June 2025

NORTHERN HORIZONS

Subtropical Dairy

Dairy Australia

@subtropicaldairy www.northernaustraliandairyhub.com.au

Queensland Dairy Accounting Scheme (QDAS)

Support your dairy business decision making with your own financial data

Roslyn D'Addona
Dairy Extension Officer
Department of Primary Industries, Queensland

Queensland Government

Dairy Australia

Queensland has a very diverse range of dairy systems which are evolving rapidly to adapt to a range of challenges and opportunities. From the constant uncertainty of farming through climate variability to the endless opportunities to advance technology, there are limitless options to invest in change that are being considered by dairy farmers every single day. So, which change will benefit your dairy business the most in the current environment; where should you focus your time and money; and how do you make an informed decision?

What information does QDAS provide?

Benchmarking through the Queensland Dairy Accounting Scheme (QDAS) provides the opportunity for participating dairy farmers to annually compare the physical, cash flow and profitability aspects of their farm operation. The comparison of your own business performance year-on-year is the internal benchmarking aspect of QDAS, offered to all participants. External benchmarking allows you to compare your farm to other farms in the Queensland industry and participation in this aspect of QDAS is voluntary.

The top 25% of QDAS farms in 2023/2024

Forty-five dairy businesses participated in QDAS in 2023/2024 with these farms representing a broad cross-section of the Queensland dairy industry. As part of QDAS analysis, the Top 25% of farms are anonymously identified as the farms with the highest Earnings Before Interest & Tax (EBIT) measured in dollars per cow. EBIT is the amount of profit retained after paying all expenses except finance costs and tax, with allowances included for depreciation, owner's labour, and cattle and feed inventory changes. Table 1 (page 3) shows the average, high and low values for the physical indicators of the 11 farms in the Top 25% in QDAS in 2023/2024, while Table 2 (page 3) shows the average, high and low values for selected cash and profit indicators of these farms. The high and low values for each indicator represents their range across all 11 farms, meaning all the high values are not values from the same farm and similarly for the low values.

The standout from the Top 25 % of QDAS farms in 2023/2024 was the broad range of farm sizes, systems, regions, breeds,

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Northern Horizons Editorial SDP Chair

Welcome to *Northern Horizons*.

At our Annual General Meeting to be held online on 20 November, 2025, two farmer directors (Ruth Chalk and Elke Watson) and one service provider director (Mark Bauer) will be standing down. Leading up to the AGM we are seeking nominations from dairy farmers for two board positions and from service providers for one board position. Terms are for three years. We are seeking Expressions of Interest from potential candidates to submit applications for Board positions through our selection panel process. It is important for potential candidates to be aware that Subtropical Dairy is currently undergoing a transformation regarding its purpose and operations. The incumbent board anticipates significant change regarding how Subtropical Dairy operates from July 1, 2026. Being on the Subtropical Dairy board is a great opportunity to have a real say regarding how our levy is spent. For a region with a smaller milk pool like Subtropical Dairy, it is important we continue to lobby for Dairy Australia services in our region which are of high priority for our unique farming systems. Please contact our Executive Officer, Brad Granzin on brad@subtropicaldairy.com.au or 0431 197 479 for further information. Applications must be lodged with the Executive Officer by 6 PM AEST Friday July 25, 2025.

This edition of Northern Horizons also has an article about the new Dairy Australia Chief Executive Officer, Dr Matthew Shaffer. Following an extensive recruitment process led by the Dairy Australia Board, Matt was selected for his compelling vision for the organisation and focus on what drives value for farmers, his deep knowledge and passion for the dairy industry, and his strong commercial experience in agriculture. Matt most recently served as CEO of DataGene; an industry-owned organisation focused on driving genetic gain and herd improvement in the Australian dairy industry. Prior to that, Matt was CEO of Holstein Australia and started his career in the finance industry for the US based Hancock Agriculture Investment Group where he played a critical international operations role. Matt commences his new role in Dairy Australia on July 16, 2025. We look forward to Matt visiting the Subtropical Dairy region and meeting with our board, staff, farmers and regional partners.

Virtual grazing is rapidly emerging as a new farming practice in New Zealand and some Australian states. Although somewhat untested in tropical and subtropical dairy systems, this technology has shown in temperate grazing systems to deliver significant productivity gains in terms of labour efficiency, pasture utilisation and cow productivity. In this edition of Northern Horizons, we are re-visiting some earlier research from Tasmania.

Once again, welcome to Northern Horizons and I hope you find this edition of value and interest to your business.

Luke Stock, Chairman,
Subtropical Dairy Programme Ltd.
P 0474 800 245

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Physical Indicator		Average	High	Low
Number of cows (Milking + Dry)		357	1075	120
Annual milk production (L)		2,554,538	6,581,165	668,729
Milk production per cow (L)		7,156	10,330	5,337
Cow liveweight (kg)		595	680	480
Feed intake of milking herd (kg DM/day)	Forages - Grazed	6.3	13.5	0
	Forage - Conserved	5.5	11.9	0
	Concentrates	9.6	13.9	5.7
Milk from homegrown feed (%)		43	64	30
Litres per labour unit		420,973	531,983	334,365

Table 1. *The average, high and low values for selected physical indicators of the 11 farms in the Top 25% of QDAS participants in 2023/2024.*

Cash or Profit Indicator	Average	High	Low
Purchased feed cost (cpl*)	33.2	43.7	22.4
Fertiliser (cpl)	2.9	8.9	1.5
Total feed cost (cpl) (including inventory change)	41.2	54.4	23.5
Employed labour (cpl)	12.6	17.0	2.5
Owners unpaid labour (cpl)	5.8	14.0	2.5
Repairs and maintenance (cpl)	4.5	7.0	0.9
Finance and land lease (cpl)	4.9	11.8	0.8
Equity (%)	79	100	40
Liabilities ($/cow)	3,702	9,484	0

**Cents per litre*

Table 2. *The average, high and low values for selected cash and profit indicators of the 11 farms in the Top 25% of QDAS participants.*

feed sources, debt levels, costs and labour structures represented within the 11 farms. This is evident from the large range between high and low values of all indicators in Tables 1 & 2. There were grazing farms from every region, including North Queensland, as well as partial mixed ration (PMR) and total mixed ration (TMR) farms from South-east Queensland and the Darling Downs.

The broad range in the value of all indicators in the Top 25% shows that there are dairy farmers in every region of the Queensland industry who have adapted to a varied range of systems and structures that optimise the profitably of the farming business they want to run. There is no ideal size or system that maximises profitability on all farms, rather individuals finding the right balance for their operation. These actual numbers from real commercial farms collected annually provides real time context for physical and financial indicators for all dairy farmers in the Queensland dairy industry.

Participation in QDAS offers the opportunity to network and compare with this group of dairy farmers operating a broad range of profitable systems. The collection and processing of the physical and financial data conducted from August to October each year enables the development of farm cash flow, profit and feed reports for each individual farm. Figure 1 (page 4) shows an example of a profit map developed for each individual farm. This internal benchmarking allows comparisons to be made with previous years and the impacts of any changes made during the year to be analysed through physical and financial indicators. For example, how much did the new grain mill reduce purchased feed cost? Did milk production and/or components increase?

