

Topfodder on Mid North Coast NSW

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In early February, a group of eight farmers got together over two days in Dorrigo, New South Wales, to discuss and learn more about silage as a part of the Top Fodder program, led by Neil Griffiths. Neil was previously with the Department of Primary Industries, based at Tocal Agricultural College for a number of years. We also had Ruairi McDonnell from Dairy Australia along for the two days to meet local farmers and hear about their farming systems as well as contribute to the discussion and share his knowledge of systems and practices from around the country. The Top Fodder program is very extensive, exploring many aspects of silage. Day one covered the basics including principles of silage, silage testing, quality, growing pastures and crops for silage and additives. Day two covered topics such as harvesting, storage principles and systems, feeding out and a range of tools that farmers can use, such as Dry Matter calculators and exploring a range of case studies.

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workshop, including sharing their own experiences with techniques for silage making, equipment and discussing local service providers that are available in the area. One of the key challenges in the Mid North Coast of New South Wales is the lack of contractors available, which results in more farmers doing their own silage. The course complemented the ongoing Feeding Pastures for Profit program being run in the area, with pasture growth stages and taking paddocks out of the rotation for silage production, one of the topics covered in the multi day course. Feedback from Topfodder was very positive, with one farmer noting that the information was more than they expected from both a quality and quantity perspective. The course ranked very high, with all respondents saying they would highly recommend the workshop to other farmers. ■■