

Cows Create Careers— Farm Module



Celebrating Ten Years
Industry—Education—Community



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Cows Create Careers is a Dairy Australia and Regional Development Project project. The project was initiated by the Strzelecki Lions Club in 2004.

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Celebrating Ten Years

2014 marks the ten-year anniversary of *Cows Create Careers—Farm module*, an innovative dairy industry project now funded by Dairy Australia that is delivered in 23 dairying regions across Australia.



Ian Halliday
Managing Director,
Dairy Australia

Since 2004, dairy industry volunteers have shared their knowledge with secondary school students across the nation, inspiring many young people to pursue a career in the dairy industry.

From students being inspired to commence a dairy industry apprenticeship or electing to study an agriculture degree, to other students winning grants for further industry education—the impact of *Cows Create Careers* continues to go well beyond the classroom.

The school-based project provides a platform to introduce secondary students to the Australian dairy industry and has an aim to increase the awareness of dairy industry careers and dairy farm pathways. The project promotes the dairy industry, provides student education and builds community connections, and also provides personal development opportunities for many industry advocates and dairyfarmers who now feel confident in front of the classroom talking to students about the dairy industry.

Cows Create Careers—Farm module started in 2004 with dairyfarmers in the Strzelecki Lions Club in Victoria and nine Gippsland schools. Since its launch, the project has proven to be highly successful and has continued to grow significantly.

The Gardiner Foundation provided seed funding in 2005 to expand the project to all dairying regions in Victoria, and in 2006, Dairy Australia supported the growth of the project to a number of other states around Australia.

Since 2006 Dairy Australia has worked with students, teachers, farmers, industry advocates and communities through its investment into the project, and with this community backing, *Cows Create Careers—Farm module* expanded to become a truly national project in 2009.

With continued support from Regional Development Programs, dairyfarmers and sponsors, the Dairy Australia funded project has now grown to over 209 schools across Australia with 51,855 students completing the project since its inception.

Cows Create Careers—Farm module has gained huge support from dairyfarmers and advocates across Australia. Project volunteers have a deep knowledge of the industry and play a vital role in encouraging and supporting student career decision-making. Last year alone volunteers gave 1,162 hours of their time across 23 Australian dairy regions.

The National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA) plays an important role by being an educational link for the schools throughout the project and commercial sponsors continue to support the project across the nation. Some regions have had dairy products donated by manufacturing companies for the project participants.

And now, 2014 marks ten successful years of *Cows Create Careers—Farm module*. A truly great achievement.

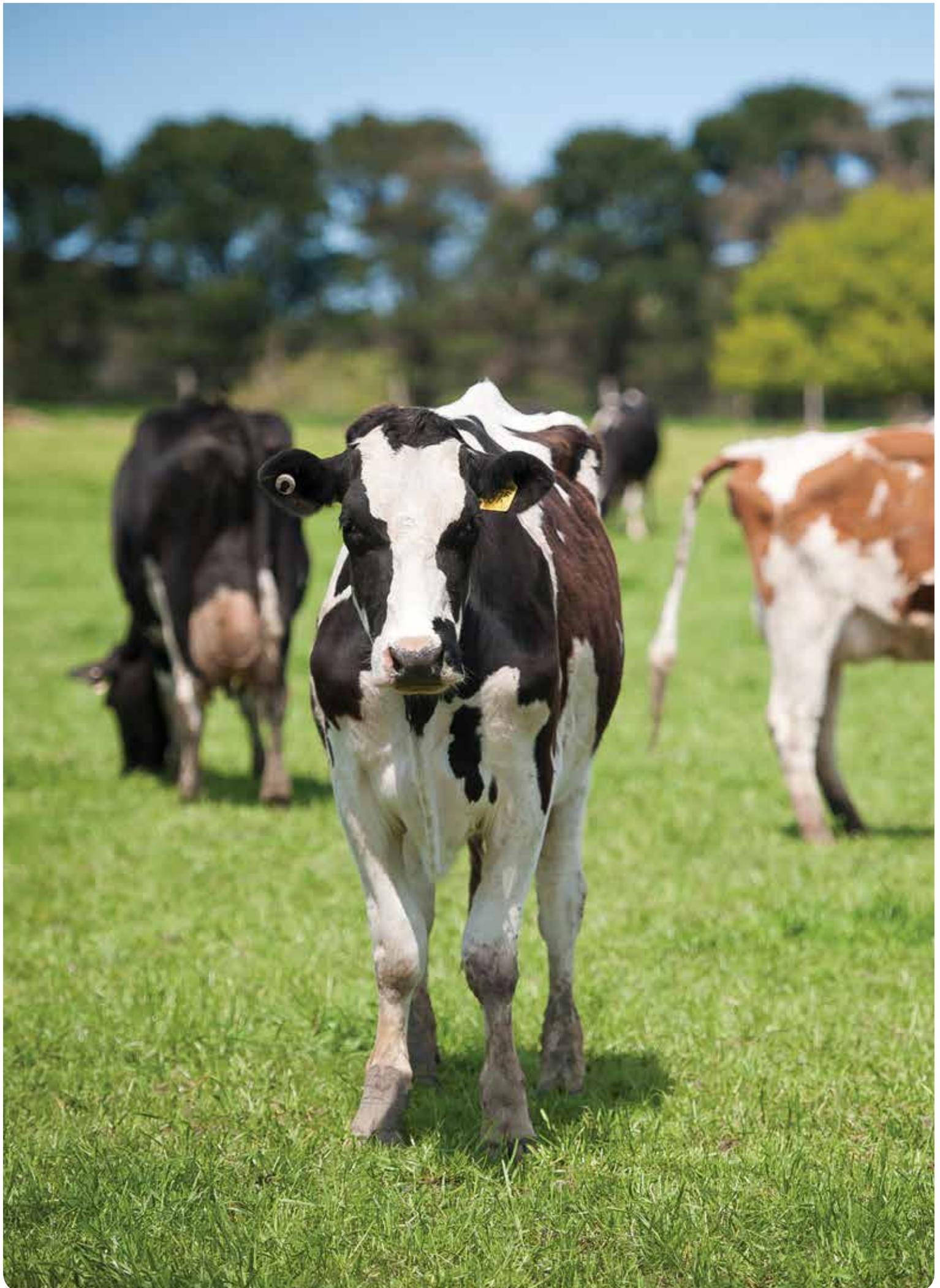
The project's ten-year success could not have been possible without the many project volunteers who dedicate their time and industry knowledge to students across Australia.

Dairy Australia would like to thank and congratulate everyone who has supported *Cows Create Careers* over the past ten years—Regional Development Programs, dairyfarmers, advocates, volunteers, sponsors and donating companies, including the Gardiner Foundation, students and teachers. It takes many people to make *Cows Create Careers* possible each year.

The case studies featured in this booklet showcase just a few of the achievements of *Cows Create Careers—Farm module* over the past ten years. The stories celebrate students who have gone onto a dairy industry career and feature the other ways how *Cows Create Careers* has touched and influenced people's lives.