QDAS workshops run in November every year offer participants the opportunity to externally benchmark their farming operations. These workshops are attended by participants and QDAS data collectors only, to confidentially discuss group, regional and farming system trends and results for the year. These workshops allow participants to identify areas for improvement and network with other farmers who may have experience and advice to offer with changes that you may be considering for your farm. This is where the real opportunity lies for QDAS participants to make more informed, supported and confident decisions to continuously improve their farms.

With the end of financial year upon us, QDAS collection is about to kick off for another year. After a three-year break, Ray Murphy will be returning to the DPI dairy team in 2025 to take the reins of QDAS management again. For all continuing QDAS farmers, keep an eye out for your inventories in your inbox. If you would like to give QDAS a go for the first time in 2025, call any of the DPI collectors listed below. All Queensland dairy farmers are welcome and encouraged to participate in this free and confidential program.

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Ray Murphy
0403 775 006
ray.murphy@dpi.qld.gov.au

Joanna Srhoj
0458 065 695
joanna.srhoj@dpi.qld.gov.au

Mark Bauer
0488 095 754
mark.bauer@dpi.qld.gov.au

Roslyn D'Addona
0457 686 504
roslyn.daddona@dpi.qld.gov.au

Ross Warren
0418 749 340
ross.warren@dpi.qld.gov.au

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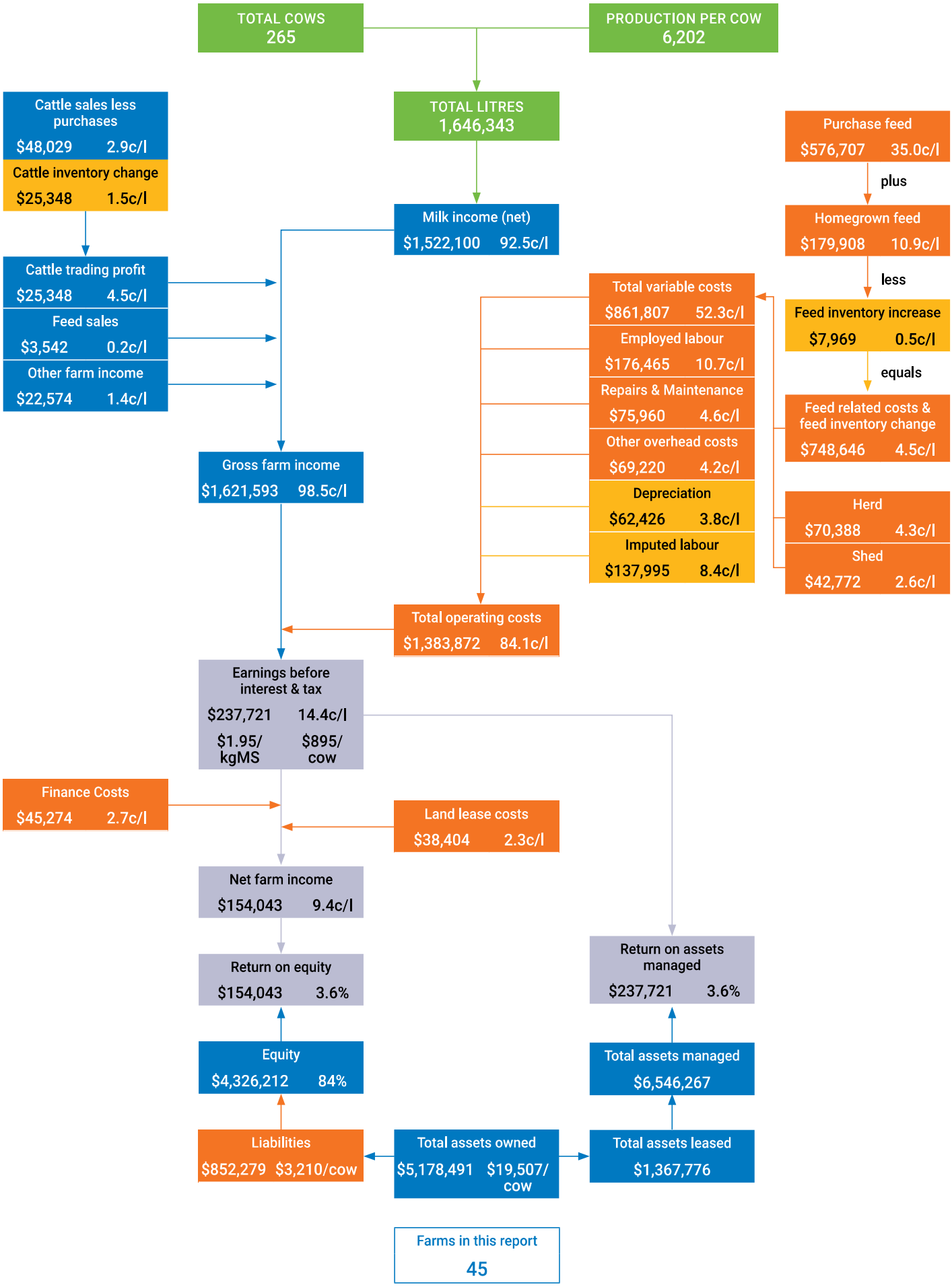
Group dairy farm profit map

***Figure 1**. Group Average Dairy Farm Profit Map – All 45 QDAS Farms 2023 - 2024*



Dairy Australia appoints new CEO

Dairy Australia has announced the appointment of Dr Matthew Shaffer as its new Chief Executive Officer, marking a significant leadership transition for the organisation.

Following an extensive recruitment process led by the Dairy Australia Board, Matt was selected for his compelling vision for the organisation and focus on what drives value for farmers, his deep knowledge and passion for the dairy industry, and his strong commercial experience in agriculture.

Matt most recently served as CEO of DataGene; an industry-owned organisation focused on driving genetic gain and herd improvement in the Australian dairy industry. Prior to that, Matt was CEO of Holstein Australia and started his career in the finance industry for the US based Hancock Agriculture Investment Group where he played a critical international operations role.

Dairy Australia Chair, Paul Roderick, said: "Matt brings a wealth of experience and a proven ability to deliver meaningful change. His leadership at DataGene, along with his deep engagement across global networks, government, and the dairy industry, positions him well to lead Dairy Australia into a new era."

"After consulting farmers around Dairy Australia's strategic direction, we are preparing to launch a new five-year strategy. Matt will contribute to shaping our future direction and play a critical role in implementing a strategy that supports farmers to unlock the potential of their farm business, innovate for future success, while ensuring a sustainable dairy industry."

Matt will succeed current Managing Director, Dr David Nation, who announced in late 2024 his decision to step down by June 2025, after seven years in the role.

Paul acknowledged David's significant contributions: "David has challenged the status quo and championed initiatives that have had a lasting impact on the dairy industry. His leadership in research and innovation through partnerships with DairyBio and DairyFeedbase has been exceptional."

"He also played a key role in enhancing Dairy Australia's support for the industry's sustainability agenda, building community trust, and strengthening regional connections with farmers. Under his guidance, Dairy Australia has become a more people-focused organisation with a clear commitment to delivering value for the industry."

Dairy Australia thanks David Nation for his dedicated service and welcomes Matt Shaffer as the organisation embarks on its next chapter. Matt is due to take the helm from 16 July 2025.

His leadership at DataGene, along with his deep engagement across global networks, government, and the dairy industry, positions him well to lead Dairy Australia into a new era.

