

Performance Report

2023/24



DELIVERING
for **DAIRY**

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Introduction

We are pleased to present the Dairy Australia Performance Report, a companion document to our Annual Report 2023/24. This is our fourth year reporting against Dairy Australia's 2020–2025 Strategic Plan.

Progress against our strategy is measured regularly and reported annually. This report provides detailed information about our achievements and status on initiatives that work towards shaping a profitable and sustainable dairy industry.

Our 2025 targets are a mix of desired levels of outcomes for the dairy industry and stretch targets that are designed to break new ground for the industry. We continue to improve the way we monitor and measure performance to gain a more comprehensive insight into on-farm practices and the benefit of the levy investment. Our performance is also measured in line with the Dairy Australia Evaluation Framework, which provides a structured mechanism for monitoring performance and outcomes of our investments.

In 2023/24, Dairy Australia invested \$64 million across seven strategic priorities. Our work and investment are focused on services, connections and engagement with farmers throughout the eight dairy regions in Australia.

Dairy Australia delivers to industry by:

- Enhancing farm business management.
- Supporting employment and people development.
- Driving herd and feed innovation.
- Managing climate and environment.
- Promoting Australian dairy and the commitment to sustainability.
- Supporting international dairy markets.
- Contributing to policy development.
- Responding to critical issues and events.

We are committed to transparency and providing information that is of interest and relevance to farmers, industry and government stakeholders, including our many partners who invest with us on major initiatives.

Over the coming year – the final year of the current Dairy Australia Strategic Plan – we will continue to hone our focus to deliver investment of most importance to farmers, while seeking input to feed into our future strategy and take the dairy industry forward over the next five years.

To read more on our achievements, people and corporate governance, see the Dairy Australia Annual Report 2023/24 available on dairyaustralia.com.au.



James D. Mann.

James Mann Chair



David Nation

David Nation Managing Director

Our strategy

Dairy Australia has seven strategic priorities from 2020 to 2025. Each priority is underpinned by a goal, and key outcomes.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
Goals	More resilient farm businesses	Attract and develop great people for dairy	Strong community support for dairy	Thrive in a changing environment
	Farm businesses that are more profitable, resilient and innovative in managing price and cost volatility.	Attract great people to the dairy industry, build their capability and careers, and foster a safe work culture.	Enhanced trust and value in the Australian dairy industry, its farmers and products.	Profitable farm businesses that adapt to the changing natural environment and provide good stewardship of resources.
Outcomes	a Business planning that leads to better decisions and sustained success.	a Greater awareness of Australian dairy as an attractive industry with rewarding careers.	a The Australian dairy industry is trusted and accepted by the community.	a Greater ability to adapt to changes in the natural environment.
	b Clear and understood drivers of dairy farm profitability and productivity.	b Clear and supported skill development and career pathways.	b Australian dairy is valued for superior health and nutrition benefits.	b Efficient and profitable use of land, water, carbon and energy resources which nurtures and sustains the natural environment.
	c Expanded range of risk management tools for price and cost volatility.	c Access to capable and skilled farm employees and service providers.	c The Australian dairy industry is committed to animal wellbeing.	c Proactive action to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.
	d Innovation in finance that increases access to capital for expansion and new entrants.	d Support farm businesses and their service providers to get the basics right.		

Priority 5

Success in domestic and overseas markets

Improved access to high-value dairy markets, backed by trusted market insights and a favourable regulatory and policy environment.

a Australian dairy is valued around the world for its premium products.

b A favourable policy and regulatory environment.

c Access to trusted market insights that inform decision-making.

Priority 6

Technology and data-enabled dairy farms

Inspire more agile and responsive dairy businesses through greater integration of technology and data.

a Accelerated genetic progress in feedbase and animal breeding.

b More flexible and agile dairy production systems.

c Greater use of high-value technology on-farm.

d Connected dairy production systems utilising multiple data sources to enhance decision-making.

Priority 7

Innovative and responsive organisation

An organisation that is farmer-focused, with talented people who embrace innovative thinking and decisive action.

a We have a farmer-focused service delivery model.

b Our culture of learning and innovation, values and ways of working deliver success.

c Our infrastructure, resources and processes allow us to be informed, agile and responsive.

d We have effective and transparent management of resources.



Key achievements in 2023/24

The following pages provide an overview of some of our key achievements and the value delivered to farmers and the industry in 2023/24.

Our priorities, goals and outcomes are set out in the Dairy Australia Strategic Plan 2020–2025, which is a companion document to this performance report and the annual report 2023/24.



Regional services

Continued to evolve the way we engage with farmers to better understand specific farm business needs and **connect farmers with services** that are relevant to their farm business. In 2023/24, we made over 12,000 connections with farmers and their people.



Farm systems

Continued supporting dairy farm businesses to explore changes in their farm system (such as moving to a contained housing system) through the **Raising the Roof 2024** event and associated resources to support decision-making.



Farm business management

Enhanced farm and industry decision-making by capturing high quality farm business data with more than 230 datasets through the **Dairy Farm Monitor Project**.



