorbed into the bloodstream. Nitrite in the bloodstream changes haemoglobin (the oxygen-carrying part of blood) to methaemoglobin (which cannot carry oxygen). If enough methaemoglobin is produced, the animal will die. Some animals can tolerate up to 50% conversion of their haemoglobin without ill-effects; however, when more than 80% haemoglobin is converted, death occurs.

Plant factors

Under certain soil and environment conditions, plants can contain high levels of nitrates

Factors that facilitate uptake of nitrate by plants include: use of nitrogen-containing fertilisers; low soil sulfur and molybdenum; areas where stock have congregated and urinated/defaecated (e.g. yards).

Factors which cause nitrate to accumulate in the plant include: drought; cloudy or cold weather; herbicide application – especially phenoxy herbicides such as 2,4-D; wilting.

Nitrate concentrations are usually higher in young plants and decrease as plants mature. Most of the plant nitrate is also located in the bottom third of the stalk, hence the leaves contain less nitrate and the flowers or grain contain little to no nitrate.



Hay and silage can contain toxic levels. Don't assume that harvesting for hay or silage makes a crop safe. Harvesting at least 7 days after rain or cloudy weather may lessen risk.

Water contaminated by fertiliser, animal wastes or decaying organic matter may also be a source of toxic levels of nitrate. Marginally toxic levels of nitrate in water, combined with marginally toxic levels of nitrate in feed, can also lead to poisoning.

Animals that are hungry, stressed or in poor health or condition will also be more susceptible to nitrate/nitrite poisoning. Frequent intake of small amounts of high-nitrate feed increases the total amount of nitrate that can be consumed by ruminant animals without adverse effects. This is because rumen microbes are adapted to deal with the increased nitrate content of the feed.

Signs of nitrate poisoning are:

- diarrhoea and vomiting;
- salivation;
- abdominal pain.

Signs of nitrite poisoning usually appear 6–24 hours after the toxic material is consumed. These include:

- rapid, noisy and difficult breathing;
- blue/chocolate-coloured mucous membranes;
- rapid pulse;
- salivation, bloat, tremors, staggering;
- dark, chocolate-coloured blood;

- abortions – pregnant females that survive nitrate/nitrite poisoning may abort due to a lack of oxygen to the foetus; abortions usually occur 10–14 days after exposure to nitrates;
- weakness, coma, terminal convulsions, death.

Treatment

Urgent veterinary attention is required to confirm the tentative diagnosis and to treat affected animals. Stock should immediately be removed from suspect material, and be handled as little and as quietly as possible. Hay or some other low-nitrate herbage should be fed to dilute the nitrate and/or nitrite in the stomach.

NSW Department of Primary Industries Regional Veterinary Laboratories (RVLs) can test feed samples for nitrate. Samples may be sent via your veterinarian to any NSW DPI RVL for testing.

Read the full Primefact online at

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/resources/factsheets/primefacts/nitrate-nitrite-poisoning>

or pick up a copy at your local NSW DPI office.

TAX TIME – GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR ACCOUNTANT

Regan Johnson

The end of June is coming and its tax time again!



Over the last couple of years through Taking Stock or using our farm business management program, Milk Biz, I have spent a lot of time with farmers going through their tax reports they receive from their accountants. These reports

can be a great resource to finding out your financial and physical performance of your farm. However often we are spending a lot of time trying to decipher these reports and make them more useful to the farmer because generally they are for tax purposes only.

There are some simple requests that you can ask of your accountant that will make the analysis of your business much easier and less time consuming.

Firstly, it's important that lumping categories together is kept to a minimum. For example, when we are talking about feed it is much more useful if home grown feed and brought-in feeds are kept separate and are not all put under the one category titled FEED. By separating these two categories out we can then use this information to

determine if brought-in feed costs are under control. One way to avoid this is to ask your accountant to use a Chart of Accounts that will be more useful when it comes to analysing your business performance.

Secondly, request that your tax reports are finished for you in a timely manner. Often when I am analysing businesses with farmers I am using figures that can be 12 months to 2 years old. This is great to get historical data and assess past performance, however it doesn't allow for you to be more proactive in decision making for the following financial year. If your accountant can get you your tax reports within a month of the end of financial year then they will be much more useful to your business. Remember you are paying your accountant!

There is a Chart of Accounts available that is recommended by Dairy Australia that you can ask your accountant to use to make tax time a bit more useful to you and your business. If you would like a copy of the Chart, contact your local Livestock Officer.