The stories illustrate how the project goes beyond the classroom, and especially, how project volunteers have inspired many young people to pursue a career in the dairy industry. I hope you enjoy reading the fabulous stories that have resulted from the participation in this program.

Regards, Ian



Cows Create... Apprenticeships

With three years of Cows Create Careers under her belt and a string of prizes for showing cattle and sheep, it's little wonder that Katelyn Burton has set her sights on working in the dairy industry.

She has spent the last 18 months working at John Fairley's Country Valley farm outside of Picton, New South Wales undertaking a school-based dairy apprenticeship. In addition, she has just finished her Year 12 at Picton High, where she studied agriculture and primary industries, English, biology and music.

"I did a work experience week at the start and some weekend milking, then spoke to teachers, career advisors and my parents, and decided to give it a go," she said.

A good sign of how well she's performed came recently when she was awarded the prize as the school-based apprentice of the year for South-West Sydney.

The Fairley farm differs from the usual dairy set-up in that it processes its own milk—along with milk from contract farmers—into fresh milk, cream and yoghurt at its on-site factory, selling its produce under the Country Valley brand. The farm first moved into processing in 2004 so its tenth anniversary will come up this year.

"We produce about 110,000 litres a week, so that's around 5 million litres a year. It's been a struggle at times," John said, "but we now supply locally and to outlets and supermarkets in Sydney, the southern highlands, Wollongong and Canberra."

John has provided work experience for veterinary students but has since had two secondary students undertake school-based apprenticeships and he is glad that he did. "Katelyn's a good one, she has a great attitude and is a very handy worker," he said.

Both he and Katelyn are thankful for the time and effort that Picton High and teacher Hayley Mahoney, who runs Cows Create Careers at the school, put into the project.

"Cows Create Careers got me more involved and interested and with the apprenticeship I've been able to take my first footsteps into the industry," Katelyn said.

It also gave her a more realistic approach to her agricultural studies at school. "Most people take the weather for granted. Working on the farm, I have a better grasp of how it can affect daily activities. You learn to be practical and adaptable, it's an extra dimension I could bring to what I've learnt in class," she said.

Besides helping with milking and cleaning the dairy, Katelyn has had her hands full with calf feeding, earmarking and drenching cattle, selecting cows for sale and helping with calving. She has also acquired skills in tractor work and handling different types of machinery.

"For example, I've learnt how to manage the feed processor so that the right mix of nutrients goes into the cows' feed while milking," she said.



Katelyn feeding a calf at Picton High School

It has been a steady progression—briefly interrupted while she completed her HSC—from doing simple tasks under direction to taking charge of things herself.

"She now works on a regular basis, and on weekends she has the responsibility of running the whole dairy by herself," John said.

Katelyn also gained some experience in the factory on the production line, with bottling and packaging, as well as some time in the office to see how they manage costs and deliveries. However her real love is working on the farm with the animals. As well as her dairy career, Katelyn still actively shows animals at the Sydney Royal Show, the Royal Canberra Show and at state finals.

She finds the variety of farm work challenging, with the many jobs that need attention. "She's always willing to pitch in," John said, "which is good, because the work demands can change from day to day and week to week. Next week we'll be working on fencing for tree lanes, and then we'll be vaccinating animals as well."

Katelyn has completed her Certificate II and is considering the prospects of doing the Certificate III or a Diploma and the opportunity to learn more about business management, farm operations and finances. She also stressed the important role that industry advocates can play in helping young people decide on their futures.

"It is really valuable getting advice from someone who has the industry experience, who knows about the different options and career paths and can offer practical guidance to help you succeed," she said.

John Fairley also appreciates the benefits involving schools in the industry. "The Cows Create Careers project is really positive because it gives kids a broader view of the possibilities within farming and the wider dairy industry," he said.

"I always say that I don't just sell milk, I sell the whole story about Country Valley and what we're trying to achieve. I think Cows Create Careers is similar in relating the whole story of opportunities in dairy to schools and students."

Cows Create... International Learning

Life on the Bellarine Peninsula seems an unlikely starting point for a dairy career. Yet 20-year-old Monique McMahon-Hide has achieved just that.

Monique attended Bellarine Secondary College, Victoria where her first introduction to dairy farming was when a calf was brought into her Year 9 Agriculture class through Dairy Australia's Cows Create Careers project. The six-week project educates in a very hands-on way: secondary school students rear two three-week-old calves at school.

Monique admits that after growing up on a housing estate with no farming experience, she was initially confronted by the drooling calves. However Monique became hooked.

In Year 12 Monique once again had the chance to participate in Cow Create Careers through a School to Industry project. Designed to reconnect to the Cows Create Careers project, the project enables interested secondary students to gain dairy industry work experience with a network of dairyfarmers and advocates.

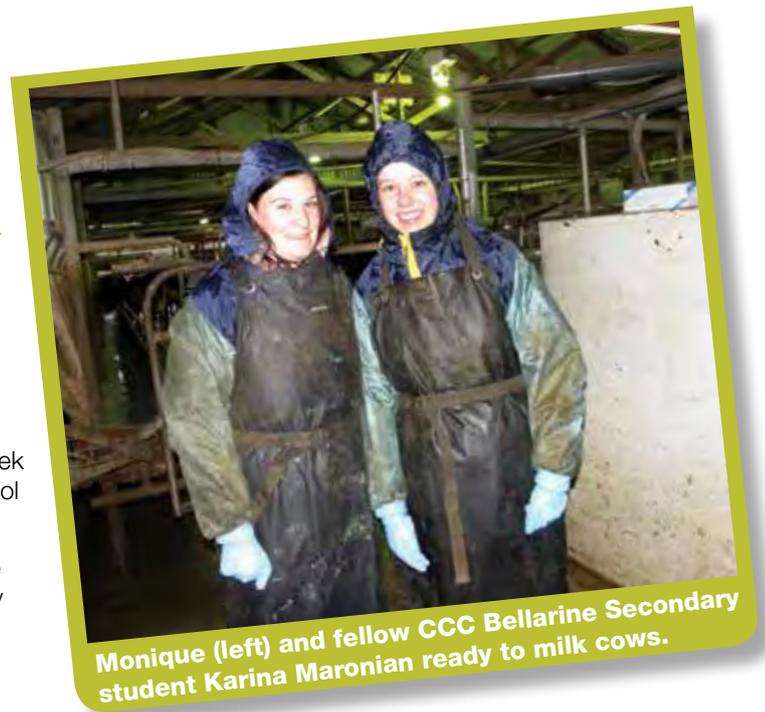
In her school holidays Monique travelled to South Gippsland working and learning first-hand about large animal veterinary practice, genetic applications in dairying, milking and pasture management systems, and food technologies.

The experience helped cement her career plans. "I'd been studying biology at school and just never realised the vital role genetics plays in both plants and animals," Monique said.