Climate and environment

Enabled farmers to better manage climate and environment performance, and plan for improvements through accelerated use of the Farm Environmental Tracker tool and the **Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator**.



Farm business management

Supported farm and personal goals for over 300 farmers through practical farm business planning initiatives delivered through **Our Farm, Our Plan**.



Feed innovation

Improved access to information that supports farmers to make decisions by integrating ryegrass nutritive values in the **Forage Value Index**.



Attraction and employment

Attracted people to work on dairy farms through the Dairy Jobs Matter **marketing investment** that saw 1 million people find out more about working on a dairy farm, 82,000 visits to the Dairy Jobs Board and 500 job placements on farm.



Feed innovation

Completed interpretation of research from multiple studies to maintain and improve milk yield and reduce cow health issues. Research outcomes from the **DairyFeedbase Cool Cows**, First 100 Days and Smart Feeding studies were adapted for use on farm.



Training and development

Developed and launched a framework for farmers and their employees to assess current and future development needs for tailored career building through the **Dairy Capability Guide**.



Herd innovation

Delivered the updated **Heat Tolerance Australian Breeding Value** to enable farmers to more effectively identify animals that can tolerate hot, humid conditions through DataGene as a result of research completed from the DairyBio – Animals project.



Herd innovation

Maintained high rates of genomic testing for dairy cows, providing better quality genetic information for breeding and management decisions. **Genetic gains** and partnership with DataGene have led to continuous, permanent and cumulative gains in the quality of cattle for over 40 years.



School education

Educated school children about the Australian dairy industry through the **Discover Dairy** website, **Picasso Cows** and Virtual Reality Farm Tours with teachers reporting students having a good knowledge of dairy foods at 9.7/10.



Innovative thinking

Identified domestic and global innovations in **agriculture technology** that have the potential to be applied on dairy farms in Australia including methane mitigation and animal health technologies.



Sustainability

Identified and assessed opportunities to convert animal industry waste streams into biogas for **renewable energy production**. Commenced a feasibility study into developing a utility-scale biogas facility in Western Victoria, through partnerships with industry stakeholders and Sustainability Victoria.



Health and nutrition

Communicated the latest science on dairy's role in a **healthy diet** to GPs and dietitians, resulting in 89 per cent of consumers hearing positive health messages about dairy foods from health professionals.



International markets

Celebrated 25 years of the Dairy Australia **China Scholarship** which is recognised as a gold standard in helping to secure Australian dairy's strong reputation, enhanced market access and provide intelligence in critical Australian export markets.



Health and nutrition

Engaged with government and key opinion leaders around **research on fractures**, which showed that increasing dairy foods in aged care facilities reduces fractures and falls and has the potential to reduce healthcare costs by \$66 million.



Policy development

Delivered **policy support** across industry to areas including health and nutrition, biosecurity, climate, workforce, water and calf management.



Promoting Australian dairy

Ensured farmers and dairy products are trusted and valued by Australians through the **Dairy Matters** marketing campaign which reinforces dairy's sustainability credentials and contributed to 83 per cent of Australians having trust in the industry.



Responding to critical issues and events

Continued to ensure the preparedness of farm businesses and industry for major **biosecurity risks** such as the potential incursion of Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease.



Our portfolios



More resilient farm businesses

Farm businesses that are more profitable, resilient and innovative in managing price and cost volatility.

Strategic outcomes

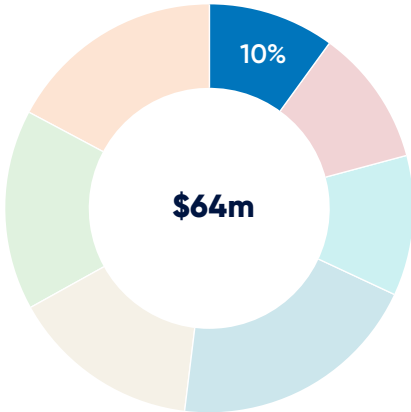
- a** Business planning that leads to better decisions and sustained success.
 - b** Clear and understood drivers of dairy farm profitability and productivity.
 - c** Expanded range of risk management initiatives.
 - d** Innovation in finance that increases access to capital for expansion and new entrants.
-



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes			
	1a	1b	1c	1d
Our Farm, Our Plan	•	•		
Dairy Farm Monitor Project		•		
Large Supplier Program	•			•
Milk Value Education Series		•	•	
National Herd Reproductive Performance Report		•		
International Productivity Analysis		•	•	
DFMP/ABARES Collaboration Phase 1		•		
New South Wales Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program (led by DairyNSW)				•

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$6.5m**



External investment 2023/24 **\$0.79m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Agriculture Victoria	\$0.50m
NSW Government	\$0.12m
Saputo Dairy Australia	\$0.11m

Key partners

- Commonwealth and state governments and their agencies
- Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF), State Dairy Farming Organisations (SDFOs)
- Gardiner Dairy Foundation
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)
- Processors

Performance summary

Augmented a suite of programs, tools and insights to support farm business performance, planning and risk management. This included delivering a company-wide target to support 300 additional farmers in improving planning and decision making through participation in the flagship project Our Farm, Our Plan. Provided ongoing support to farmers at all stages of the farm business resilience journey by delivering a wide range of courses and programs designed to build skills and confidence in all areas of farm business management.

