

The Milk Flow

WINTER EDITION - 2023

Message from the Board

The release of the May 2023 Situation outlook report from Dairy Australia has highlighted several key successes and growth areas for our local NSW dairy farming community, and national industry members.

The report shows that **86 per cent** of Australian farming businesses expect to be profitable this season, after being offered historically high farmgate milk prices, and that **84 per cent** of dairy farmers included in the study are feeling positive about their own businesses. Dairy Australia is projecting the milk pool will stabilise in the 2023/24 season.

Considering largescale changes to consumer behaviours, dairy continues to generate significant value through the retail sector, proving more sustainable compared to its plant-based and non-dairy competitors. The dairy supply chain remains intact despite macroeconomic disruptions, and processors' thirst for milk is likely to support firm farmgate milk prices next season. The report also shows that the domestic market has provided an avenue for robust returns for processors, which is welcomed news across the wider industry supply chain.

While workforce challenges and farmers exiting the dairy sector continue to weigh on production, there is significant potential for growth – which Dairy NSW is focusing acutely on with an increase in our Workplace Engagement and Retention programs, workshops, partnerships, and event activities.

The report findings identified that climate remains a concern for **40 per cent** of Australian farm businesses – partly driven by the unpredictability experienced over recent seasons. Optimistically though, the past wet seasons have helped prepare the dairy industry for drier conditions of an El Nino event which is predicted to form later this year. With plenty of irrigation water around and some improvements in feed availability, this will help reduce the impact of input prices and market challenges. Given past downturns and variable seasonal conditions, farmers are taking a conservative approach to operating their businesses and prioritising stability over expansion as employee shortages and unpredictable weather conditions challenge their overall business growth.

The Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program, a joint initiative between Dairy NSW and both State and Federal Government departments will address the long-term recovery and resilience of the NSW dairy industry over the coming two years. We will be producing a significant number of services,

recommendations, and solutions to respond to the above key issues highlighted in the May *Situation Outlook* report and create frameworks to ensure our dairy farming community is fully supported for a strong, sustainable future.

Several of the projects within the Storm and Flood Industry Program have already been deployed into the market, including:

- Our employment Jobs Board, which has placed **30 new employees** into NSW dairy farming jobs since launching in January this year.
- Dairy NSW has also increased our participation at career days, expos, and school on-farm excursions to promote industry employment opportunities and entry pathways to future dairy farmers.
- The unique 1:1 industry mentoring program **'Mentoring the future of Dairy'** has also launched into the NSW market. This 12-month program has been well received by NSW farmers, with outstanding registrations of mentees and mentors ready to commence their skill-development journey.
- Women's NRL champion, and generational dairy farmer, **Kezie Apps, has commenced an Ambassadorship for the NSW Dairy Farming Industry.** Raised on a dairy farm in NSW's Bega Shire, Kezie is passionate about promoting the dairy industry, raising its public profile, highlighting the nutritional benefits of dairy products, and encouraging new entrants into the dairy industry workforce. She will also be participating in our **'Mentoring the Future of Dairy'** program as an official mentor. Kezie has been paired with a young local dairy farming mentee from the NSW Mid North Coast region and is looking forward to sharing her skills and experience.

The board and staff at Dairy NSW remain committed in providing the best possible programs, services, and support to our local NSW dairy farming community, in a combined effort to build a successful and sustainable industry for years to come.

To connect with our board, please email paul@dairynsw.com.au.

Staff spotlight

Dairy NSW Workforce Attraction and Retention Project Officers, Laura Matthews and Tania Ketteringham.

Laura Matthews



Laura joined the Dairy NSW team earlier this year, as our Project officer for the Dairy Industry Workforce Attraction and Retention Division.

Raised on a Dairy Farm in New Zealand, Laura now calls the Mid-North Coast of NSW home and focuses her skills and experience on growing the local dairy industry workforce in the Mid-North Coast, Northern NSW regions.

She works tirelessly to support the local farmer and dairy supply chain organisations by providing employee advice and resources and implementing the Dairy NSW employment programs across these localities.

Tania Ketteringham



Tania has been with Dairy NSW since the end of 2022 and has made a name for herself with the local dairy community in NSW, specifically the Illawarra, far South Coast and Western NSW regions.

Tania brings almost 30 years of employment support and recruitment experience gained through senior operational roles with top performing Australian Government Employment Services.

She has leveraged her strong regional community networks, relationships with farmers and the wider industry to facilitate recruitment, support retention and build capability of people in dairy since commencing her role in the team.

Through industry promotion, Tania and Laura aim to increase attraction to the industry and create a greater awareness of Australian dairy as an opportunity for a meaningful and rewarding career.