"It helped me make sense of things—I discovered it's in everything and wanted to learn about it."

In early 2013, Monique was offered a place at La Trobe University to study a Bachelor of Bioscience. She also successfully applied for a Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation scholarship worth \$5000 per year over three years, with the funds to go directly towards her tertiary education.

In the second year of her three-year university degree, Monique applied for La Trobe University's exchange project, which offers students a unique opportunity to learn abroad.



Monique (left) and fellow CCC Bellarine Secondary student Karina Maronian ready to milk cows.

Monique was chosen, with two other students, to complete five months of her Bioscience degree at Washington State University, USA, commencing in August 2014.

"The opportunity to do a semester of my degree overseas presented itself through the university's exchange project. So I thought, the opportunity's there, why not go for it?" Monique said.

"The experience of completing a semester of my course at Washington State University, it's a great opportunity," she said. "I want to travel and I really want to gain a new learning experience."

Monique has not yet decided on a particular job when she finishes university, however there is one thing she is sure about: "I'd definitely love to work in the dairy industry."

Cows Create... Education

Agriculture in school curriculums often seems to be the bridesmaid, but never the bride—that is until a pair of gangly calves stood on the threshold of Cessnock High School's doorstep.

Teacher, Greg Matthews grew up with farming in his blood—his father and grandfather were both dairyfarmers. In contrast, around 95 per cent of his students were growing up in urban and economically disadvantaged areas.

Typical of many schools across Australia, agriculture tended to be buried under the mountain of literacy, numeracy and science curriculum priorities; and there was no direct correlation between these subjects and agriculture.

After meeting the Cows Create Careers team, Greg first introduced the project to his students in 2006.

“Back then, agriculture classes had the reputation of being the worst with student dynamics all over the place,” Greg said. “There were academic kids who wanted to be really involved and then there were those who were doing the elective because they had to do something.”

“My students generally had mixed learning abilities, but the Cows Create Careers project was designed in a way that it didn't matter too much as each student could work to their own level,” Greg said.

Greg found when he had calves involved, it removed the focus from a managed teacher-student relationship, as the animals created a third natural dimension in the form of ‘caring’.

In the staff room, a few of his teacher colleagues initially thought the idea of bringing calves into the school was a joke; nor did it rate a mention in the school's Annual Report—agriculture had a low profile.

He persevered with his students pushing each one to make sure they could maximise their achievements as best they could. Greg freely admitted he was technologically challenged and struggled with the PowerPoint component of the project—his students were ‘naturals’ but he needed help.

“I sought help from the Head of Technology teacher who was interested in the project and we started splitting groups to help improve the students' technology experience.”

The Head of Technology was also able to convey what was happening to the school's Executive Group. The subject of agriculture began to have a relevant voice through Cows Create Careers and its successes finally reported.

Fast-forward a couple of years and in November 2011, Greg received an unexpected phone call from the National Managers of Cow Create Careers. Because of their outstanding achievements, his students had been chosen to represent New South Wales in the Dairy Australia sponsored Moo'in Transfer at the Australian Dairy Conference in Victoria.

The School Principal was really pleased and a subtle, but major shift occurred. This was no longer about Greg and his students, but Cessnock High School representing NSW at national level bringing agriculture to the forefront of the school's profile through Cows Create Careers.

The invitation meant careful preparation for the event as his students were required to create a 60 second advertisement for the Conference on “How to convince consumers that they want to pay \$3 per litre for their milk”.

It also became the breakthrough point where literacy, numeracy, science, technology and agriculture finally joined together within a cohesive curriculum. Greg enlisted the help of his fellow teachers to help facilitate the students' brainstorming of ideas.

“The students settled on a theme of ‘Milk, everyone's drink’. The students and teachers had enormous fun producing the video, though it was a challenge shortening it to 60 seconds,” Greg said.

“We also received fantastic support and financial help from our school community and our local MP, Clayton Barr.”

Producing the video had the side benefit of bringing the school out into the community to film different people including one man who was rumoured to only drink milk at his local pub.



Winning team Lauren McGowan, Natalie Lasky, Maddie King, Courtney Scott and Jenna-May Ryan with teacher Greg Matthews

CASE STUDY

He was duly tracked down and featured drinking a schooner of milk at said pub, along with hairdressers drinking milk, an army of kids drinking milk and people from all walks of life.

Greg and his wife Sally, along with five students, Lauren McGowan, Madison King, Natalie Lasky, Jenna-May Ryan, and Courtney Scott, caught a plane down to Melbourne, Victoria.

“The following day we went to the Australian Dairy Conference at Lardner Park in Gippsland; every team was nervous and everyone’s take on the topic was interestingly different,” Greg said.

Finally, the announcement came and Cessnock High School was the national winner of the Moo’in Transfer.

Leaping around like excited mad things, the Year 10 students from Cessnock High School immediately rang their Principal to announce the big win.

Greg is now able to reflect with a sense of pride that through Cows Create Careers and his persistence, a gradual change of ideas became accepted across a whole school community.

Cows Create Careers also demonstrated that the use of maths, English, science, technology and creative skills are all used in agriculture and make for a viable future career for all interested students.



Cows Create... Community

One of the remarkable things about Cows Create Careers is the appeal it holds for people of all ages and walks of life across Australia.

From its inception, when Bill Loughridge was Strzelecki Lions Club President, his wife Faye and family, plus a handful of Poowong dairyfarmers have had years of association with Cows Create Careers.

“We originally wanted to make our contribution to the industry by running an activity through the Poowong Dairy Expo to help kids learn about it,” Bill said.

Pleasure, pride, and a sense of achievement echo behind his descriptions of the way it has grown from its early pilot days in Gippsland to the national project it has become today.

Bill has now taken on the role of Cows Create Careers advocate for Melbourne city based students and an example of his work has been with Kilbreda College, Mentone.

“Kilbreda, an all-girls’ secondary college, was very keen to participate and although none of them had any idea what they were in for, they all did the job of rearing calves very well,” he said. “The teachers commented that it was worthwhile because the students had the chance to interact with dairyfarmers as well.”

Growing up in an urban environment can be a stark contrast to a student who’s grown up in a rural environment. Bill observed that few city students get the chance to experience country life and many don’t realise where milk or other naturally produced food comes from.

“The majority of them have no openings to be involved with the dairy industry either. The outcome has been a general lack of awareness about the diversity of dairy focused professions available to them. But, give them the chance and they learn pretty quick.”

Bill believes the good things about the project are getting the message spread to students and communities all over Australia—and hearing lots of positive feedback from people saying just how good Cows Create Careers is.



Bill introducing a calf to Kilbreda College Students.

“What’s been really satisfying from my point of view is the fact that the wider industry has taken it on and funded it—which has meant more schools and students gained a chance to be involved.”

“Kids and teachers both get an insight into the dairy industry, and are able see there are all sorts of rural and professional careers available. I still come across some of the original kids who did Cows Create Careers—some of them are doing advanced Dairy Diplomas or working on farms.”