Delivered timely insights on farm performance at the industry level by promptly publishing comprehensive results from the Dairy Farm Monitor Project (DFMP) and commenced the process of enhancing this project through collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).

Collaborated with leading international peers on economic research into dairy farm productivity, placing Australia at the forefront of this area of study, and equipping the industry with insights to support future strategic planning and investment decisions.

Leveraged external funding such as the Commonwealth Government Perishable Agricultural Goods Grant and NSW Flood Recovery Sector Grant to create engaging content covering a range of topics from market transparency to wealth creation in dairy.

Strategic outcome 1a

Business planning that leads to better decisions and sustained success

A robust and regularly reviewed business plan is essential to manage farm businesses. This forms the basis to set goals, measure farm performance, confidently make decisions and capture opportunities.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Dairy farm businesses perform systematic, periodic business reviews at least annually.	80% farm businesses	69%	79%*
Dairy farm businesses make key long-term decisions using a documented business plan.	80% farm businesses	49%	24%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Engaged over 300 farmers in comprehensive business planning to support their future success, through delivering the Our Farm, Our Plan (OFOP) program against an ambitious organisational target.
- Expanded the opportunities for large dairy producers to draw on world-leading expertise through a series of in-depth business workshops covering business governance, people and culture, and how to be an employer of choice.

Strategic outcome 1b

Clear and understood drivers of dairy farm profitability and productivity

The drivers of profitability and productivity can differ between individual farms, regions and production systems. Understanding those drivers, their differences and the levers that can affect them, is what will drive margin on farms. This is even more important at times when there is increased volatility and disruption to normal business operations.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farm decision-makers can accurately state the profit metrics for their farm.	60% farm businesses	15%	70%*
Farm decision-makers can accurately state the productivity drivers for their farm.	90% farm businesses	81%	80%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Enhanced farm decision-making and productivity by capturing high quality data and more than 230 datasets for 2023/24 through the Dairy Farm Monitor Project (DFMP). The DFMP results were published in annual reports across all eight regions by 31 December 2023, providing timely analysis and insights for farm performance. This data also provides high-quality averages for DairyBase and Farm Business Snapshot business analysis tools.
- Progressed economic research on dairy productivity and its key drivers, through collaboration with key international partners. In particular, the Australian and New Zealand productivity analysis has been completed, showing that both industries face the same threat to future farm income from declining productivity growth. This project has created a platform for designing future research and innovation investment priorities, possibly across both countries, to tackle the issue of stagnant productivity.

Strategic outcome 1c

Expanded range of risk management initiatives

Australia's tools for securing farm operating margins in an environment of price and cost volatility are under-developed in comparison to major overseas competitors. Given the ongoing volatility in Australia, it is important to rapidly improve tools for risk management.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farm businesses are actively using risk mitigation initiatives.	80% farm businesses	57%	97%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Supported farmers to better understand the dynamics of the milk market and drivers of farm gate milk price through the development and pilot of a suite of five videos covering topics from the Milk Price Workshops held in 2022/23.
- Supported farmers to prepare for and respond to challenges brought on by dry conditions and milk price movements, by collaborating with external partners and subject matter experts within Dairy Australia to update key resources, as well as launching an awareness campaign including a webinar with practical advice and tips.

Strategic outcome 1d

Innovation in finance that increases access to capital for expansion and new entrants

As finance is a highly innovative sector, it is important to provide dairy businesses seeking additional capital with better access to finance.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farm owners and managers have opportunity to access capital to meet their requirements.	80% of farms that had no problems accessing finance for capital investment when attempted to do so	78%	83%
Dairy farm businesses are aware of information, case studies and resources on pathways to investment such as share farming, equity partnerships, vendor finance, etc.	50% of farm businesses	New metric introduced from FY24	47%

Key achievements

- Developed approaches to engage and equip farmers (including new entrants) about wealth creation and succession through the NSW Flood Recovery Sector Grant project. The project also created video case studies of successful farm ownership models and sharefarmers operating within those. This content will continue to be rolled out through a variety of formats.



Case study

International Dairy Productivity

Objective

To better understand the productivity performance of Australian dairy farms compared with farms in other key dairy exporting countries and apply these learnings to the Australian dairy industry.

Background

Long-term productivity growth is crucial for maintaining the profitability and competitiveness of the Australian dairy industry, especially given the volatility of output and input prices and environmental challenges in a competitive global market. Despite its importance, dairy farm productivity is not fully understood by the Australian dairy industry.

In 2022, a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on dairy farm productivity in the USA reported strong growth of 2.5 per cent in dairy total factor productivity (TFP), primarily driven by technical progress. The method of calculating productivity was remarkably similar to a method used by Dairy Australia in 2021, which led to the initiation of this project to compare Australian dairy productivity with other major exporting countries.