Photo courtesy of farmonline.com.au

Managing Winter Pastures in 2025

Ross Warren
Senior Dairy Extension Officer
Department of Primary Industries, Queensland

Winter is well underway across the region and winter pastures and crops are up and going. Very wet conditions in northern NSW, South-east Queensland, North Queensland and coastal districts have proved problematic, however, generally the feed is quite good, and cows are grazing.

The warm start to winter has presented a few unusual circumstances. The moist, humid conditions have created a perfect environment for grey leaf spot (blast) to infect many ryegrass pastures, regardless of variety. To minimise the damage from blast, it is best to graze to about 5cm residual height, top the pasture if necessary, apply fertiliser and irrigate if required to promote new leaf growth. If left unmanaged, swards will thin out significantly or die, creating an unexpected feed gap. Some of these swards may need resowing to ensure a vigorous sward in spring.

Nutrient deficiencies and pugging have also been evident early in the ryegrass season where rainfall has been constant. Identifying plant symptoms is important before applying fertiliser, as deficiencies may be due to potassium, sulphur and nitrogen in some circumstances. More resowing may be needed if pugging has decimated the plant population, again to thicken the sward, and prevent broadleaf weed encroachment.

The wet conditions in some regions have delayed planting, with sowing occurring in late May to early June. These pastures will be slower to establish due to lower soil temperatures. However, once established, they should be nipped off to promote tillering, bearing in mind that there may only be 500-600 kg dry matter (DM) per hectare available in the first grazing. Tiller promotion leads to greater yields, sward survivability and reduces competition from weeds.

Prudent grazing management also reduces the cost of pasture utilised and improves margin over feed cost. Pasture management is difficult during challenging seasons, but when done well, high levels of profit can be achieved. Grazing leaf and managing residual height are primary objectives of any pasture-based system. Grazing below

Photo 1: Ideal stage to graze ryegrass pasture.

5cm residual height will reduce plant energy reserves, decrease yields and reduce plant population. Conversely, high residuals increase plant maturity, decreases quality and increases the risk of sward disease. Grazing frequency is equally important to optimise pasture utilisation. Grazing too often can limit intake and can be a factor in milk fat depression. Grazing too little can reduce seasonal yields, compromise plant quality and increase the risk of disease in swards. Monitoring leaf emergence, allocating feed, back fencing, managing supplements and altering stock numbers are just some of the factors influencing utilisation. When done well, substantial rewards are possible.

C4 Milk experiments at Gatton Research Dairy have shown that grazing annual ryegrass at the two-leaf stage increases total seasonal leaf yield compared to grazing at the three-leaf stage. Leaf utilisation totalled 13,296 kg DM/ha when grazed at the two-leaf stage versus 11,954 kg DM/ha when grazed at the three-leaf stage. The stem proportion of the two-leaf grazing was around half that of three-leaf grazing: 3,545 kg DM/ha versus 7,018 kg DM/ha, respectively. Feed quality (per kg DM) was consistently

Photo 2: Overgrazed ryegrass pasture (ryegrass oversown into Rhodes grass)

Photo 3: Underutilised ryegrass pasture

high across both grazing strategies. Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) increased as the season progressed and was lower in leaf (37-40%) than in stem (42-47%). Metabolisable energy (ME) decreased as the season progressed and was higher in leaf (11.6 – 11.1 MJ) than stem (11.1-10.6 MJ). Crude protein decreased as the season progressed and was higher in leaf (36-29%) than stem (30-24%). Overall, ryegrass is a high yielding and nutritious forage, irrespective of two- or three-leaf stage grazing strategies. On commercial dairies, annual utilisation has been measured at over 14,000 kg DM/ha. Remember ryegrass only grows three leaves before the tiller gets longer and the "fourth" leaf dies. If ryegrass is approaching canopy closure, it needs to be grazed or conserved, be that either the two- or three-leaf stage.

On average, feed related costs represent around 50% of total expenditure of a dairy business. Daily diet costs for pasture-based systems can be as low as $5 per cow, with a margin over feed cost of over $10 per cow. Capitalising on temperate pastures and the few cool months we have in Queensland and northern NSW is critical to ensuring a profit across the whole year.

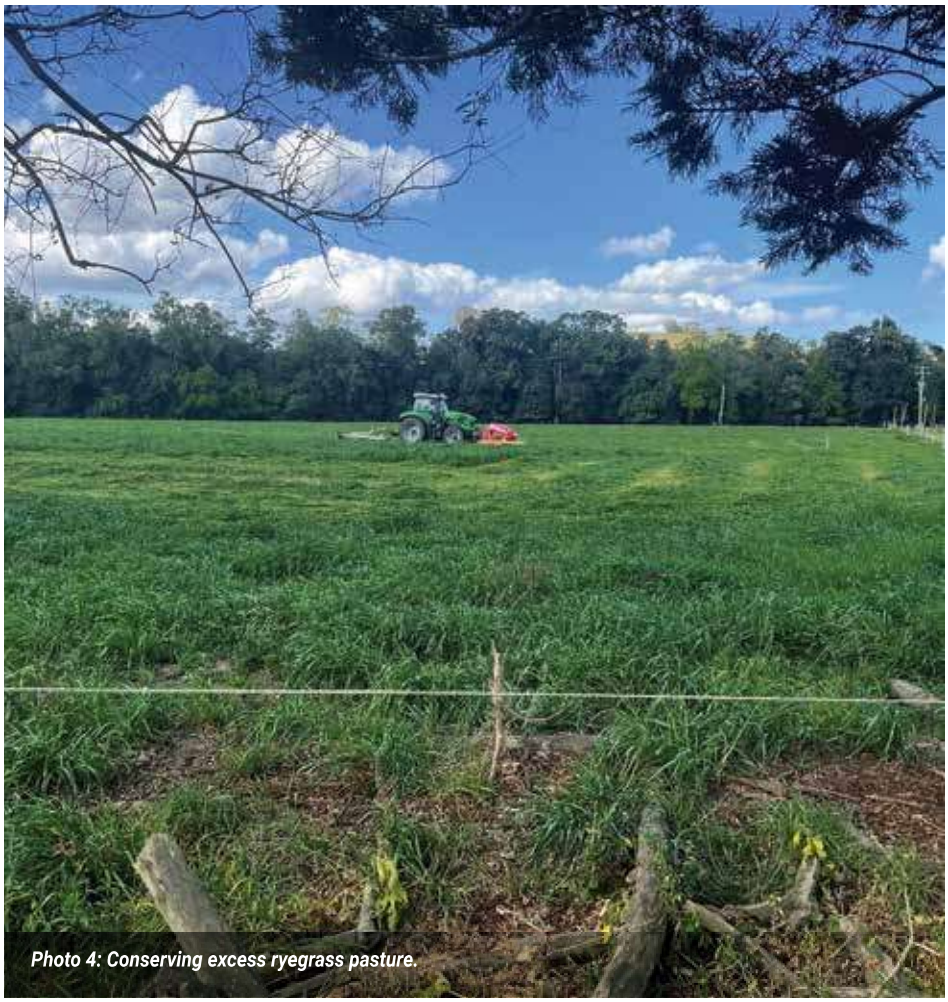


Photo 4: Conserving excess ryegrass pasture.

SAFER: A Practical Approach to Risk Management

Di Gresham
Human Resource Consultant

Managing hazards is a critical part of building and maintaining a farm safety system. It underpins and shapes many elements of day-to-day operations — from the operating procedures you need, the training you provide to staff, maintenance, and personal protective equipment required. Effective hazard control helps determine what actions are necessary to keep people safe.