Urban environments are jammed full of young people, and Cows Create Careers offers the chance for some of them to consider a career in the dairy industry.

This is a feather in Strzelecki Lions’ cap and the grin resonating through Bill’s voice tells you how chuffed they all are.

Cows Create... Opportunity

Jane Sherborne is a seventh generation dairyfarmer and married to Grant, who she fondly describes as dedicated and hardworking. Between them they have raised three teenage children on their farm property at Burrawang in NSW's southern highlands.

Like many Australian farmers, they have witnessed young people make the leap to the big smoke attracted by urban industries, and a whole generation of rural skilled labour disappearing.

The reasons are complex, but often boil down to government policy, economics, limited higher education and employment, poor access to quality industry information and social pressure.

Grant said many young people don't want to work in the dairy industry because they've no idea just how far it's advanced or the diversity of professional careers it supports.

"They believe it's a narrow industry with no prospects," Grant said. "You hear well-meaning folks tell young people they're wasting their time and to look elsewhere for a worthwhile job."

All has not been lost, after Jane spied an article in a dairy newspaper promoting Cows Create Careers in 2005.

"I thought it was a good idea. So I quickly rang Cows Create Careers, but they said they were thinking of going to Tasmania instead!" Jane said. "Well I said, I've got calves, and I know just the right school to put them in and its only two blocks away—so why not now?"

At the time, Jane had two children attending the school and was also a member of the school's Parents and Friends Club.

"We were struggling to maintain student numbers and I saw it as a way to attract parents who wanted their kids to grow up in a great country atmosphere," Jane said. "We got the project going, walked the calf to school on a Monday, picked the calf up on Friday, and all the kids, parents and teachers were really excited!"

"At the beginning, some of the kids were reticent about sticking their fingers into calves' mouths and letting them suck on them. After three weeks, the kids had grown attached to them. For them, the calves had individual personalities, loved a scratch behind the ear and so on."

"Teachers also noticed that kids who'd become totally disengaged from school life, suddenly wanted to be involved and back in to it."

Burrawang Primary School is a feeder school into Moss Vale High School. As the older students had never been involved with the project at a senior level, it was natural for both schools to get together for their presentation afternoon.

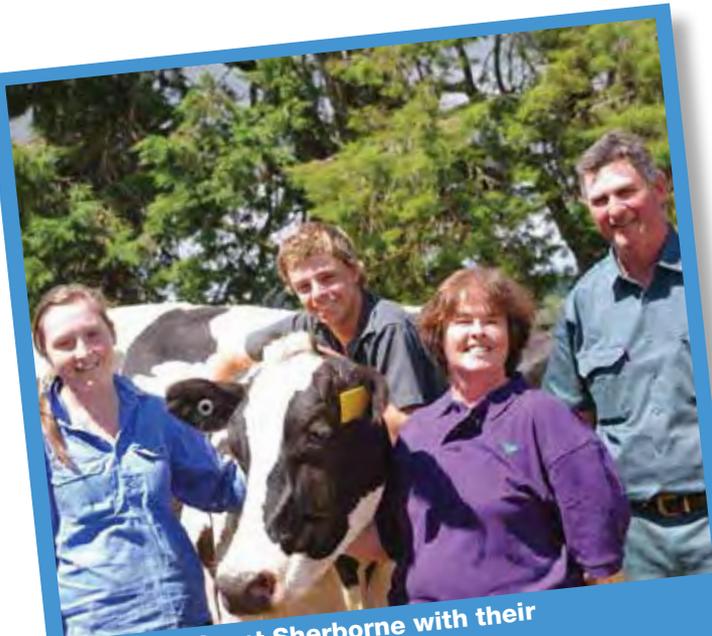
"With all this happening, it didn't take long to gain popular community interest, for example we received \$5,000 from our Dairyfarmers Co-op to build a shed to house calves."

"Then the ANZ bank got on board, along with local butchers, feed companies, Bowral Co Op, vets and livestock officers, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and heaps of other people volunteered their time."

"We also have advocates for the project and they go to all the schools to talk about all the professional opportunities in dairying. Everyone's into Cows Create Careers," Jane said.

Grant said six years ago, there was real trouble attracting young people. Now, he has noticed a spike in interest from young people ringing up about work.

The pilot project at Burrawang Primary School established within a month of Jane's phone call and it turned out to be a great start for the project in NSW. Today, there are 16 secondary schools across NSW in the project.



Jane and Grant Sherborne with their two employees.

Cows Create... Experience

A farm work placement in 2013 was all it took to convince Jake Sutton, from Murwillumbah in northern NSW, to take the next step and embark on a school-based apprenticeship with local dairyfarmer Corey Crosthwaite.

Jake had just completed Year 11 at Murwillumbah High School, focusing on English, maths, primary industry and agriculture and industrial technology. He first got involved in Cows Create Careers two years earlier in Year 9, feeding and weighing calves at the school and working on assignments and research into different jobs and careers.

When the opportunity of a work placement came up at Corey's farm earlier this year, Jake put up his hand. "I worked out there for five days, starting at 4.30 in the morning and heading home at 5.30pm. Getting up early was a challenge but I was used to it by Wednesday."

He helped with milking but also tried his hand at fertilising paddocks and learning to use the quad bike. "I really enjoyed it," he said. His enthusiasm must have been evident because Corey offered him the school-based apprenticeship on an ongoing basis.

Corey is a fourth generation dairyfarmer who started dairying when he was thirteen and runs a 300-acre property near Byangum, not far from Lismore.

"We have about 220 Friesian and cross-bred cows. Our family has been farming here for a hundred years this last August," Corey said.

He is also active in the local dairy industry as chair of Young Dairyfarmers North Coast, a member of the Norco dairy group and Young Dairy Network Queensland.

Corey has been involved with Cows Create Careers at local schools for the last few years, providing calves and advising on calf care, hygiene and health. He also demonstrates simple techniques in grass analysis and explains the importance of pasture and feed for milk production, as well as industry career opportunities.

"The kids just love it," he said. "They have the chance to get involved, use their common sense, take responsibility for the animals and learn something new."

Similarly, Jake is enjoying farm work, "because I like to be outside and get things done, and it's a good way to get started in the industry."

"Instead of school, each Wednesday I start work at the farm, doing different jobs and the afternoon milking. I also work there weekends and four days a week during the holidays as well."

Since starting, he's learnt new skills and tasks, including tractor driving, feeding out hay, ripping up ground to prepare for sowing, spraying weeds under fences, cleaning out water troughs, as well as animal care such as worming and drenching. Not every job turns out as routine, however.



Jake Sutton with calves on Corey Crosthwaite's Dairy Farm, Murwillumbah, NSW.

"I was separating a calf from its mother one day but the calf took off and got through the fence. I went after it, next thing I knew it was swimming across the river. I didn't realise that cows could even swim till then," Jake laughed.

