



Focussing on effluent and carbon

Heidi Barnier

Dairy Australia Carbon Farming Extension Advisor



Effluent and manure management contribute to approximately 16% of on farm greenhouse gas emissions for dairy. Having a well running effluent system, suitable to the farm's production and system, is key in effectively managing these emissions.

Early in June, Subtropical Dairy held effluent management workshops on the Sunshine Coast, at the Ledger's Farm, and in South East Queensland, at The Veresdale Hotel, just outside of Beaudesert. These workshops were made possible by funding from the Carbon Farming Outreach Program from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water, The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC), SEQ Water, and Healthy Land and Water.

These effluent workshops continued to build on the learnings from our **Understanding Farm Carbon** workshops which were delivered across the Sunshine Coast and South East Queensland in previous months. The objective of these workshops was to focus on effluent management, as well as technologies and research on anaerobic digestion and biogas. Clare Fitzpatrick, from Progressive Rural Solutions presented on managing effluent, it's benefits, factors affecting effluent systems and considerations for changes in systems. Clare provided examples that demonstrated the importance of effluent storage and sustainable land application of nutrients in effluent and pond sludge. Dr Stephan Tait, Senior Research Fellow from The University of Queensland, discussed research on biogas and anaerobic digestion including the costs involved with these systems and how this could be applied to dairy farms. Stephan also spoke about the suitability of methane as an energy source and how it can be used to effectively manage emissions. Stephan highlighted that anaerobic digestion is more cost-effective for larger farms (>2000 cows) with intensive production systems (i.e. feedpads, loose housing, freestalls). Its key benefits are reducing onsite energy costs, and generating and selling carbon credits. However, he also highlighted potential social license benefits from reduced effluent odour. If you would like more information about Stephan's research, please read more [here](#).

We enjoyed the benefit of having representatives from MRCCC, SEQ Water, and Healthy Land and Water attend these days. Alana Ebert and Tom Brooks (MRCCC), Tim Odgers (SEQ Water), and Marc Leman (Healthy Land and Water), all spoke about the work that they do in the various regions and catchment areas, and made themselves available to connect with farmers and provide support.

We would like to thank all of the presenters, all who provided support, and the attending farmers for an engaging and successful couple of days.



Please keep an eye out for our next Understanding Farm Carbon Workshop (November 10 at Casino NSW) which can be found in the Subtropical Dairy Enews. ■■



The objective of these workshops was to focus on effluent management, as well as technologies and research on anaerobic digestion and biogas.