The prospect of doing risk assessments can at times seem like a burden. It might seem like they take too long and you don't have time – just another layer of paperwork that slows things down. It may also seem a bit daunting if you think they require specialised knowledge or training and the paperwork is hard to understand. As a result, they're often left until something goes wrong — when in reality, doing them up front saves time, money, and serious harm.

To help simplify the risk management process, Dairy Australia has developed the SAFER approach — a practical, step-by-step method to help identify hazards, reduce risk and implement effective controls. A range of supporting resources are available in the Farm Safety Manual and on The People in Dairy website to guide you through each stage.

Let's break down each stage of the SAFER approach, showing how it can be used to identify hazards, assess risk, take action, and maintain a safer working environment.

SEE IT – Spot the hazard

The first step is to go on a hazard hunt. Walk around your farm and observe what could potentially cause harm. Consider things like:

- Structures and machinery
- Chemicals and fuels
- Electricity, ladders, and noise
- Livestock, terrain, and weather
- Human factors like fatigue, stress, and workforce age

Also think about what's changed recently — new tasks, equipment, or weather conditions can all affect the level of risk.

To help guide this process, the Farm Safety Manual includes detailed modules on 14 common hazard topics, complete with self-assessments, checklist and other templates to help identify what you are looking for.

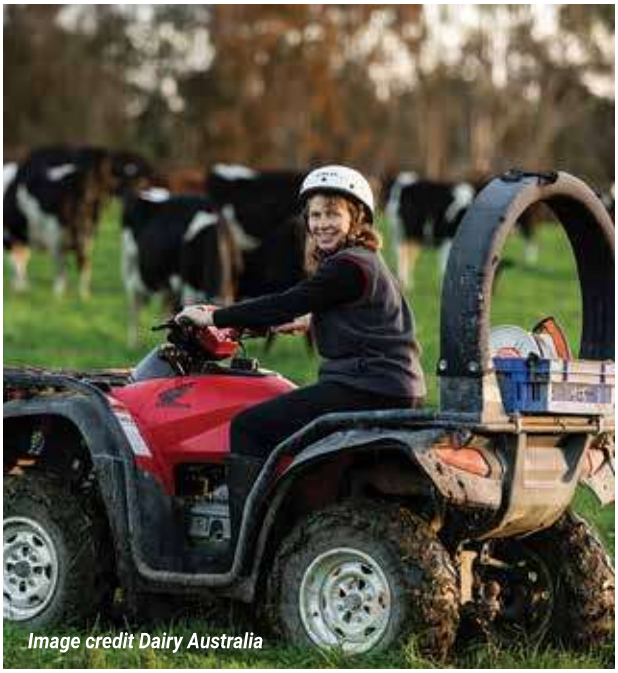


Image credit Dairy Australia

ASSESS IT – Decide how risky it is

Once a hazard is identified, the next step is to assess the likelihood of something going wrong and the potential consequences. Key questions to ask include:

- Who could be harmed and how?
- What could happen, and how bad would it be?
- How likely is it to happen?
- What's already in place to reduce the risk?

Use the Risk Assessment Matrix to determine a risk rating. This involves:

1. Estimating the most serious consequence that could reasonably occur (e.g. first aid, lost time, permanent disability, or fatality).
2. Rating the likelihood of that outcome — is it almost certain, or going to be very rare?

This gives a risk score (1–25) that guides the next steps.

Most Serious Consequence What Harm will be the outcome	Likelihood of the Injury/Incident occurring				
	A Almost Certain	B Likely	C Possible	D Unlikely	E Rare
Fatality	1	2	4	7	11
Permanent Disability	3	5	8	12	16
Lost time injury	6	9	13	17	20
Medical treatment injury	10	14	18	21	23
First Aid	15	19	22	24	25

Supporting resources such as step-by-step guides in the Farm Safety Manual can help you work through this process. Codes of Practice and guidance material from WorkSafe Qld and SafeWork NSW provide a range of information on specific risk and how to manage them.

FIX IT – Take action to control the risk

Once the risk level is known, you can choose the best control measures. Ask yourself:

- What are we already doing to reduce this risk?
- Are the existing controls adequate?
- Do the controls protect everyone exposed to the hazard?

Use your risk rating to decide what action is needed and how urgently:

Risk Rating	Acceptance guide	What to do	Time Frame
Extreme 1 – 7	Not acceptable	Stop work. Isolate or eliminate the risk. Add to risk register.	Immediately
High 8 – 14	Generally not acceptable	Control the risk as soon as reasonably practicable. Monitor closely	Weekly/Ongoing
Medium 15 – 21	Generally acceptable	Use safe operating procedures. Monitor & supervise.	Within 3 – 6 months
Low 22 – 23	Acceptable	Managed with SOP*. Review	12 months

**Standard Operating Procedure*

EVALUATE IT – Check if it's working

After a period of time it's important to check your controls and ensure they are working in the way you intended. Ask yourself:

- Has the level of risk actually decreased?
- Has a new risk been introduced?
- Are workers trained and following the procedures?
- Have there been any failures, near misses, or changes to the job?

Talk to your staff. If things aren't working as planned, reassess and adjust your approach. Have an action plan in place to make sure your controls remain effective.

REVIEW IT – Keep It Up to Date

Risk management is not a one-time task. As part of your responsibilities under WHS law, you should review your controls regularly — at least annually, and any time there is:

- A change in equipment, process, or personnel
- An incident or near miss
- New information about the hazard or safer methods

Make sure your controls are still relevant, effective, and correctly implemented. Don't wait for an incident before acting.

Why it Matters?

Correctly identifying and assessing risk helps determine what actions are needed to keep people safe and the operation running smoothly. Done well, it can:

- Prevent or reduce the severity and cost of injuries and illnesses
- Support worker capability – when risks are well controlled, staff feel confident and can work more efficiently and without fear
- Boost productivity and quality – safe systems allow innovation to flourish and promote more consistent, higher-quality work

A strong risk assessment process is not just about compliance — it's about protecting your people, supporting your daily activities, and improving the long-term performance of your farm business.

Shed Build Shock: What Steve Missed in the Ground

Di Gresham
Human Resource Consultant

Steve was excited. Today marked the start of a long-anticipated project—a new commodity shed that would boost storage capacity and protect the quality of feed. It was the biggest structure yet on the farm, set to sit between the feed mill and the machinery shed. The team knew the construction would disrupt access and laneways, but the benefits of the new shed would be great and everyone was happy to work around the inconvenience.

With a background in construction, Steve had been heavily involved in the shed's design and was now keen to be hands-on with the build. His team picked up many of his regular tasks, leaving him free to manage site preparation and formwork for the slab.

After scraping the grass with the front-end loader, Steve jumped into the hired excavator to dig footings. Just three buckets in, he heard a loud crack. As he pulled back the arm, he saw the unmistakable end of electrical conduit rising from the ground.

He'd hit the main underground power line connecting the switchboard on the machinery shed to the silos and feed mill.

The excitement turned to extreme stress.

The entire farm lost power—including the house. The electrician and the electricity service provider had to be called in urgently. The farm's operations ground to a halt, and the service provider was far from impressed. What had been planned as a smooth construction started with a costly and disruptive incident.

With a background in construction, Steve had been heavily involved in the shed's design and was now keen to be hands-on with the build.

Where Things Went Wrong

Steve's focus had been on logistics—shed layout, vehicle access, and getting the job done. What he had not done was a thorough risk assessment, especially around the site preparation phase. Had he paused to assess the risks, the damage could have been avoided.