Because of his on-farm experience Jake helps out and is able to pass on tips to the other students about handling cattle and caring for calves at school. He is gradually learning that running a farm these days requires a lot of planning and a diverse range of skills, as well as the hard work of getting jobs done.

As Corey puts it: "Any day of the week, you've got to be a vet, or a mechanic, a welder, a banker, an animal nutritionist, there's all sorts of trades you have to learn."

Jake agrees. "What impresses me is the dedication of the farmer getting things done and the time and effort that goes into work like preparing pasture properly."

Undertaking the school-based apprenticeship means Jake will qualify for his Certificate II in Agriculture next year. He is making good progress and has already gained competencies in monitoring water supply to stock, operating machinery and monitoring the welfare of animals.

"There's still a few to do," said Jake "as long as I get them all complete by the end of Year 12. I could go onto my Certificate III next, so I'll certainly consider it later next year."

Whatever his future holds, Jake sounds determined to make the best of his apprenticeship and the prospects of a career in dairy.

Cows Create... Lessons outside of the classroom

Well-known for its award-winning, student-run shop, Mypolonga Primary School in South Australia has continued its prize-winning ways by taking on the Cows Create Careers project with gusto.

The school has won prizes in the primary school division every year it has entered the regional Cows Create Careers competition.

The project first got underway through the initiative and support of local dairy advocate Graham Smart, who was keen to give students a hands-on, close-up experience of handling calves and investigating all things dairy. So far Mypolonga has run the project in 2009, 2011 and 2013.

“We have a combined Year 6 and 7 so it makes more sense for us to host the calves every other year,” teacher Anne Martin said. “Much to the children’s credit, every year we’ve run it, we’ve scored highly in the annual competition.”

Anne, and her husband Graham, work their dairy farm at Wall Flat near the Murray River, with 450 cows, on river-flat and irrigated highland country.

“When the school decided to give another go in 2011, we volunteered and have provided calves the last few times,” Anne said.

The Martin’s farm has also been the venue for school excursions, as well as providing further opportunities for students keen to gain more experience.

“We have a Year 9 student, Cooper Walton, who helps with the milking on weekends and afternoons. He first got interested in it when he did the project at school in Year 7,” Anne said.

“There’s also a young lass who became very enthused so she comes out every day after school and helps feed the calves.”

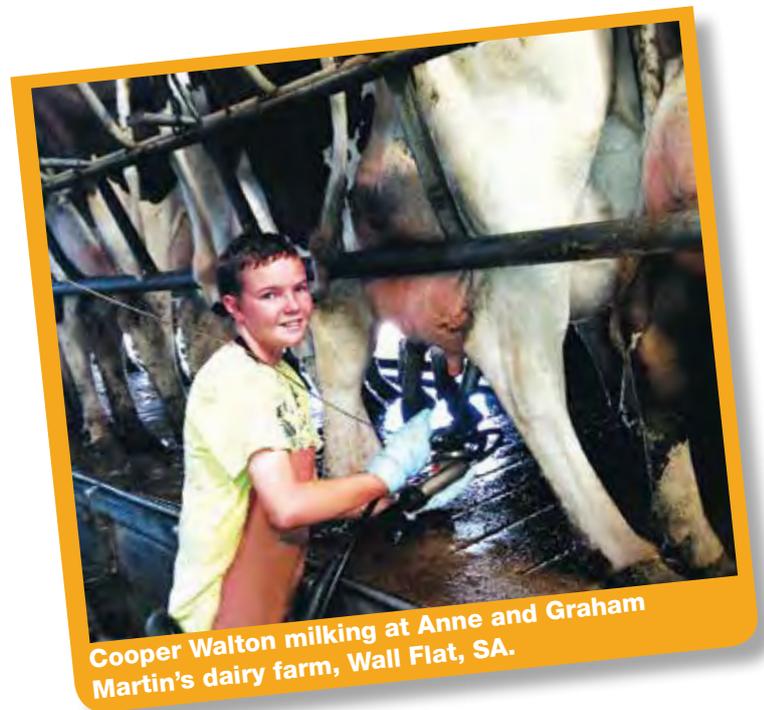
The school has also been visited by the local vet, who explained how she got into veterinary science, and by Mypolonga Traders who talked about farm supplies and rural business. In the meantime, Graham Smart has visited the school often to show the children how the original calves have grown.

“On one of our excursions, the kids saw a calf being born, so one of them asked where the father was. They were quite surprised to learn the father lived in the United States.”

“So we were able to explain the processes of artificial insemination and the importance of breeding, growth and development.”

The children also applied the scientific approach to monitoring their growth of their calves at school. They conducted a feeding and weight experiment, to determine whether the slow drinker or the fast one put on weight quickest.

“They kept careful watch, recorded and correlated their results and, in the end, it was the slow drinker that put on the most, which was not what they expected.”



Cooper Walton milking at Anne and Graham Martin’s dairy farm, Wall Flat, SA.

The hard work paid off when the school attended the presentation day at Murray Bridge and participated in the activities, including a dairy quiz.

“We were represented by Cooper’s younger brother, Mitchell. He got up and answered half the questions correctly, so there was no catching him.”

Anne is convinced the project opens up a variety of ways for children to learn valuable lessons, inside and outside of the classroom. “We have one boy here with an intellectual disability, who was very diligent in cleaning out the milk containers thoroughly and he took great pride in his work.”

Other insights emerged when the students took on other activities that demanded skills that aren’t as common as they once were.

As part of the project, students write letters to farmers and advocates, and compose a newsletter—but that’s not as simple as it sounds. “Because they rely so much on emails and texts nowadays, letter writing is not much practised. So we devoted some lessons to the skills of structuring a letter and addressing envelopes properly,” Anne said.

“They had great fun with the newsletter. We got hold of some black and white material and held a cow dress-up fashion parade, so that was a news item.”

Anne firmly believes having the calves on site gives much more meaning to each child’s education and life experience. “We set great store, as teachers, by what’s known as intrinsic motivation—having the inner drive of achieving things for yourself because you see your results and appreciate the value.”

“The children soon learn to be responsible and reliable in caring for the calves, to be generous with their time, to work in teams, to make an effort and not be afraid to get their hands a bit dirty.”

“They enjoy it so much, it’s a natural progression that makes learning easier when they have a genuine interest in it.”

Now they’re back on the farm, the calves seem to have relished their experience as well, according to Anne. “They do get spoilt rotten at the school and now whenever you walk out into the paddock, they come bounding up each time for a pat on the head.”

Cows Create... Industry advocates

Kevin Williams has been an industry advocate with Cows Create Careers since it started in 2006. Every year he rolls up to do it again because he sees how much the kids get out of it, and the industry. And he enjoys the role too.

"I first got involved with Cows Create Careers when I was based in Gippsland, Victoria. When I moved to Western Australia in 2009 they set me up with a school over here," he said.