THE LATEST TOP 10 TIPS FOR FINDING AND KEEPING THE RIGHT DAIRY PEOPLE

Michael Ison

Dairy Officer – Human Resources, Tocal

Here are the latest tips from the human resource industry that will help you to improve the people productivity on your farm.

1. Always have a job description

No matter what the role on your farm, from feeding the calves to managing the breeding program, have a clear description of the job and what the individual's responsibilities will be. Write these down.

2. Target your job ad

If the person you need has specific skills then make sure you choose a publication that will target that person. For example, if you want a machinery specialist how about advertising in the farm machinery publications. More general positions can be advertised in a local newspaper which can be cheaper. Sometimes it's just as good to spread the word.

3. Decide if the position can be filled by a casual

Building up a pool of temporary staff is critical to helping with peak times and over holidays. Make a list of the jobs on your farm that could be done on

a part time or casual basis. A good example of this would be general farm maintenance. We all have jobs that don't get done because we're too busy. Having someone come in regularly to "tidy up" can reduce the backlog.



4. References and referees are important

When interviewing, check references and call the referees. If a referee cannot give a strong recommendation then review the person and seek more information.

5. Welcome people to your farm

When a new employee is taken on, show them the ropes. Discuss the farm and the farm goals and how you go about achieving them. Each farm has different ways of working so provide some training. A great way to do this is to "buddy" up the new person with someone who has been around and knows the routine.

6. Involve your employees

Research has shown that job satisfaction is directly related to whether the individual is included in the decisions and has an input into the longer term goals of the farm. This gives the individual ownership and control over the work they do.

7. Money is not always the only incentive

Find out what motivates your workers. It may be different for each person. Money may be a motivator for some but others may just need more flexible hours. Others rewards and benefits can be provided such as child minding or time off to attend conferences and training.

8. Evaluate your people regularly

People need both positive and negative feedback in their work. When conducted well, discussions or interviews with staff about how they are going can create the challenge needed to remain motivated.

9. Enforce strict 'absence' procedures

Consider writing down a list of policies about clocking on and off, sick leave, annual leave and punctuality. If this is provided when the person is inducted and regularly reviewed, the problem can be more easily resolved.

10. Find out why staff leave and make leaving a positive experience

When someone leaves your farm find out why. Understanding the reasons can help you retain staff, and also the person who leaves on a positive note will not talk you down as an employer. Make it a point to have a send off for those who leave.

More tips and information about The People in Dairy project can be found on the DPI website.



FUNNY FEEDS

Dried Distillers Grain (DDG)

Dry distillers Grain, commonly referred to as DDG is becoming more available as a stock feed as ethanol production across Australia develops. The increase in the availability will lead to wider use and inclusion of this by product in dairy rations as a cheap protein source especially in times of restricted pasture availability and during dry conditions.

What is it?

A coarse dark coloured powder obtained by condensing and drying the protein stillage that remains after the starch fermentation of grains such as wheat, corn, barley for example, in the production of ethanol.

What is its value as a dairy feed?

It is a good source of protein and energy however highly variable (see table below) in nutrient value depending on the type of grain fermented and the production process which highlights the need to test regularly to achieve balanced ration.

Nutrient analysis of DDG in Australia

Components	Value
Dry Matter (%)	92 (90-93)
Energy ME* (MJ/Kg)	11.5 (10.0-13.2)
Crude Protein* (%)	25 (20-43)
Available protein	19 (15-32)
NDF*	35 (30-40)
eNDF	15(12-20)
Crude Fat %	5 (4-8)

*calculated on a dry matter basis

What to considerations if feeding it?

- Ensure the ration is balance for the class of stock you are feeding
- Check the rate of feeding and avoid using greater than 20% in a ration
- Check the ration protein levels as 25% of the crude protein is unavailable and has a high bypass protein content (UDP). Needs to be fed with a good quality protein sources as low in methionine and lysine levels
- check the ration fat levels as too high and effect rumen function
- check the ration mineral levels as high in phosphorus causing metabolic
- feed with sufficient effective fibre otherwise acidosis may be a problem

Palm Kernel Expeller Meal (PKE)

What is it?

A by-product of the palm oil industry in South East Asia. It is a dry gritty material that may not run easily in a silo.