The Workplace attraction and retention roles are funded by the Australian and NSW government's Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program and aim to support the dairy industry in the attraction and retention of staff. Key program areas of interest include, the Dairy Farm Jobs Board, Training and Development programs, and Promotion of the Dairy Industry.

To find out more about our workforce attraction and retention services, reach out to Laura and Tania via laura@dairynsw.com.au or tania@dairynsw.com.au.

Young Dairy Network tour inspires next generation farmers



Earlier this year, our Dairy NSW Regional Extension Officer, Alicia Richters, coordinated a five-day tour across Victoria visiting Melbourne, Gippsland, and Murray Regions with 20 delegates from the combined Young Dairy Network (YDN).

Focusing on the themes of Progression, Resilience and Innovation, the tour provided enthusiastic young industry delegates from dairy farms in Tasmania and NSW the opportunity to experience cutting-edge dairy farms, processing facilities, and research campuses at one research farm, six commercial farms, and DairyBio.

The tour kicked off with a visit to Dairy Australia's head office in Melbourne where delegates met with the Dairy Australia leadership team and technical experts, as well as setting their own personal and professional goals and visions via the Dairy Australia *Our Farm, Our Plan* program.

Next stop was a visit to the Ellinbank Smart Farm, where experts shared insights on current key projects related to farming systems, and discussed how these can be incorporated on the ground by our delegates back home.

The third day of the tour consisted of three on-farm visits in the local regions of Lardner, Lang Lang East, and Caldermead, exploring the diversity of dairy farming practices.

The following day, delegates visited Australian Fresh Milk Holdings in Coomboona. Meeting up with Murray Dairy YDN members and Dairy Australia staff, the group toured the facility and heard from staff about their careers in Dairy, and the path to success. This was an important day in the tour as delegates were able to openly share information, thoughts, and ideas within the group, and build stronger connections across the industry.

The final day of the tour included two farm visits. Firstly, stopping at Clydevale Holsteins, Robotic Compost Barn in Marcorna North, delegates heard from the multi-generational family about their journey in the industry and inspected this state-of-the-art facility. The final visit was to Calmo Farms, in Calivill. Owners, Jade, and Belinda Clymo shared their journey to building a barn for their cows and discussed their expansion plans, including multiple new barns to be constructed on the property.

Our tour delegates were inspired by each of the experts, professionals, and industry members they met with across this year's tour. Here is just some of their feedback.

'My favourite part of the tour was learning about other farming systems and gaining knowledge which I can apply to our own business.' – YDN Tour Delegate

'I enjoyed meeting up with other YDN groups, sharing information, thoughts, and ideas within a group of likeminded positive young dairy farmers. and now having more connections within the industry.' – YDN Tour Delegate

'I learnt that both dairy NSW and TAS have the industry in good hands, the people I met on the tour are incredibly switched on when it comes to the future of dairy. I originally thought Dairy Australia was just a place to advertise workshops etc. and to give verbal information, I have now learnt that Dairy Australia should be utilised by all dairy and non-dairy persons as there is a whole lot of information, support lines and help available.' – YDN Tour Delegate

Alicia Richters, Dairy NSW REO and YDN tour manager said, 'The delegates were all so encouraged to hear about all the things that Dairy Australia does across the entire business and that we care about their future in the industry, a hard thing to achieve when you put a bunch of hands-on farmers at a desk for a day! In a world where these young farmers have had such isolation over the past few years, to help them establish their own networks and to know they can reach out to a whole range of people to help them get to where they want to in their careers is inspiring and encouraging'.

Dairy NSW would like to thank all the incredible facilities, farms and individuals who welcomed our tour and YDN delegates into their businesses, and we wish this year's tour attendees the very best for their dairy farming future.

To find out more about our YDN program, contact alicia@dairynsw.com.au.

Expressions of interest now open for NSW's next dairy Focus Farmer

Dairy Australia is calling for applications from local NSW Dairy Farmers to feature their business as our next Focus Farmer. We are eager to hear from farmers interested in exercising industry change practices, this may include a farmer planning to intensify their operations, and/or those in the process of navigating farm succession plans.

The Dairy Australia *Focus Farms* program centres on farming families and enterprises. It aims to assist Focus Farmers to achieve their stated goals during a defined period in which they are supported by an experienced group of industry members made up of farmers and local service providers.

The benefits from being involved in the Focus Farm project are considerable for the individual, and the wider dairy farming community.

This is an opportunity for a farmer to share their personal knowledge and experience with other farm businesses that are looking to grow, transition farm/business ownership, develop their business skills and capability, make timely farm operational decisions, and create a more connected and collaborative dairy farming community through relationship building and partnerships.