Here's how Steve's risk assessment should have looked using the **SAFER** approach:

S – SEE IT: Identify the Hazards

- The shed site sits between two power-connected structures. That's a strong clue that underground cables may be present.
- Steve assumed there was no risk because the new shed would not be powered—but the feed mill and silos still relied on underground supply.
- A quick discussion with the farm electrician or his father (who oversaw the feed mill installation) could have confirmed the cable's presence.

- The key hazard: **Underground power line beneath the proposed build site.**

Key Risks:

- Damaging underground cable during excavation or footing work
- Electric shock, equipment damage, or full-site power outage
- Breach of service provider clearance and access requirements
- Cable location and depth unknown—creates hidden hazard

A – ASSESS IT: Evaluate the Risk

- **Likelihood:** High during any ground disturbance if cable position is unknown
- **Consequences:** Severe—electrocution, serious injury, outages, repair costs, possible fines
- **Risk rating: High;** 1 on the risk matrix
- **Control step:** Contact electrician, use a cable locator, and confirm cable depth and alignment

F – FIX IT: Control the Risk

Avoid building directly over the cable—reposition shed if possible.

If the cable can't be avoided:

- Consult the electricity provider for approval and conditions before starting any work
- Use vacuum excavation or hand digging near cable zones
- Clearly mark the cable route with paint or physical markers
- Never use a probe to search for buried services
- Install barriers and signage around high-risk areas
- Have an observer or spotter during any digging
- Brief all workers on the location and risks
- Have an emergency plan in place in case of contact

E – EVALUATE IT: Ensure Controls Are Working

- Use a pre-start checklist to confirm all controls are in place
- Double-check the cable location before and during excavation
- Monitor site changes—any design or method shift can introduce new risks

R – REVIEW IT: Improve Over Time

- Review the risk after key construction milestones or changes to the build plan
- Keep thorough records of cable locations, provider advice, and staff training
- Update the farm map to show cable locations for future works or repairs

Final Thoughts

Steve's story is a reminder that even with experience, enthusiasm can cloud judgment. A few minutes spent identifying and managing risks can save hours of repair, thousands in costs, and potentially a life. Farm safety isn't about slowing things down—it's about keeping progress on track, without the setbacks.

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.

Annual Minimum Wage Increase

Effective 1 July 2025

The Fair Work Commission has announced a 3.5% increase to the National Minimum Wage and minimum award wages following the 2024–25 Annual Wage Review.

From 1 July 2025, the new National Minimum Wage will be:

- **$948.00 per week (full-time)**
- **$24.95 per hour**

This increase applies to all minimum pay rates under the Pastoral Award and other modern awards.

What Employers Need to Do

From the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2025, you must:

- Ensure all employees are paid at or above the new minimum wage or their applicable Farm and Livestock Hand (FLH) Level
- Update payroll systems, employment contracts, and individual flexibility agreements to reflect the new rates
- Review and adjust allowances, penalty rates, deductions, and any other amounts linked to base pay

Tip: It's not just the hourly rate that changes—other payments based on it will also need to be updated.

Final Checks

- Make sure your payroll software is up to date. If not, update the rates manually
- Take this opportunity to check in with your staff and ensure their contact and payroll details are current

Superannuation

The superannuation guarantee rate will rise to 12% from 1 July 2025. This rate must be applied to ordinary time earnings for all salary and wages paid to eligible workers on or after 1 July, even if some of the work was performed before that date.

Managing dairy cows with Halter virtual-fencing technology

Megan Verdon
University of Tasmania,
Tasmanian Instiute of Agriculture
utas.edu.au/tia

Research results

(preliminary, September 2023)

Virtual-fencing is an emerging technology with the potential to revolutionise livestock management.

How does the technology work?

Virtual-fencing requires each cow to wear a collar that communicates to the animal using sensory cues, rather than relying on stock-people and electric fencing.

The Halter virtual-fencing system uses sound (called 'piezo'), electrical (called 'pulse'), and vibration cues.

Cows are confined to a pasture allocation using the piezo and pulse cues. A 'virtual-fence' is set via GPS and its location is communicated to each collar. As the cow approaches the virtual-fence, the collar emits a benign piezo cue. If the cow ignores the piezo, the collar delivers a pulse. However, if the animal stops walking or turns around at the piezo, no pulse is delivered.

Halter can also remotely shift cows to the dairy using piezo and vibration cues. The piezo guides cows in the right direction, while the vibration encourages them to continue moving forward. A pulse is only delivered if the piezo and vibration cues are ignored.

Over time, the cow learns to avoid a pulse by responding to the piezo or vibration cues.

What was examined?

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, in collaboration with Halter, assessed the effectiveness of this technology to manage lactating dairy cows.

What was the outcome?

Cows quickly learned the cue associations. After training, most cows received ≤1 pulse per 100 piezo cues when confined to a pasture allocation and ≤1 pulse every 4 transitions to the dairy.

KEY POINTS

- This is the longest study of virtual-fencing on lactating dairy cows, and the first to study the application of Halter technology.
- Eighty mid-lactation dairy cows were split into two groups and managed with Halter virtual-fencing system for a 10-day training and 4-week management period.
- Cows quickly learn to respond to the sound cue when the technology is holding them in a paddock. Most of this learning occurs within one day.
- Transitioning is a more complex function so takes longer to learn, but cows start shifting unassisted within a week of the start of training.
- During the management period cows received 2.6 pulses per 100 piezo cues.
- The ratio of pulse: piezo observed in this study is lower than previously reported in the literature using other technologies.

What did the trial involve?

Conducted at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's Dairy Research Facility, this trial examined how cattle adjusted to the Halter virtual-fencing system. The study considered two time periods:

T The training period occurred over 10-days. Stock people and electrified tape were gradually removed over the training period as dependence on the collar cues increased.

M The management period was 4-weeks long, starting after training ended. In this time cows were managed entirely with the Halter technology.

Cows were milked twice per day. They were fed 9 kg pasture DM/day in a 24-h allocation, supplemented with 7 kg silage DM/day and 6 kg grain DM/day fed in the dairy.

Ratio of pulses to piezo cues declined over time

At day 1, at least 60% of piezo cues resulted in a pulse.

From days 2-10, 6.4% of piezo/vibration cues resulted in a pulse.

In the management period, 2.3% of piezo/vibration cues resulted in a pulse.

What were the findings?

The training period

Cows quickly started responding to the piezo when in the paddock, and most of this learning occurred within one day.

Learning to transition took longer, but cows were shifting from the paddock to the dairy unassisted by day 4.

The management period

When in the paddock, 90% of cows spent ≤ 1.7 mins/d over the virtual-fence (≤0.15% of daily paddock time).

Most cows interacted with the virtual-fence at least once/d (10th percentile for interactions 1.14), but seldom received more than 1 pulse/d (90th percentile 0.71 pulses/d).

More than half of cows received ≤1 pulse/100 piezo cues when in the paddock, and few exceed 7 pulses/100 piezo.

Vibration was active for 4.4% of transition time. Cows received ≤10 piezo and ≤0.43 pulses/d during transitions (50th percentiles). With two transitions to the dairy each day, this equates to <1 pulse every 4 transitions.

During week 4, 50% of cows received zero pulses in the paddock and 35% received zero pulses while transitioning.