Action

Dairy Australia took the lead in initiating the International Dairy Productivity Project, a first ever collaboration on dairy farm productivity between world-leading agricultural economists in New Zealand, Ireland and Australia. For the first time, these countries are applying a consistent, comparable and repeatable method for measuring productivity and its relationship to profitability. As part of this exercise, these countries have developed compatible ways of sharing and harmonising data and calculation methods, enabling cross-country comparisons.

Findings

The Australian Dairy Productivity Project (2021) found that Australian dairy TFP was relatively flat over the past decade. Updating the modelling for this project found that dairy farm TFP remained relatively flat (0.1 per cent) between 2012/13 to 2021/22. The analysis also showed no growth in technological progress (i.e. the discovery of new technologies) and a very small decline in technical efficiency (i.e. how well technologies are chosen and used) over the same period.

Additionally, terms of trade (as reflected by a measure of prices received divided by a measure of prices paid) improved over the period 2012/13 to 2021/22, particularly starting in 2019/20. This has offset relatively flat productivity growth over the same period and led to higher levels of profitability for farmers.

Collaboration with DairyNZ revealed that TFP growth in New Zealand is similar to Australia when compared over a similar period, staying relatively flat at 0.4 per cent. In addition, growth in technological progress and technical efficiency are also static in the New Zealand dairy farm sector.

Impact

The International Dairy Productivity Project benefits farmers by providing updated productivity data for Australia, which will guide Dairy Australia's investments in research, development and extension (RD&E) to improve profitability and create a more sustainable dairy industry.

The project provides valuable insights into dairy productivity and its drivers in other participating countries, fosters extensive international collaboration and promotes a culture of shared knowledge and capability building. It has highlighted common challenges, such as declining productivity growth in both Australia and New Zealand and has laid the groundwork for investing in high quality research and innovation into the future.

To achieve long-term profitability and competitiveness, the dairy sector must focus on productivity rather than relying on fluctuating output and input prices. Technological advancements such as genetic improvements, better forage and automation are crucial for driving productivity growth and managing price volatility. The project's findings will support industry leaders to advocate for new research and innovation strategies, which are key to enhancing long-term productivity.

Overall, this collaborative platform will help address flat productivity and inform strategies to enhance productivity and profitability for Australian dairy farmers.

Acknowledgement

Dairy Australia's partners on this project were Marsden Jacob Associates, DairyNZ, and Teagasc.



Post-investment impact assessment – Our Farm, Our Plan

Background

Our Farm, Our Plan (OFOP), delivered by Dairy Australia, improved the strategic planning of participating Australian dairy farmers through the development of a physical 'Plan on a Page'. The program created an estimated \$9.3 million in total benefits (in present value terms) across 1,050 farmers. Delivery of the program cost \$6.3 million (in present value terms), resulting in net benefits of \$3.1 million (in present value terms) with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.5:1. Moving forward, there are likely to be opportunities to achieve some program delivery efficiencies while continuing to improve strategic planning outcomes for dairy farmers and yielding positive relationship outcomes between dairy farmers and Dairy Australia.

Activities

The objective of the OFOP project was to support farmers to set long-term goals, improve their business performance and manage risk. Through the program, farmers participated in a series of workshops and follow-up one-on-one engagements with Dairy Australia staff and program service deliverers. The one-on-one engagements enabled them to make informed choices and decisions on their strategic priorities and what would be physically documented. This level of engagement was intended to improve the likelihood that farmers would make more informed and actionable strategic plans, and increase their future engagement with Dairy Australia, encouraging participation in future initiatives.

OFOP had significant success attracting participants and driving the successful preparation and implementation of farmers' written strategic plans. In a survey of participating dairy farmers, farmers said that having a 'Plan on a Page' improved the clarity of their business and personal goals and provided clear next steps required to achieve these goals. Of those surveyed, 90 per cent rated the Plan on a Page either extremely or very useful. After participating in OFOP, they also felt more confident, in control and better prepared to manage business risk by following through on their priorities and putting them into action. Nearly all survey respondents (96 per cent) are still farming, of which most said participating in OFOP helped or enabled them to continue farming (67 per cent).

Benefits

Dairy Australia invested \$6.3 million in Our Farm, Our Plan. This largely included Dairy Australia and matching levy funding but also included significant funding from other sources such as the Gardiner Dairy Foundation, the Commonwealth Government Future Drought Fund – Farm Business Resilience Program, state agencies and some milk processors. The net benefits of the program are estimated to be \$3.1 million with a benefit cost ratio of 1.5 – for every \$1 invested, a return of \$1.50 of benefit was achieved.

These estimates are based on the values farmers placed on having a strategic plan and identifying a range of positive outcomes that occurred in their businesses as a result. These included among others:

- improvement in clarity of personal and business goals
- alignment with key decision-makers
- confidence
- preparedness to manage business risk
- skills to map progress and adjust the plan over time.

Key observations

The consultants noted that OFOP is valued highly by many farmers who participate in the program and considerable effort has been placed on deep engagement with participating farmers. However, there may be opportunities to find program efficiencies while avoiding deterioration in the quality of outcomes. As the historical reach of the program grows and involves more farmers, it may become increasingly more difficult to attract new participants, affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

Recognising the relatively high value but also high cost of program delivery, the consultants advised that Dairy Australia should carefully consider the opportunity to reduce program costs while maintaining effectiveness. For example, it may be possible to:

- Reduce some design and research costs within the program.
- Undertake program design changes to reduce implementation costs, such as reducing the number of engagement points with individual farmers (which may include finding efficiencies with other related programs that have the same engagement points) without adversely impacting their experience or quality of strategic planning.