As a Focus Farmer, your involvement will include:

- **Hosting support group meetings:** The support group traditionally meets bi-monthly. These sessions will run for approximately three hours, including a farm walk of your property and a business discussion. The discussion will revolve around relevant business challenges and will also include a financial analysis for the month and ongoing planning.
- **Hosing field days:** There will be several field days where the focus farm is open to the public to participate in a farm walk and discussion about the ways the business is operating. Our consultant will facilitate the day and support the focus farmer to participate in the discussion.
- **Promotion of learnings:** There is an expectation that finance, and production key performance indicators will be provided to Dairy Australia and Dairy NSW for promotion throughout the program. Capturing images and video footage for promoting the learnings is also expected to ensure a wider audience learns from the focus farm journey.
- **Project reporting:** The *Focus Farms* project is fully funded by Dairy Australia (DA) and Dairy NSW. Dairy Australia requires progress reports, and the Dairy NSW Board requires regular updates. The reporting will be organised by the facilitator and a project manager employed by DA. From time to time, the Focus Farmer will be asked to make comments on the program and provide updates on what is happening on farm.

We encourage all local NSW Dairy Farmers to consider this opportunity and make a difference to the community as a Focus Farmer.

Applications for this year's Focus Farmer close on Friday 30th June 2023. Contact Carly Potts, Program Manager, carly.potts@dairyaustralia.com.au to receive an application form.

For more info on the Dairy Australia *Focus Farm* program, visit dairyaustralia.com.au/farm-business/focus-farms.

Dairy Jobs Board off to a flying start!



Knox school tour at The Pines, Kiama with Mahala and Kel Grey, and Tania Ulladulla community session.

In January this year, Dairy Australia launched the Dairy Farm Jobs Board, allowing farmers to advertise on-farm job vacancies for jobseekers to view on the Dairy Jobs Matter website.

Our Workforce Attraction and Retention team have placed 30 new employees into NSW dairy jobs via this platform, with most of these staff placements being new entrants to the industry.

Staff shortages is the primary issue facing farmers. Due to the historically low unemployment rates the pool of potential candidates is very small, and farmers are competing with other industries in similar positions.

A Dairy Australia survey of 400 farmers in November 2022 revealed that 50 per cent of farmers had positions available in the last 12 months, almost one third of these did not fill the roles and 76 per cent of farmers found recruitment of staff difficult.

'We are living in a time where staff retention is more difficult due to the employment opportunities available now. Farmers are becoming more receptive to retention principles and looking at ways of making their roles more attractive. Many are offering more flexible work arrangements, for example rather than offering full time roles with split shifts, they are offering part time morning or afternoon shifts to attract and retain employees.

We are also working with farmers to encourage career advancement opportunities and training for their staff, and our Dairy Australia Regional Extension Officers continue to deliver an increased number of skill development-based workshops for the wider dairy community.

We all know that work culture is key in retaining staff, Dairy NSW is supporting the inclusion aspect of this by encouraging young new entrants in the Young Dairy Network, where dairy farm staff can feel a part of a larger team. This is important particularly for workers in small farming operations.' – Tania Ketteringham, Dairy NSW.

Over 330,000 people have visited the dairyjobsmatter website since the campaign started in September last year.

The campaign showcased why working in dairy matters, highlighting factors that have been shown to motivate people to explore a job in dairy. These include working with animals, working outdoors, career progression, job variety and training, job security and the contribution Australian dairy makes to the community through production of a highly nutritious food. We've seen a 50 per cent increase in regional adults who would consider working on farm.

Our teams are working to improve the attraction to the industry by marketing the positives aspects of work in the dairy industry and the career pathways. We work closely with farmers to support the recruitment of staff into available jobs, part of that not only includes sourcing suitable candidates, but also providing support to engage staff by encouraging the update of traineeships for new employees to improve retention and skill development.

The Dairy Jobs Farm Jobs Board is free and easy to use. Job vacancies are listed on the NSW section and will reach job seekers exploring dairy farming jobs from our national marketing campaign. Our team provides additional support by understanding your workforce needs, networking with local agencies including schools, TAFEs and Employment Services, assisting with traineeship commencements, and referring applicants looking for work in your area.

To discover how our Jobs Board and Workforce Attraction programs can help you, reach out to tania@dairynsw.com.au for the NSW Southern localities, and laura@dairynsw.com.au for Northern and Western NSW regions.