Median (or 50th percentile) for number of cues delivered per day of each time period (with 5th to 95th percentiles in parenthesis).

Variable	Training Period		Management Period			
	Day 1	Days 2 to 10	Week 11	Week 21	Week 31	Week 4
In the paddock						
Piezo	19.0 (7.2-32)	7.3 (2.6-52.1)	4.4 (1.0-61.9)	6.4 (1.1-82.7)	5.1 (0.41-110)	4.7 (0.41-71.3)
Pulse	11.0 (4.0-20.0)	0.56 (0.0-2.3)	0.14 (0.0-1.6)	0.14 (0.0-1.8)	0.14 (0.0-1.7)	0.0 (0.0-1.2)
Pulse: Piezo	0.600 (0.3-0.95)	0.045 (0.0-0.17)	0.018 (0.0-0.12)	0.013 (0.0-0.09)	0.006 (0.0-0.12)	0.00 (0.0-0.07)
Transitions						
Piezo	N/A	20.5 (10.5-46.6)	9.0 (5.6-18.2)	9.2 (6.0-16.6)	7.0 (2.9-13.2)	5.3 (2.7-9.3)
Pulse	N/A	1.44 (0.67-2.5)	0.33 (0.0-1.14)	0.17 (0.0-0.67)	0.17 (0.0-0.59)	0.14 (0.0-0.44)
Pulse: Piezo	N/A	0.072 (0.02-0.21)	0.036 (0.0-0.13)	0.019 (0.0-0.09)	0.021 (0.0-0.13)	0.018 (0.0-0.17)
Daily total						
Piezo	N/A	31.9 (16.8-90.5)	14.7 (8.0-63.8)	16.5 (8.2-109)	13.6 (5.2-118)	11.1 (4.1-76)
Pulse	N/A	2.0 (1.2-4.0)	0.67 (0.17-1.7)	0.40 (0.0-2.6)	0.43 (0.0-1.9)	0.29 (0.0-1.12)
Pulse: Piezo	N/A	0.064 (0.03-0.16)	0.033 (0.01-0.11)	0.021 (0.0-0.06)	0.024 (0.0-0.11)	0.017 (0.0-0.07)

N/A no transition data recorded this day due to technical error of unknown cause.

MOVING HAY?

FIRE ANTS HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR YOUR LAND

DON'T SPREAD FIRE ANTS

The movement of soil, hay, mulch, manure, quarry products, turf and potted plants present significant risks. Visit our website to find out what steps you should be taking to ensure you don't spread fire ants.

fireants.org.au

NATIONAL Fire Ant Eradication PROGRAM

Queensland Government

Our Farm, Our Plan

Ramada Ballina – Overnight intensive workshop 30th and 31st July

Dairy Australia

Dairy Australia's Our Farm, Our Plan program provides the opportunity for you to take time out of your business to spend time on your business. Get your plan on a page, and everyone on the same page.

With support from the Australian Governments Farm Business Resilience Program and NSW DPI, the program will be delivered for dairy farmers as an intensive 2 day (overnight) workshop in Ballina, northern NSW.

The workshop will be co-delivered with experienced farm consultant Phil Shannon and the Dairy Australia team, including Neil Webster, who leads the Our Farm, Our Plan project nationally.

Farmers participating will then receive follow up one-on-one sessions over the next two years, including two of those being with Phil Shannon.

Australian Government

NSW GOVERNMENT

Details

Starts Midday Wednesday 30th July
Ramada Hotel & Suites, Ballina.

Concludes 1pm Thursday 31st July
depart after lunch

Lunch, dinner and accommodation are provided for all participants thanks to partner funding support. Participants will need to arrange their own travel.

REGISTER HERE

or scan the code or call 1800 548 073

Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority

Make your start in the dairy industry with QRIDA

- Purchase your first block of land
- Enter into lease or sharefarming arrangements
- Put succession plans into place
- Become a partner in the family farm

- ✓ Up to $2 million for First Start Loans
- ✓ No flexible repayment terms
- ✓ No set up or exit fees
- ✓ Low, fixed rates for 1, 3 or 5 years

Talk to your local Regional Area Manager on 1800 623 946 or scan to find out how a QRIDA First Start Loan could help you get your foot on a farm*.

**Eligibility criteria applies. The information contained herein is for general information purposes only. You should not rely upon this information as a basis for making any business, legal or any other decisions.*

qrida.qld.gov.au 1800 623 946 contact_us@qrida.qld.gov.au

Queensland Government

Authorised by the Queensland Government, Turbot St, Brisbane

RIC Farm Loans Fast facts

RIC (Regional Investment Corporation) is an Australian Government specialist lender committed to strengthening Australian agriculture and building thriving regional communities, by providing low interest loans to farm businesses and farm-related small businesses.

Our loans can be used to prepare for, manage through, and recover from unforeseen severe business disruption due to drought, natural disasters, biosecurity issues or other significant market events. They can also support first generation farmers to establish farm businesses or succession planning for next generation farmers.

After more than 6 years in operation, our RIC loan portfolio now exceeds 3300 loans, with more than $3.5 billion in settled funds providing direct on-farm benefit.

RIC loans have a valuable impact beyond on-farm investment alone. The flow-on effect of RIC loans creates economic activity in regional areas, benefiting regional community growth and the wider Australian economy. Loans repaid to the Australian Government can then be reallocated to fund other programs.

What do you need to know about RIC loans

RIC offers low-interest loans to strengthen Australia's farming future

About two-thirds of RIC loans support sheep, beef cattle and grains farming. These industries contribute more than 50% of all agriculture, fisheries and forestry value of production.

RIC loans are helping to grow the Australian agricultural industry and build regional communities

89% of customers agree their RIC loan has given them greater confidence in the future of their farm, while 62% of customers say their RIC loan facilitated the implementation of sustainable agriculture practices, which they see as a priority to improve long-term business viability and minimise future risk.

RIC adds value to individual farms and farm-related businesses by accelerating recovery and building future-ready farms

Our farm business and farm-related small business loans:

- Support eligible businesses as they manage through downturns, recover, rebuild and prepare – Farm Investment, Drought, AgBiz Drought loans
- Help get businesses off to a good start, grow and keep farmers in farming – AgriStarter Loan for first generation farmers and succession planning

RIC is different to a bank

We are proud to work alongside the Australian agricultural sector and the financial services industry but we are not a bank.

RIC provides loans, not overdraft or transactional accounts.

The Australian Government does not make a profit from RIC loans. RIC offers low-interest, long-term loans with no ongoing account-keeping fees and no penalty fees for early repayment.

RIC loans need to be repaid

Unlike government grants, RIC loans are paid back. Responsible lending and eligibility criteria apply, including adequate security and the ability to service the loan by making repayments.

RIC interest rate terms are concessional

RIC loan interest rates allow customers to plan and manage cash flow in advance.

- The 10-year loan term includes 5 years' interest only and 5 years' principal and interest repayments.
- Interest rates are variable but are only reviewed twice a year.
- Interest rates are reviewed in consideration of any changes to the Commonwealth Government 10-year Bond rate.

