

Effluent Management: Why expert design matters



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Effluent management isn't just a box to tick—it's a vital part of running a successful and sustainable dairy farm. Every farm produces effluent, and how it's handled can make a big difference to productivity, compliance, and environmental outcomes.

Effluent doesn't have to be a problem—it can be a resource. When managed effectively, it can help grow feed and improve nutrient cycling on-farm. But to unlock these benefits, effluent systems need to be designed and operated correctly. That's where expert advice comes in.

Farmers also have a clear responsibility to manage effluent systems properly. Done well, these systems prevent pollution of air, water, and land. Done poorly, they can lead to serious issues such as odours, greenhouse gas emissions, nutrient loss, and leachate entering waterways or land where it doesn't belong. Beyond the environmental impact, failing to manage effluent correctly can put farmers at risk of breaching their state's Environmental Protection Act.

Designing an effluent system isn't a one-size-fits-all job. It requires knowledge of state guidelines, system components, application methods, and contingency planning. It also involves understanding compliance, economics, and how effluent can be integrated into farm productivity. Getting it wrong can be costly—not just financially, but environmentally and reputationally.

To support farmers, Dairy Australia, in partnership with Agriculture Victoria, runs the Design Livestock Effluent Systems

(DLES) program. This program regularly upskills service providers across the country, ensuring they have the latest knowledge in effluent design, management, and application. These experts cover everything from agronomy and irrigation to regulatory requirements, giving farmers confidence that their systems meet best practice standards.

In 2025, ten more participants completed the DLES program, adding to the growing network of accredited service providers. This means more farmers now have access to qualified professionals who can help turn effluent from a challenge into an opportunity.

If you're planning a new effluent system—or reviewing an existing one—the first step is to consult a properly qualified expert. The full list of accredited service providers is available on the Agriculture Victoria website.

Effluent management is too important to leave to chance. By working with qualified experts, farmers can protect the environment, stay compliant, and make the most of a valuable resource. It's an investment in the future of your farm—and the industry as a whole. ■ ■



[Click here for more information on effluent management and resources for dairy farmers.](#)