A sales agronomist with PGG Seeds (Wrightson Seeds), Kevin considers being an advocate for the industry an important part of his job, although Cows Create Careers doesn't involve a lot of time. His work involves regular contact with dairyfarmers and other graziers.

"I really enjoy my job and I want to inspire young people to consider a career in agriculture. Cows Create Careers is exceptional. Its hands-on approach gives kids an insight into what goes on in the real world. I don't know of any other industry that has such an engaging project for school children."

Although the schools Kevin has been involved with are usually in rural areas, he's surprised that many of them have virtually no idea about careers in the dairy industry.

"Cows Create Careers enables us to show the kids the wide range of options available in the dairy industry—not just on-farm but beyond the farm gate in manufacturing and beyond. I'm surprised how few kids think about the broader opportunities in dairy, for example science and research."

As an industry advocate, Kevin visits the school when Cows Creates Careers starts. He introduces the project, builds up the excitement about rearing calves and the competition and talks about some of the careers available in the dairy industry.

"I try to make it hands on by taking pasture seeds in to pass around; and I've got a few tools used on dairy farms to show the kids."

The class rears two calves and completes a variety of assessments which are entered into a regional competition.

"I usually go to the competition presentations and I'm always impressed by kids' enthusiasm and how much they've achieved. I leave feeling quite uplifted."

Kevin believes Cows Create Careers achieves a lot more than raising the profile of careers in the dairy industry.

"I think one of its greatest impacts is to create a better understanding in the community that the dairy industry has responsible and sustainable practices and that dairy is a healthy food choice."

"Introducing school children to the dairy industry through real life experiences makes a lasting impression. You can't achieve that through advertising and mass media," Kevin said.



Cows Create... Industry connections

One young student has definite ambitions about his future career, because of his interest in mathematics and Cows Create Careers.

It arose from a presentation that Dean Lalor gave at Cressy District High School in Tasmania, as the industry advocate to its Cows Create Careers project.

An agribusiness executive with the Commonwealth Bank, Dean is well acquainted with the diversity of farming enterprises in northern Tasmania, be it cropping, forestry, aquaculture, fishing or the dairy industry. He has been involved in Cows Create Careers for five years and has visited several schools.

He draws on his experience to inspire the students to think laterally about possible careers in dairy and agriculture. "I run an exercise where the kids say what areas of study they're interested in—science, architecture, technology—and I explain how that might suit a career in farming or agriculture or related industries. I also tell them a bit about my career path and my role in assisting farmers to keep their operations financially viable."

It was this latter topic that caught the attention of a Year 7 student Andrew Booth, who already had a strong affinity for mathematics and its uses in business.

So far this year he's tackled decimals, fractions, statistics and algebra—such is his aptitude, he is doing Maths Extensions. He also participated in the Cows Create Careers project, caring for calves and writing scientific reports and newsletters about the activities.

With Dean Lalor's talk, the idea of becoming an agribusiness advisor attracted him, because it offered further opportunity to work with numbers.

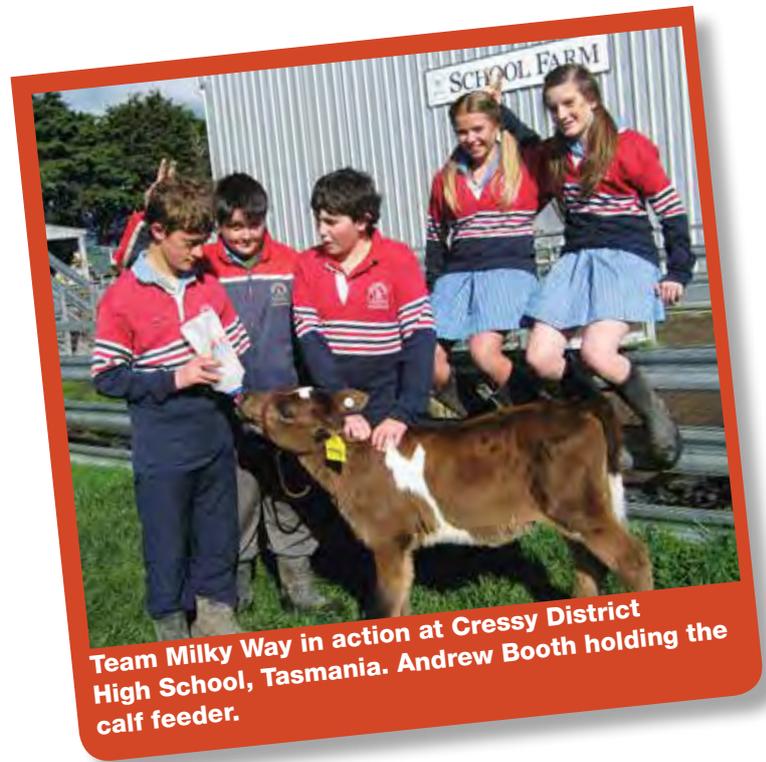
As Andrew puts it: "Mathematics appeals to me because it is logical and has rules you can follow to get a result. It's always an interesting challenge, because it can be like working on a complex puzzle but you can also solve problems in a practical way."

However, he had doubts about other subjects like English. "It didn't appeal to me as much and it didn't seem relevant to the jobs I'd like to do."

His English teacher, Emma Emery, saw a possible solution to Andrew's difficulty. She got in contact with Dean, explaining she had a young student hoping to pursue a career as an agribusiness executive.

"He is a keen and very capable mathematician" Emma said, "and very capable in other curriculum areas... I am wondering if there is any chance we could set up a conversation between yourself and Andrew to talk in more detail about your career path, with a particular focus on the literacy demands of your role."

After giving it some thought, Dean went one better and came up with a proposal that would give Andrew a closer view of what his job involved, as well as tasks that would involve all aspects of the English curriculum and provide relevance.



Team Milky Way in action at Cressy District High School, Tasmania. Andrew Booth holding the calf feeder.

Once it was cleared with the school and Andrew's parents, Dean arranged for the boy to accompany him on a client visit at a local farm. They spent two and a half hours there, with Andrew observing while Dean discussed matters with the farmer. A tour of the farm provided additional insight into its operations.

"I gave him some idea of the kinds of decisions and calculations farmers make and take into account," Dean said. "For example, looking at a crop, and understanding the investment in sowing it, the costs that have to be carried until harvest and what that means for important factors like cash flow."

While on the visit, Andrew took plenty of notes and Dean gave him pointers on drafting a report about what he saw and learnt. "I explained that I would be writing something similar, a review of operations report, which would require a certain structure, sections, paragraphs, and conclusions."

Writing the report will give Andrew a better grasp of how important literacy is to business advice. He also appreciates the chance to see Dean going about his work and the value of good communication skills.

"It was good to see how he connected with the customer and could discuss what the issues were on the farm," Andrew said. "One great thing about his job is that he isn't always in the office, he gets to visit different farms and businesses and understand what they are doing first hand."