Not all Australian farm and farm-related businesses are eligible for a RIC loan

RIC loans are for businesses in financial need who meet specific eligibility criteria: Complete our quick quiz at ric.gov.au/resources to find out if a RIC loan could be an option for you. Read the loan eligibility criteria and document checklist. Talk to a trusted adviser before you apply. Information on eligible farm industries is available at ric.gov.au/eligible-industries

Loan terms designed to support farmers in financial need

A 10-year loan term with options:

- Repay early or refinance back to a commercial lender at end of the loan term
- Nominate a repayment cycle to best suit individual needs, such as monthly, quarterly or half-yearly

Our assessment team provides individual support from draft application through to settlement

RIC loan applications can be submitted online or in hardcopy. Our team of professional Agri lending specialist can support you from initial enquiry to access your religibility, through application, settlement and beyond. If you need help with your application, please call 1800 875 675 or email info@ric.gov.au

P 1800 875 675 E info@ric.gov.au W ric.gov.au

RIC (Regional Investment Corporation)
ABN 99 528 049 038 Published: May 2025

RIC farm loans

* Interest rates effective from 1 February 2025.
Interest rates reviewed every 6 months.

Agristarter Loan

Accelerate plans to help secure a first farm business or support succession arrangements.

$2m Max amount	**5.18%** Variable rate
10 Year term	**5** Years interest only

Farm Investment Loan

Recover from severe business impact and prepare for future financial disruptions.

$2m Max amount	**5.18%** Variable rate
10 Year term	**5** Years interest only

Drought Loan

For drought preparedness management and recovery activities.

$2m Max amount	**5.18%** Variable rate
10 Year term	**5** Years interest only

AgBiz Drought Loan

Enable farm-related small businesses to manage through, and recover from drought.

$500k Max amount	**5.18%** Variable rate
10 Year term	**5** Years interest only

Australian Government | RIC

1800 875 675 info@ric.gov.au ric.gov.au

RIC (Regional Investment Corporation) ABN 99 528 049 038 Published: March 2025

T&Cs. eligibility & credit criteria apply

Project Update

P9a Producing milk with less lactose

Unlocking the potential of cows

Milk underpins the dairy industry. Getting more from this precious commodity has the potential to increase its value throughout the supply chain.

The Dairy UP team is investigating novel ways to get more value from milk.

There are three elements to this research:

P9a Producing milk with less lactose

P9b Milk as an indicator of heat load

P9c Adding value to dairy waste

This document provides an overview of P9

Climate change is increasing pressure to produce food with less water. As milk is 87% water, producing milk with less water is an opportunity for the dairy industry to improve its carbon footprint, reduce energy costs and improve water use efficiency. This could create more value and profit along the supply chain.

This project aims to find ways to produce cows' milk with high concentrations of solids.

Lactose is the focus of this work as it plays a key role in determining milk's water content.

The project is investigating the theory that those cows that produce less lactose would produce milk with less water and higher concentrations of solids.

Potential benefits

Lactose has broad roles in the physiology of the dairy cow, which means the potential to influence lactose production has a wide range of potential benefits.

Animal performance, health and welfare

It takes a lot of energy for a cow to produce lactose so reducing the production of lactose could improve the energy balance of the cow, especially during the transition period. Improved energy balance could also have a role in reproduction and fertility.

Lactose is also associated with some animal health traits. For example, milk lactose content could be used to monitor or detect mastitis and ketosis in dairy cows.

Farm labour

If reducing lactose production means cows produce milk containing less water, it may be possible to reduce the frequency of milking. This could provide a labour-saving opportunity.

Processing and transport

A reduction in milk volume could also lead to more efficient transport – carting less water or volume overall – and gains in the processing sector.

This project

This project builds on earlier work in California led by Dairy UP collaborator Prof Russ Hovey that demonstrated it is possible to reduce the lactose in milk production without negatively affecting the total milk solids output. To identify potential management interventions to reduce lactose production, Dairy UP researchers are investigating the factors that influence lactose secretion in the cow, for example milk composition, genetics and environmental conditions.

There are two elements of this project. The first project is investigating the impact of genetics and other management or environmental influences. It involves analysing data from Dairy UP monitor farms, NSW herd test results and DataGene's Central Data Repository.

The second is research to better understand lactose synthesis in the dairy cow and how it is regulated. This work is being undertaken at the University of California, Davis, USA.

Genetic, management and environmental influences

Results to date show significant variations across breeds, lactation stages, parity (number of calvings) and seasonal conditions. Researchers have been able to identify cows that consistently produced milk with reduced lactose content or lactose yield while maintaining similar fat and protein levels.

These findings indicate there could be opportunities to improve milk production efficiency by enhancing milk composition and reducing water content.

Research approach

This work involved examining datasets of herd records, genetic data for dairy sires and meteorological records. Spanning 14 years (2008-2022) the dataset included 393,772 herd records from 33,280 cows in 85 herds, representing 5% of the NSW herd records.

The following summarises some of the high-level findings about the factors affecting lactose production in Australian dairy cows.

Parity (number of calvings)

The lactose percentage was higher for heifers throughout their lactation but their total lactose yield wasn't.

Stage of lactation

Stage of lactation had a strong impact on lactose output, peaking in early lactation and decreasing as the lactation progressed (similar to the milk yield curve).

Seasonal conditions

Hot, humid weather negatively affected yield of milk, lactose and milk solids but it did not affect lactose percentage or other milk components. A decline in milk yield lactose yield and protein yield coincided with severe drought conditions from 2016.

Breed

Holsteins had the highest lactose yields. Jerseys had the lowest lactose yields produced more milk solids per unit of lactose. This finding wasn't surprising given that Jerseys are well recognised for producing milk with higher concentrations of solids for a given volume of milk compared with other dairy breeds like Holsteins.

Genetic link

Building on these findings, Dairy UP researchers uncovered a genetic link for the NSW cows that produce less lactose.

Investigation of bull Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) demonstrated low lactose producing cows were descendants from 13 sires (mostly Jerseys).

All the daughters (or descendants) of these sires produced a similar milk yield, but with more fat, and showed a trend towards lower protein production. There was no difference in daughter fertility.

Implications

These findings highlight the potential for selective breeding for cows that produce less lactose and more milk solids and less milk volume.

The findings also highlight the potential to develop management strategies to influence lactose production and enhance the milk production efficiency of cows and potentially reduce their environmental impact.

Lactose synthesis

A 'proof of concept' study has shown it is possible to change the proportion of lactose in milk without affecting fat and protein production.

The study involved Holsteins in a total mixed ration farming system that were on their second calf and at peak lactation.

It demonstrated that a single treatment with the drug dexamethasone temporarily reduced the amount of lactose in the cow's udder. Fat and protein production increased in response to the treatment as milk volume decreased.

The team has uncovered a possible explanation for this finding. Advanced genetic testing pointed to a regulatory molecule involved in lactose synthesis (alpha-lactalbumin) that was suppressed by the dexamethasone treatment.

This finding offers new insights for researchers to better understand the factors regulating milk yield (volume) relative to the fat and protein content which could lead to interventions. This work was published in Frontiers in Genetics.

Next steps

The next phase will involve working with Dairy UP farm data and additional data from NSW farms to conduct an in-depth analysis of cows that have shown reduced lactose production and milk volume and higher milk solids.

Collaborators

This project involves collaboration between Dairy UP researchers based at the University of California Davis (USA), DPI NSW and the University of Sydney. A large proportion of the herd records were provided by DataGene.

Read more

Gargiulo, J.I., S.C. Garcia, and R.C. Hovey (2025) Sources of Variation Underlying the Production of Lactose by Dairy Cows

Project lead

Juan Gargiulo juan.gargiulo@dpi.nsw.gov.au or **Russell Hovey** rchovey@ucdavis.edu

New data automations a game changer for farmers and advisers

DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

Recent automations in data transfer from on farm software is a game changer for farmers, dairy vets and advisers.