Management response

Feedback from farmers has been consistently very positive about OFOP, including its content, delivery and the value provided to them and their business. Pleasingly, this was confirmed by the feedback received through a survey undertaken by Marsden Jacobs as part of the benefit-cost analysis (BCA) process.

Deep engagement with participating farmers starts before they commence OFOP, with significant investment made at the front-end to engage and convince farmers to participate. Like all Dairy Australia extension programs, this remains the biggest challenge for OFOP. The development of relationships with Dairy Australia regional staff and farmers having a key contact is, by design, one of the outcomes achieved by OFOP. Through OFOP, regions have seen many farmers who don't typically participate in programs become involved.

In recognising there may be opportunities to find program efficiencies while avoiding deterioration in the quality of outcomes, the OFOP team confirmed this has been considered when planning for the next iteration of the project, OFOP Phase 2. Maintaining the quality of outcomes for farmers is the priority, while achieving efficiencies through a focus on delivery and collaboration with other Dairy Australia initiatives, is the strategy. This includes Dairy Australia's Farm Engagement Practice, which is strongly aligned with OFOP through the provision of one-to-one engagement with farmers. The opportunity for OFOP and the Farm Engagement Practice to deliver 'win:win' outcomes will be captured. Other efficiencies will be gained through a lower-cost model that winds back the spend on marketing and other costs outside of delivery and won't require further research.

The OFOP project team have taken feedback onboard, regarding the increased difficulty to attract new participants due to historically high participation rates, and the flow-on effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the program. The team continue to work with regional teams on a new 'Engagement-led OFOP' model, which has been piloted with success. This model removes the need to attend workshops and goes 'straight to the kitchen table' with farmers. As such, it opens OFOP up to a large number of farm businesses where one or more people involved did not want to attend workshops. This will be a key initiative to attract new participants into OFOP, while gaining efficiencies through collaboration with the Farm Engagement Practice.

2

Attract and develop great people for dairy

Attract great people to the dairy industry, build their capability and careers, and foster a safe work culture.

Strategic outcomes

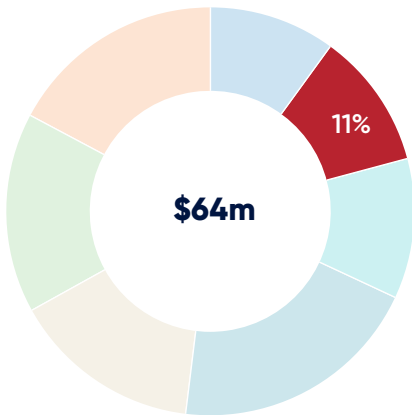
- a** Greater awareness of Australian dairy as an attractive industry with rewarding careers.
 - b** Clear and supported skill development and career pathways.
 - c** Access to capable and skilled farm employees.
 - d** Support farm businesses and their service providers to get the basics right.
-



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes			
	2a	2b	2c	2d
Farm Safety	●			●
Dairy Farm Managers		●	●	
Regional Services				●
Extension		●		●
People in Dairy	●	●	●	●
Australian Rural Leadership Program sponsorship		●		
DairyLearn partnerships		●	●	
Workforce Evidence Based Targeted Marketing	●	●		
Dairy workforce Network Implementation	●	●	●	●
Workforce Attraction – pathways and resources	●	●	●	
Simulation Education for Artificial Insemination		●	●	
Rural Safety and Health Alliance 2	●			●

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$7.3m**



External investment 2032/24 **\$0.17m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Department of Education and Training Victoria	\$0.07m
University of Sydney	\$0.06m

Key partners

- Victorian Government
- Gardiner Dairy Foundation
- Regional Development Corporations
- DairyLearn Partner Network (registered training organisations and universities)
- Marcus Oldham College, University of Tasmania, University of Sydney, La Trobe University
- Rural Safety & Health Alliance
- The Careers Department
- Primary Industry Education Foundation Australia
- National Herd Improvement Association
- National Centre for Farmer Health

Performance summary

Attracted people to work on dairy farms and provided support to farmers in employing and managing people and building skills for successful careers.

Promoted the benefits of working in dairy farming and encouraged Australians to explore a job in dairy through initiatives including a marketing campaign aimed at regional jobseekers. The campaign was supported by a jobs board where farmers could post vacancies and connect with people interested in a job in dairy.

Delivered initiatives to support farm employment needs and improve people development and leadership skills. The development and implementation of the Dairy Capability Guide commenced initially with large suppliers and is progressively being promoted to all farms.

Completed an innovative learning initiative to develop a simulation-based training option for artificial insemination through partnerships with vocational training bodies.

Enhanced the learning platform 'Enlight' to improve accessibility and functionality for farmers and employees, resulting in an increase in user registrations. Further improvements in areas such as language translation of courses and self-registration are planned for the coming year.