Andrew also realised he would have to think carefully about his future study plans to achieve a well-rounded education, rather than concentrate on his favourite subjects. In addition, since the visit, Dean has offered to give Andrew further advice and mentor his development, acknowledging that the student has some way to go before he decides what career path he'll choose.

For their part, the school is grateful for the support that industry advocates give to projects like Cows Create Careers.

"It was an amazing opportunity for Andrew and I really appreciate Dean taking time out of his day to help with this," Emma said.

Cows Create... Industry attraction

With a wealth of farming experience and overseeing a large commercial dairy operation, Jim Simpson is well placed to appreciate both the industry and individual benefits of young people pursuing a career in dairy.

Jim is the General Manager of Riverina Milk. Located near Corowa in NSW and part of the ICM Agribusiness group, it is one of the largest dairy farms in the region.

Having supplied calves for local projects, Jim sees the Cows Create Careers initiative as a constructive way to introduce schools and their students to the diversity of farming experiences and career paths in dairy.

Riverina Milk is home to 3,000 head of cattle, with 1,740 cows currently milking. It is one of the few farms in Australia using free stall sheds—more common in the northern hemisphere—to house its cows during lactation.

Each shed can house 1,000 cows, in 250 pens, with sand bedding and a steady supply of feed. There are separate sheds for calves and animals requiring special care. Not only is the accommodation different—the farm also operates two different milk cycles every day, employing two rotaries to handle the task.

“We milk about 400 cows twice a day, but milk another 1,300 cows three times a day, with the extra milking at midday,” Jim said.

“We produce 20 million litres of milk a year, which we supply to the Riverina Dairy factory in Albury, another business in the ICM group.”

Riverina Dairy manufactures yoghurt and fresh cheeses, principally feta, ricotta and haloumi. The needs of the factory mean there are specific milk standards, such as fat and protein content, which in turn influence feed and nutrition on the farm.

Along with irrigated pasture, the farm grows cereal winter crops, maize and lucerne in summer, all of which go into the total mix ration that ensures the cows are producing the optimal quantity and quality of milk.

“It’s a constant, intensive form of farming,” Jim said, “which wouldn’t be possible without the contribution of the many people working on the farm.”

Originally from Wales, Jim studied history at university but had his first taste of farming when he came to Australia 17 years ago.

“I worked on a dairy farm and did other odd jobs, like driving forklift trucks. Then I returned to the UK and worked in a city office. I hated it and couldn’t wait to get out,” he said. He emigrated to Australia and became a permanent resident 16 years ago, steadily building his career in the dairy industry.

“I started on the bottom rung and after a few years got work as a herd manager,” he said. “I’ve always worked on large farms, at several places. I started farming at Finley in NSW, before spending time in New Zealand, Echuca and Mount Gambier. I have been managing Riverina Milk for 3 years.”

Reflecting on recent industry trends, he believes large-scale intensive farming will become more common in Australia, as will the free-stall setup being pioneered at Riverina Milk and elsewhere.

“The traditional small farms can be viable, so long as they manage their debt and if they have good land, stock and rainfall. The same goes for the boutique dairies that get into processing or downstream production. The more control you have over your supply chain, the less exposed you are to the vagaries of the market.”

He also sees consolidation and integration potentially opening up a diversity of careers for young people who are interested in dairy.

Citing Riverina Milk as an example, he listed the various jobs required to run such a large operation smoothly.

“We have six milking staff, who work in overlapping shifts, starting at 4 in the morning, then at noon, then at 5 in the afternoon. In addition, we have two to three people focused solely on feed and pasture. We have calf rearers and another three people monitoring livestock, especially the heifers, dry cows and calving cows. Maintenance and mechanical work is handled by another two, plus there are three people (including me) on the management/admin side.”

The farm also relies on external services for its veterinary and nutritional needs. “We would like to do more with schools and connect with young people interested in dairy in one way or another,” he said.

He is currently considering the potential of Riverina Milk as a destination for school excursions as well as for work experience placements.

“The industry needs to attract young people and demonstrate the range of work and career options available. I’m hoping that we can be an active part of that.”

Cows Create Careers—Farm module generates significant media coverage across print, radio and television each year. Participating schools also provide articles to their local media outlets and include information in their school newsletters. Through this coverage, positive and educational dairy stories are shared with both the school and wider community, allowing communities to have an increased positive perception of the dairy industry and career pathways.



Feeding time: Boo Archer feeds Douglas, one of the calves on loan to the school.

Hands-on dairy experience

Cowabunga, Marymount's moov-ing experience with Dairy Australia program

JASMINE HOODSON
TEEN STUDENT REPORTER
MARYMOUNT COLLEGE, YEAR 12

MARYMOUNT College recently welcomed three new enrollees.

They're less than a metre tall, coloured black and white and they say "moo".

A Beauport dairy farm lent the three young calves to the school for a Dairy Australia program called Cows Create Careers.

The calves were just three weeks old when they arrived at the college.

The program gave students the opportunity to raise calves for a three-week period.

Marymount College was the first Gold Coast school to take part in the program

which, since its establishment in 2004, has grown to over 180 schools across Australia.

The hands-on program aims to increase the awareness of dairy industry careers and pathways in Australia.

The three Year 12 students who raised the cows through the program are Lily Popovic, Chloe Paton and Sophie McLaughlin, who are all completing an agriscience course as a part of the program.

The girls were responsible for the feeding and care of the calves with help from agricultural science teacher Chris Larkin.

"The girls and I are committed to best practice with respect to the cows' welfare and security," Mr Larkin said.

He said the dairy industry keenly supported the project.

"They want the whole community to be aware of where their food comes from and how

Australian farmers produce the high quality product that is in demand around the world."

Upon completion of the program, the students and farmers involved were recognised at a presentation day put together by Dairy Australia.



Chloe Paton makes friends with one of the calves.



Lily Popovic with a calf at Marymount College.

Spring Head students win dairy cow award

By Natalie Koufos

Students at Spring Head Lutheran School were the winners of the junior category award for Dairy Australia's Cows Create Careers program.

The program was designed to raise awareness of the dairy industry and build relationships between local farmers, schools and industry professionals.

Students looked after two calves in May and they fed them, weighed them and checked their health over a month.

The award was judged on their assignments which was based on the work they did



Isabella Stirling, 14, (left) from Apollo Bay P12 College and Kara Mann, 15, from Wangi Regional College, Campedown, taking part in the lighter side of Today's subject.

Enjoying the lighter side of careers in dairy

By STEVE HYNES

It wasn't the average school for about 30 of its region's secondary students on Tuesday when they gathered at Cobles Hill

to win two three-month-old calves and complete a dairy industry curriculum that includes creating a multi-media presentation and a scientific report.

Cows Create Careers is supported by Dairy Australia and aims to increase awareness among secondary

The team prizes went to a Ballarat Secondary College team in the senior section and Apollo Bay P-12 College in the junior competition.