Dr Craig Wood from Terang and Mortlake Vet Clinic has been analysing the data from dairy herd records for years, to help his clients make informed decisions about mastitis management, selective dry cow treatments and culling.

Until now, accessing herd data has been challenging and varied with different on-farm software systems. Craig said he would either have to visit the farm on site to manually download the data himself or get the farmer to create and email him a dif file or get a back-up file from the on-farm software. This process had to be repeated regularly to ensure his analysis was based on current herd data.

"It was a time-consuming but worthwhile exercise because making decisions based on actual herd data directly affects the farm's financial performance, as well as animal health and welfare," he said.

Craig is excited about the DataConnect project which enables dairy farmers to set up a daily, automatic transfer of herd data from the farm to the industry's central data repository.

This means farmers and their trusted advisors can log into DataVat.com.au to access reports based on actual herd records to gain insights into mastitis management, selective dry cow therapy, improving herd fertility and genetic progress.

"The recent automations enable my clients to give me permission to access their herd data and reports anytime, anywhere. I can give better advice, faster, especially in the herd health space," he said.

"This really is a game-changer. Instead of spending half of my time on farm downloading data, I can do the analysis before I get there and the visit becomes a discussion about how the herd is doing, intervention options and a plan of action."

DataGene is rolling out connections with a variety of systems progressively over time, with DeLaval and GEA systems already up and running and others in progress.

"I've got a lot of clients with DeLaval systems so I'm keen to get them connected in the coming months."

At this stage, each herd needs to set up the connection. The process is quick, easy and secure. It's a once-off task that involves a 10-minute online session with DataGene's IT staff, who set up the connection process. Once connected, data is updated to the industry's central data repository every night. Herd owners control who they give access to their records via the DataVat website portal.

Dr Craig Wood says the data automations are a game changer.

The DataConnect project is a step towards DataGene's vision of a system that enables data to be entered once and then accessed in many different ways to eliminate double entry of the same information and to enable data-driven decisions through reports and tools that analyse the data.

Additional benefits of connecting include less double entry of data when it comes to genotyping and improved accuracy of breeding values – both for animals in the herd and the genetic evaluation of bulls.

DataGene is inviting dairy farmers with any system to express their interest now and they will be contacted when their system can connect.

If you would like to connect, use the QR code to fill in an expression of interest form.

DataGene is an initiative of Dairy Australia and the herd improvement industry.

For more information, contact DataGene on 1800 841 848 or dataconnect@datagene.com.au or www.datagene.com.au.

2025 Event Calendar

DATE	EVENT	REGION	LOCATION	CONTACT
July				
16-17	**Top Fodder**	Sunshine Coast	Kandanga	Belinda Haddow
29	**Farm System Evaluator workshop Day 1**	Sunshine Coast	Kandanga	Belinda Haddow
30-31	**Farm System Evaluator workshop Day 1 and 2**	Far North Qld	TBC	Fiona Neville
30-31	**Our Farm Our Plan**	Subtropical Dairy	Ballina NSW	Roisin Wilson
August				
5	**Farm System Evaluator Workshop Day 2**	Sunshine Coast	Kandanga	Belinda Haddow
20-21	**Top Fodder**	Far North Coast NSW	TBC	Roisin Wilson
27-28	**Top Fodder**	South-east Qld	Gatton	Belinda Haddow
November				
10	**Understanding Farm Carbon Workshop**	Far North Coast NSW	Casino	Roisin Wilson
20	**Subtropical Dairy Annual General Meeting**	Online	Online	Brad Granzin

Brad Granzin 0431 197 479
Belinda Haddow 0423 003 638
Fiona Neville 0427 033 709
Roisin Wilson 0419 176 212

Sponsors of Northern Horizons

DAIRYFIELDS

Subtropical Dairy Programme Ltd 2025 Director Elections

Applications close 6pm Friday 25 July 2025

Subtropical Dairy Programme Ltd (SDP) is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by an elected skills-based Board. SDP is Dairy Australia's Regional Development Program (RDP) for the northern Australian dairy industry throughout Queensland and northern NSW. SDP delivers Research, Development, Extension and Education outcomes for northern Australian dairy farmers.

The Board consists of seven directors. At our Annual General Meeting to be held online on 20 November, 2025, two farmer directors (Ruth Chalk and Elke Watson) and one service provider director (Mark Bauer) will be standing down. The remaining Board members are: Luke Stock (dairy farmer); Dan Cork (dairy farmer); Zita Ritchie (service provider) and Howard Smith (service provider).

Leading up to the AGM we are seeking nominations from dairy farmers for two board positions and from service providers for one board position. Terms are for three years. We are seeking Expressions of Interest from potential candidates to submit applications for Board positions through our selection panel process. Ruth Chalk, Mark Bauer and Elke Watson have indicated they will seek election through the same selection process as new candidates.

It is important for potential candidates to be aware that Subtropical Dairy is currently undergoing a transformation regarding its purpose and operations. The incumbent board anticipates significant change regarding how Subtropical Dairy operates from July 1, 2026.

The key skills being sought as agreed by standing members of the Board are:

i. *Dairy Industry Experience:* Candidates must be able to demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of the Australian and northern Australian dairy industry and its complexities across the value chain;

ii. *Milk-Producer Skills and Experience:* Farmers with an interest and understanding of research, development and/or extension across the Subtropical Dairy region are encouraged to apply;

iii. *Industry leadership:* It is desirable that a candidate can demonstrate an interest, involvement and knowledge of issues and industry structures and/or active participation and credibility within their community with the ability to facilitate consultative discussion;

iv. *Board / Committee Experience:* All candidates will be required to demonstrate their experience and abilities in key skills relating to the role of director, with relevance to legal obligations, developing and implementing strategy, monitoring organisation performance, ethical standards and developing stakeholder relationships.

v. *A demonstrated high standard of ethical business behaviour:* Subtropical Dairy operates under a Code of Business Conduct & Ethics, and a Governance Framework. Its purpose is to establish the ethical standards by which directors are required to abide. These standards go beyond compliance with laws and regulations to embrace the organization's values and commitments to its stakeholders.

vi. *Re-engineering and transforming not-for-profit organisations:* Candidates with skills in the development, deployment and collaboration of strategy within not-for-profit (NFP) organisations; developing public private partnerships; new service and project design for primary producers and/or agricultural service organisations; and generating revenue for NFPs.

vii. *Emerging Issues:* It is essential that all candidates can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of emerging issues and be able to apply them as they relate to the northern Australian dairy industry;

viii. *Research, Development, Extension and Education:* It is preferred that candidates understand leading research, development and extension activities and an interest in working with stakeholders and investors in these disciplines.

Please contact our Executive Officer, Brad Granzin on brad@subtropicaldairy.com.au or 0431 197 479 for further information. Applications must be lodged with the Executive Officer by 6 PM AEST Friday July 25, 2025.

SUBTROPICAL DAIRY

CHAIRMAN
Luke Stock
0474 800 245

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Dr Brad Granzin
0431 197 479

REGIONAL EXTENSION OFFICERS

SEQ/DD/Burnett
Belinda Haddow
0423 003 638

Sunshine Coast
Belinda Haddow
0423 003 638

Northern NSW
Roisin Wilson
0419 176 212

Far North QLD/CQ
Fiona Neville
0427 033 709