Nutrients: From Victoria DPI

Nutritive value of palm kernel expeller meal (range in brackets)

Fodder (no. samples)	Dry Matter (DM%)	Metabolisable Energy (MJ ME/kg DM)	Crude Protein (CP%)	Neutral Detergentt Fibre (NDF%)
Palm Kernel	90	11	16	68*
Expeller meal	(88.0 – 94.5)	(10.5 – 11.5)	(14.5 – 19.5)	

*Effective fibre equivalent to about 30% NDF

Most energy comes from oil, digestible fibre and protein, rather than starch and sugar, so acidosis is unlikely. The material is very finely ground, so should be fed with long fibre to encourage rumination as effective fibre of PKE is low. Low in calcium and sodium. Unpalatable by itself.

Potential use: excellent dry cow feed if fed with long fibre; excellent feed for heifers if fed with protein and fibre source. Can have a use in milking cow rations as long as starch, mineral and effective fibre levels are maintained.

Cost benefit: As price becomes closer to that of grain, the benefit becomes less, as quality and palatability are much lower than that of grain.



PEOPLE ARE THE CORE OF SUCCESS IN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

Michael Ison

Given the current environment, dairy farmers and advisors are confronting some difficult questions about how they organise and develop the farm business and maintain a harmonious and rewarding workplace for all involved into the future.

Can you relate to any of the following comments?

"There are a lot of owner operators and employers finding that their work/life balance is difficult to maintain with long hours and 'burnout' in the business."

"Many employers are frustrated with employing and ask 'How can I attract and maintain the workforce needed to support the business I want?'"

"Employees are struggling to find a direction in their jobs and wonder if there is a career pathway in the dairy industry."

"When family labour reaches its limits or retirement plans contemplated, expansion and employment options are often ruled out without advice from professional services."

"Many service providers hear the frustrations and questions of farmer clients but feel poorly equipped to provide them with advice or sign posts to other services."

Because these issues are critical to the future success of dairying, "The People in Dairy" Program has been developed by Dairy Australia so that in the future we can

- develop resources and advice to enhance people deployment in their businesses
- Employees are attracted and retained in the dairy industry because we have highly competitive employment practices
- All farmers and service providers have access to programs that help them understand and develop their career options
- Every farm business has access to the skills and information required to maximize the chance of transfer to the next generation.



The NSW DPI Dairy Pathways project has developed strong linkages with "The People in Dairy" project and will be helping to create networks of interested farmers who will look

at developing their own skills in this area.

To find out more contact Michael Ison at Tocal on 49398814.

BATCH CALVING

Tom D'Arcy

"Year round calving is a strain on dairy farmers and their staff. It is a continual chore day in and day out with milking, cows calving, rearing calves, heat detection and joining cows. Physiologically you become tired of cattle husbandry and your efficiency rate begins to fall.

A way of overcoming this problem is to calve cows in four batches a year and still maintain year round production.

The periods we chose to calve and join cows are:-

1 Feb to 16 March

1 May to 16 June

1 Aug to 16 Sept

1 Nov to 16 Dec

Each period consists of seven weeks where 25% of herd calves and another 25% of the herd is being joined. The calving and joining is run under a herd health program with our local Vet.

Joining cows consists of:

- vet inspection to check pregnancy status/or if cycling
- heat detection using Kamar as an aid for five days
- those cows that have not cycled during the five days are given a prostaglandin shot
- mop up bull for the last 18 days of each period.

Advantages of 4 batches a year:

- four six weekly periods a year with no calving, rearing small calves, heat detection or A.I.
- at the start of each batch you are fresh, so less calving problems, greater efficiency in heat detection and conception rates
- staff are more enthusiastic
- more time with your family especially when cows don't calve during school holidays
- supplementary feeding, according to stage of lactation is more efficient
- handling of replacement heifers in batches for dehorning, vaccinations and drenching
- no capital expenditure on vats, calf sheds etc
- calving paddocks and calf sheds and pens are given several spells throughout the year.

Batch calving allows us to concentrate on important jobs of heat detection and calving cows for shorter periods of time. It also allows us to A.I. cows and then use 'mop up' bulls to get the rest in calf or if they don't go in calf to save them for the next batch rather than being culled.

COMING EVENTS

August 13 Calf Health Field Day – Lismore/Casino
Time & venue TBA

August 24 SDP Nutrition Field Day – Casino
Time & venue TBA (Bob Patton from USA)

August 25 SDP Nutrition Field Day – Raleigh
Time & venue TBA

NSW CONTACT DETAILS

KYOOGLE

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IMPORTANT WEB LINKS

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