



Subtropical Dairy Roadshow to Central Queensland

At the beginning of June, Kylie Dennis, Subtropical Dairy Program (SDP) Extension Co-ordinator for Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland (CQ), and Charlie Ernst from Parmalat, travelled throughout the CQ region demonstrating the latest technology in virtual meetings and accessing resources on-line.

Meetings were held over lunch and dinner at Biggenden, Monto, Jambin, Rockhampton, Miriam Vale and Gin Gin.

There are around 32 farms in CQ spread over some 120,000 square kms. This makes it challenging to deliver face-to-face workshops. While SDP will continue to deliver some topics face-to-face in CQ (particularly those with an on-farm component), in the future more workshops will be delivered over the internet. This will allow SDP to deliver more events and programmes in CQ and allow greater farmer-to-farmer interaction across the entire CQ region.

Last year, SDP successfully piloted a model in CQ where three to four farms in a district met at a farmer's home office

to participate in a webinar. We christened these groups Pods. It was the purpose of this current series of meetings to revisit some of the technology we introduced last year and to discuss further options to improve the effectiveness of Pods. At each event, Ruth Chalk, Program Manager for the Dairying Better 'n' Better programme (SDP and Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation joint NRM programme), hosted a webinar and gave all in attendance an overview on how webinars operate. Ruth also discussed some topical NRM projects. Looking forward, some farmers indicated they would like to participate in webinars from their home office while others have suggested meeting in venues.

The events were extremely well attended

by the majority of farmers in each Pod and the feedback received was very positive. It is planned for SDP to hold a webinar in the coming month to further utilise Pods and to allow farmers to practice accessing Pods on their own computers.

Subtropical Dairy would like to thank all the farmers that took the time out to attend, Charlie for being an excellent tour guide and Parmalat for providing beverages at all the events. Subtropical Dairy would also like to thank the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs who provided funding to support these events and provide at no cost to dairy farmers and their families. ■■

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