The overall winning school in



Teens experience dairy

By Sarah Vella

Creating careers with cows

BY FARRAH PLUMMER

A PROGRAM caring for two school has dairy industry

Flinders College year 12 students after their 'Benji', local dairy clearing

The Carr be ad res

generated

agricultural sector.

"We're in a dairying region and there's ample jobs on farms.

"That's what I've been trying to say to the students, just because you might not want to be a farmer, you're not going to be a dairy industry." Ms

Cows create careers

FAITH Lutheran College excelled at the Cows Create Careers - farm module awards presentation held on June 25

at the Kapunda Soldiers Memorial Hall.

Over 235 students and teachers from the Barossa Valley region were recognised on the day.

Faith's junior team 'Black and White' were first prize winners, Faith's 'Utterly Fabulous' team came second and Faith's 'Moonlit Fear' team drew with Nuriootpa High School.

In the senior section, Xerxes College's 'The A Team' came in second, while Trinity College's 'The Milky Herd' came in third.

The 11 schools that participated in the program included Nuriootpa and Kapunda High Schools, Barossa Community School, Trinity, Faith Lutheran and Xavier Colleges, Clays High School, Gawler and District College, Horizon Christian School, Riverton and District College, Horizon Christian School, Clays High School and Orororo Arm.

Cows Create Careers - farm module is a Dairy Australia program for secondary students whose participants are educated by rearing two three-week-old calves at school and

the school is provided with dairy industry curriculum fee

generated

agricultural sector.

are required in complex, costly based projects in the dairy industry, such as a mooseb movie or a 3D model.

"Through creating, the students are able to discover something new about the dairy industry."

Ms Hutchison said the



WINNING JUNIORS: The Faith Lutheran College team along with the Clare Valley High who drew in the junior category, pictured with industry volunteers.

To see the full list of results and teams go to barossaferald.com.au

Cattle create careers

Secondary students educated on dairy industry jobs

CADPES are helping to highlight the dairy industry through Dairy Australia's innovative Cows Create Careers program.

Carers find that cows create careers



For the animals was fun. "They can get a bit playful," Derrick said. "I reckon it's a fun, enjoyable thing."

The program has paid for the calves, their food and other expenses.

The school would not have the resources to get the calves in without the funding, Mr Symons said.

The program started in 2004 in Victoria, but is now available in 180 schools nation-wide.

Dairy Australia's industry capability program manager, Tracy Lloyd, said the program built awareness of dairy industry careers.

"By bringing calves into schools, students have fun learning about the different skills required in the dairy industry," Mr Lloyd said.

As part of the initiative, students made dairy industry-related videos.

A grand presentation will recognize volunteers, students and teachers at Burra on October 26.

Students explore dairy job potential



FRESIAN FUN: A group of students at the end of this year's Cows Create Careers program.

Caring for calves fun and educational for students

By JASON THOMAS

FOUR calves on loan to Ulversnoor High School are helping year seven students to learn in a hands-on way.

DairyAus and several private enterprises are funding the Cows Create Careers program at 39 North-West Coast schools.

Students were learning valuable skills, while enjoying themselves, Ulversnoor High School grade seven coordinator Wade Symons said.

"The kids are responsible for looking after them, AM and PM," he said.

"It's like looking after a baby. It's a big responsibility."

Grade seven student, Derrick Murie, said caring

for the animals was fun. "They can get a bit playful," Derrick said. "I reckon it's a fun, enjoyable thing."

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A farmyard in the schoolyard

The program for dairy calves has been a great success story at Southport High School.

Students have been learning about the different skills required in the dairy industry.

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Cows create college careers

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CAREER MOVES: Ulversnoor High School students prepare to feed their calves. Picture: Grant W...

Students get insight into

STUDENTS at Campdown College experienced first-hand what it is like to be a dairy farmer as part of Dairy Australia's Cows Create Careers program.

Calves from the Hinkers farm at Territory have spent three weeks at Campdown College and have been cared for by year 7 students and their year 11 VCA mentors.

Campdown College is one of 14 schools in northern Victoria participating in Cows Create Careers this year.

Ben, who his friends describe as a "bruiser", had his sights set on an automotive career.

His introduction has a soft spot for calves and his passion for the industry through his friends. Tyronne supported his certificate in Agriculture last year starting his learning experience from Tassaloo, Melbourne and Stanger.

Students at TAP's Ormsby schools at TAP's Ormsby experience that stood by good food for the morning at Campdown College.

Students get taste of dairy industry

School children in the South West are experiencing the joys and frustrations of working in the dairy industry through an innovative education program.

Cows Create Careers is a program funded and presented by Dairy Australia and gives students hands-on experience in feeding and caring for dairy calves.

The program is designed to introduce children to the possibility of working in the dairy industry.

It includes all actual a bit daunting, but DairyBrook Primary School teacher Jacqui McLennan said her year 2 class found it an exciting experience.

"A lot of our students don't live on farms, so it was an eye-opening experience for them."



When Dairy chairman Vic Rodwell is it is important for children to experience the workings of a dairy farm and where food comes from.



MOOVERS AND SHAKERS: St John the Evangelist H...

Rearing calves the hard way, no bull

It was almost a clean sweep for Francis Greenway High School students who took first and second prize in a Dairy Australia program to rear a calf.

More than 150 schools were awarded for completing the Cows Create Careers program at Tocal College on Monday.

A Dairy Australia program aims to increase awareness of dairy industry careers in a hands-on way.

Secondary students are educated as they rear one three-week-old calves at school.

While loans from Francis Greenway High School claimed first and second prize in the junior school - years 7 and 8 - the winning senior school was Newcastle High School.

In the senior school - years 9 to 11 - first prize went to Ceresock High School's team with Mount View High School taking out winning school in the division.

Dairy Australia's industry capability program manager Tracy Lloyd said the program started in Victoria in 2004 and had grown to include more than 180 schools across Australia with 1315 students completing the program in 2014.



FRANCIS GREENWAY SECOND PLACE: (Back) Kerry Kempson (Department of Primary Industries), Sarah Carroll, Emma Peck, Hogan Young, Matt Hogan (Tocal College), Ewan Lewis (Pauze), (front) Fatima Caine-Jordan and Ebony Coape.

The Project at a Glance

Facts About the Students



The Project at a Glance

Facts About the Stakeholders and other Achievements

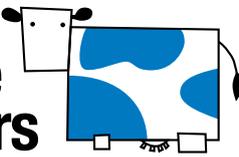


The Project at a Glance

Facts About the Schools and Teachers



GARDINER
FOUNDATION

Cows create careers  **Dairy Australia**
FARM MODULE

The ten-year success of *Cows Create Careers - Farm module* could not have been possible without volunteer support. Dairy Australia would like to thank everyone who has supported Cows Create Careers over the past ten years: regional development programs, dairyfarmers, advocates, volunteers, sponsors and donating companies.

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Your Levy at Work

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