Worked to improve safety on dairy farms through the delivery of a range of initiatives and resources, including monthly safety communications and greater involvement of farmers in delivery of these messages. Farmer wellbeing and health will continue to be a significant focus in 2024-25.

Strategic outcome 2a

Greater awareness of Australian dairy as an attractive industry with rewarding careers

There are strong community perceptions about dairy based on historic views of long hours and hard work. Modern dairy operations are more diverse with roles that are highly skilled and provide genuine career opportunities.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Dairy farm employers can describe why dairy is rewarding to work in.	80% of employers	75%	76%
Australians would consider working on a dairy farm.	30% of community	20%	18%
All dairy farms implement good safety practices.	100% farm employees	85%	88%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Attracted people to work on dairy farms through the Dairy Jobs Matter marketing campaign. The campaign improved awareness and perceptions of working on a dairy farm, with 64 per cent of those who recognised the campaign taking action as a result. More than one million people visited dairyjobsmatter.com.au off the back of the campaign. Of the regional adults who saw the campaign, 42 per cent would consider working on a dairy farm.
- Highlighted opportunities to work in dairy and improved connectivity between dairy farm employers and jobseekers with the launch of an online Dairy Farm Jobs Board. Farmers can list vacancies on the jobs board while continuing to advertise on Facebook, Gumtree or SEEK, and via their local networks and channels. Almost 82,000 potential jobseekers visited the Dairy Jobs Board.
- Attracted secondary school students to explore a career in dairy through a partnership with Explore Careers that reached 3,200 secondary schools across Australia. The Cows Create Careers program included over 200 secondary schools and involved over 14,000 students.

Strategic outcome 2b

Clear and supported skill development and career pathways

As the needs of the dairy industry evolve, the industry requires a workforce with an advanced range of capabilities and a greater diversity of career pathways. This will lead to more successful dairy careers, including pathways to business ownership.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Employees have clear, logical and supported development pathways in dairy.	70% of farmers who are building their career in dairy	54%	78%
Employers have clear, logical and supported development pathways for themselves.	70% of employers	52%	43%

Key achievements

- Delivered opportunities for farmers and their employees to assess their current skills and knowledge and identify new learning opportunities to support their career progression through a new skills capability self-assessment tool.
- Delivered a framework for farmers and their employees to assess current and future development needs to build their careers through development and implementation of the Dairy Capability Guide. Initial feedback from large suppliers has been positive with a progressive promotion and rollout planned to occur with all farms during 2024/25.

Strategic outcome 2c

Access to capable and skilled farm employees

Farm businesses continue to require skilled labour on farm and access to quality service provision from external providers. Success requires employers to be confident and capable to hire, manage, lead and provide a safe work environment for capable people. Service providers need to invest in their own capability and support a new generation of talented professionals.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Employers report that the time taken to find a new employee was less than one month.	80% of employers that employed someone in the past 12 months	69%	76%
Employers were able find an employee with the right capability for the role in the past 12 months.	80% of employers that employed someone in the past 12 months	70%	75%

Key achievements

- Assisted farmers and the industry with their workforce needs through continued development of short and longer-term workforce attraction and retention initiatives. This has resulted in a faster recruitment cycle and an improvement in the identification of candidates with higher capabilities.
- Promoted the Dairy Jobs Board to farmers, which resulted in over 500 job posts, and increased exposure of vacant roles through third party websites for agriculture-affiliated job sites.
- Facilitated courses on employment, from fundamentals through to leadership development, to support farmers in building their employment brand and strengthen their candidate attraction capability.

Strategic outcome 2d

Support farm businesses and their service providers to get the basics right

Farm businesses are complex with many interconnected decisions required daily to produce milk. Establishing fundamentals such as soil management, pasture agronomy, animal nutrition and milk quality are important for farm success.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farm businesses have access to the information and tools they need to get the fundamentals right on-farm.	80% of farm businesses	63%	58%
Service providers have access to the information and tools that they need to get the fundamentals right on-farm.	80% of service providers	65%	78%

Key achievements

- Improved access to up-to-date employment information for farmers through the People in Dairy website with over 48,000 farmer visits to the site.
- Supported farmers and service providers to continue developing skills in employing, managing and leading people by facilitating regional and national online courses.
- Supported farmers to improve safety systems and safety culture adoption on farms through development of a new farm safety course, SAFER Farms. The SAFER Farms course (which stands for see, assess, fix, evaluate, review) will be formally rolled-out in the first half of 2024/25.



Case study

Workforce attraction

Objective

To attract new people to work on dairy farms and retain existing workers.

Action

Dairy Australia developed and implemented a marketing campaign, Dairy Jobs Matter, that promoted the benefits of working in dairy farming, drove awareness of jobs available on dairy farms and encouraged Australians to consider a job and career in dairy.

The advertising videos featured several Dairy Australia farmer ambassadors who spoke about the benefits of working on a dairy farm including:

- working with animals and outdoors
- implementing sustainable practices on farm
- learning on the job
- career progression
- and having variety in every day.