NRL women's star player and Bega local hero joins forces in mentoring the future of dairy



Dairy NSW is thrilled to announce the support of Australian women's rugby league player, Kezie Apps, as NSW Dairy Ambassador, and mentor of our innovative new *Mentoring the Future of Dairy* program.

Growing up on a dairy farm in the Bega Valley Shire, Kezie has played as a second row for the St George Illawarra Dragons in the NRL Women's Premiership and has recently commenced her position as Captain of the Wests Tigers. She is an Australian international and New South Wales representative in the sport.

In partnership with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, Dairy NSW launched its Mentoring the Future of Dairy Program in April earlier this year. Funded under the Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program. The *Mentoring the Future of Dairy* program will take place over nine months from June 2023 to March 2024.

The aim of this program is to encourage and foster the development and connectedness of dairy leaders to think and act across the industry. This will be achieved by pairing mentees with more experienced practitioners who are willing to provide guidance, support, and feedback for the mentee to achieve their developmental goals for their mentoring relationship.

As a proud dairy industry member Kezie is excited to be commencing her official mentoring role and aims to empower the next generation of dairy industry leaders.

Kezie has spoken publicly about her personal experiences and support of the dairy industry, and Dairy NSW is pleased to have Kezie on-board as a mentor and positive dairy industry ambassador for these project activities, endorsing all opportunities for the existing and new dairy farming audience to engage with.

To find out more about the *Mentoring the Future of Dairy* program, reach out to our team member Carly Potts via carly.potts@dairyaustralia.com.au.

New people management programs to support local farmers



Dairy Australia has launched a series of new programs to attract workers to dairy farming and support their farm employment needs. This includes new people management programs to help dairy farmers enhance their skills as employers and improve worker retention rates.

Employment Basics is a resource portal made available by the Dairy UP program. Providing farmers with valuable employment toolkits, templates and frameworks, farmers can access this easy-to-use information via the Employment Starter Kit (ESKi) and the People in Dairy website.

Managing People covers the essentials for supervising and guiding staff on your farm, as well as allowing time to learn from the experience of others and ask experts any questions you may have.

Farming with My Team is designed to provide farmers with an insight into their own leadership style and build their leadership skills. Improved leadership will not only benefit the farm business but provide farmers with skills that will benefit them beyond the farm gate.

Participants will understand the benefits that being a good leader will have on their team and assist in addressing workforce attraction and retention challenges.

Reach out to your local Dairy NSW team member for more information on our valuable employment resources, workshops, and services dairynsw.com.au.



We want to hear from you! Dairy industry bodies seek expressions of interest from farmers in a quest to build a Storm and Flood resilient future

The Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program (SFIRP) will address the long-term recovery and resilience position of the NSW dairy industry following the recent widespread storm and flood events.

This Program is led by NSW DPI and Dairy NSW over the next two years, alongside several delivery partners. There are three programs:

- Better response and short-term recovery (led by NSW DPI)
- Better Preparedness, lower risk, and higher resilience in dairy (led by NSW DPI)
- Supporting industry development in dairy (led by Dairy NSW).

Within the three programs are 12 projects aiming to collectively support greater dairy industry sustainability in the face of ongoing climate challenges and promote true industry-wide collaboration throughout NSW.

We are conducting several research case studies and invite you to participate in these.

Upcoming project activities are seeking interested NSW dairy farmers who had farms impacted by recent storm, flood, and wet weather events and:

- Are willing to share their direct experiences, challenges and/or successes during the response and recovery period (project led by NSW DPI)
- Are interested in tailored business support for future disaster preparedness and wish to review structures to mitigate risks for future extreme events (project led by Scibus).

By participating you will have the opportunity to share your experiences to help improve industry emergency coordination and better support farmer emergency response to future natural disaster events. There is also opportunity for some farms to receive individual support to better prepare the business for future climate risks.



Are you interested to find out more?

Scan the QR Code to register your interest or contact Tori Alexander, NSW DPI Project Officer Dairy to find out more and register your interest.
P 0457 271 830 **E** tori.alexander@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Upcoming events:

June

20 Ferts\$mart South Coast – Pyree, NSW

July

10, 17, 24, 31 National Online Farm Business Fundamentals webinar

August

7, 14 National Online Farm Business Fundamentals webinar

28-29 Dairy NSW Members Event – Bega Valley Shire, NSW

29 Focus Farm Open Day Bega Valley Shire, NSW



To register your attendance at these events, and view many more, visit dairynsw.com.au.

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We've included an information brochure on the Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program, Dairy Sector Recovery and Resilience for additional reading!

Please reach out to the team via info@dairynsw.com.au for more details on this activity.

The Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program, Dairy Sector Recovery and Resilience is funded by the Australian and NSW government's Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program.

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