The Dairy Jobs Matter campaign targeted potential jobseekers who live within a 50-kilometre radius of dairy regions. It aimed to drive jobseekers to the dairyjobsmatter.com.au website, to retarget them through social media and digital display advertising. The retargeting advertising nurtured jobseekers' interest and drove them to the Dairy Jobs Board to showcase the vacant positions on dairy farms. The advertising also encouraged them to consider a job on a dairy farm, and take action, such as providing contact details, contacting a potential employer or applying for a job. Dairy Australia's Workforce Attraction Lead network, which is active across all regions, worked with candidates and recruiting farmers to encourage the connection with job opportunities.

The Dairy Jobs Matter advertising campaign was supported with public relations activity including:

- national and localised media outreach
- a social media influencer program

- a partnership with content creators, Humans of Agriculture, with podcast interviews and video content published across social media featuring dairy farmer Harry Lloyd.

A key action of the project has been to develop industry frameworks and resources to promote pre-employment experiences for jobseekers to connect with dairy farm businesses, in addition to building the skills of farmers to successfully recruit and retain workers.

Impact

The social media component of the Dairy Jobs Matter retargeting campaign was successful at reaching the entire available audience of 1.6 million people.

More than one million people visited the Dairy Jobs Matter page, and almost 82,000 people visited the Dairy Jobs Board. Of the regional adults who saw the campaign, 42 per cent would consider working on a dairy farm.

The Dairy Jobs Matter campaign resulted in a total of 3,300 candidates who demonstrated strong interest in working on a dairy farm, along with 500 direct on-farm placements, and a significantly higher number of indirect on-farm placements.

More than 500 vacant positions were posted on the Dairy Farm Jobs Board by recruiting farmers.

Survey feedback gathered from recruiting and employing farmers concerning the benefits of the project has consistently been positive, indicating that it has assisted them to source appropriate candidates in a challenging employment market and to retain them.

Industry networks including government job agencies, service providers and education institutions have been developed through the implementation of a range of pre-employment programs for secondary school age groups, unemployed and the socially disadvantaged. The impact of industry network contacts in each region to improve both candidate numbers and employee capability positions the dairy industry as a leader in this area across the broader agriculture sector.

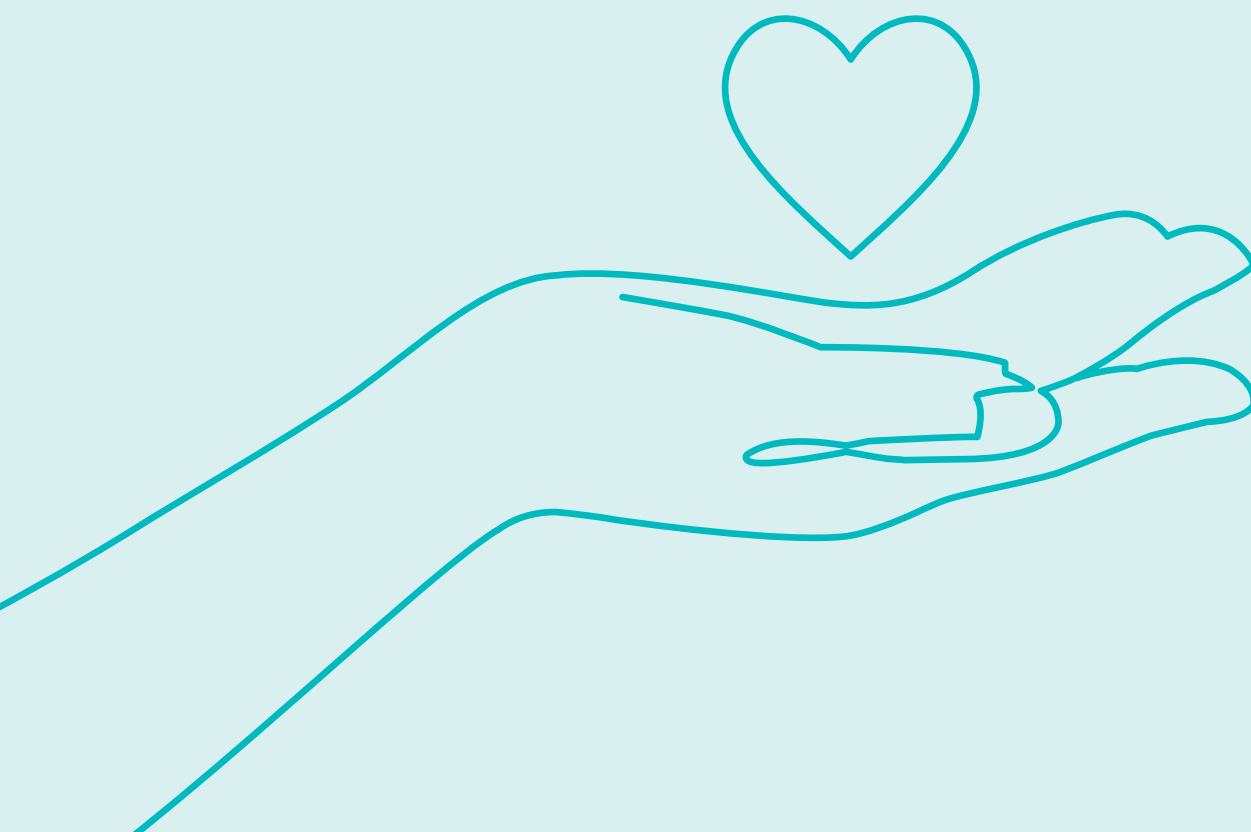
3

Strong community support for dairy

Enhanced trust and value in the Australian dairy industry, its farmers and products.

Strategic outcomes

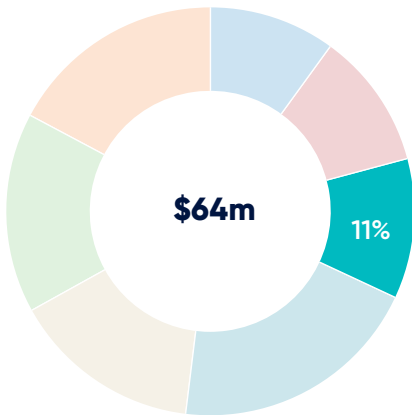
- a The Australian dairy industry is trusted and accepted by the community.
- b Australian dairy is valued for superior health and nutrition benefits.
- c The Australian dairy industry is committed to animal wellbeing.



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes		
	3a	3b	3c
Health and Nutrition	●	●	
Communications to Health Care Professionals	●	●	
Consumer Marketing	●	●	●
School Engagement	●	●	●
Dairy Trust Tracker			
Farmer Ambassadors	●	●	●
Non-replacement Calf Pathways	●		●
Growing Beef from Dairy			●
Industry Sustainability Framework	●		●
Healthy Ageing with Dairy	●	●	
DairyHIGH 2 – non-replacement dairy calves welfare research and development	●		●
Supporting Manufacturing Sustainability	●		
Anaerobic Digestion			●
Australian Surplus Calves Roadmap	●		●
Driving adoption of disbudding best practice	●		●
Data driven animal health, welfare and antibiotic use benchmarking			●
Dairy manufacturers workforce webinars	●		

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$6.9m**



External investment 2023/24 **\$0.23m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Sustainability Victoria	\$0.07m
University of Melbourne	\$0.04m

Key partners

- Sustainability Framework Consultative Forum
- Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives Platform
- International Dairy Federation
- Global Dairy Platform
- International Milk Promotion Group
- Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF), State Dairy Farming Organisations (SDFOs)
- Processors
- University of Melbourne
- Sydney University
- Life Education

Performance summary

Improved community trust to a high of 83 per cent by communicating the industry’s sustainability commitments and progress. The national Dairy Matters – Our Dairy Promise campaign contributed to positive public perceptions of the industry and these high levels of trust. This extended to school children through farm-to-plate education initiatives including Picasso Cows and virtual experiences. Farmer ambassadors were key to championing the industry and engaging with the broader community.

Communication of dairy’s health benefits through community campaigns, health professional and influencer engagement and a partnership with the Life Education schools program led to improved perceptions of dairy’s health credentials.

Continued to leverage the Dairy Australia-led Fractures Trial which showed that increasing dairy foods in aged care facilities reduces falls and fractures and subsequent healthcare costs. Partnered with Meals on Wheels in NSW, collaborated on an event at Parliament House, in Canberra, presented at key forums and the final paper was accepted for publication. The Australian Dietary Guidelines review is still underway, evidence will continue to be provided as required.

Delivered the Australian Grand Dairy Awards event and campaign under new partnership with the Royal Agricultural Societies, leading to an increase in consumers who make an effort to buy Australian dairy products.

Addressing animal welfare concerns through the exploration of non-replacement calf pathways continues with funding received from TasFarmers to develop Tasmanian Calfways Operational Plan. Animal health, welfare and antibiotic use benchmarking is underway in partnership with key universities.

Supported the ongoing development and implementation of the Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework which will continue to be a whole of industry priority.

Strategic outcome 3a

The Australian dairy industry is trusted and accepted by the community

The Australian community is taking a greater interest in the food they consume and the way it is produced. Trust and resulting acceptance in agriculture, including dairy, cannot be taken for granted. Sustainable production of dairy foods requires a demonstrable commitment to people, animal care and the environment. This commitment includes understanding and staying ahead of community expectations and working with industry to set targets and measure progress at a national and global scale.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Consumers trust the dairy industry.	79% of consumers	75%	83%
Farmers actively promote the industry.	40% of farmers	31%	31%
Consumers prefer to buy Australian-made or locally-produced dairy products wherever possible.	85% of consumers	81%	80%
Consumers agree dairy farmers do a good job caring for the environment.	75% of consumers	64%	68%
The Sustainability Framework is recognised, supported and trusted as providing evidence of industry's commitment to sustainable dairy practices.	80% community representatives on the consultative forum	70%	N/A
Dairy manufacturers are engaged in industry-led initiatives to improve the water, waste, packaging and emissions intensity of their operations.	90% of milk pool	91%	94%

Key achievements

- Promoted the industry's sustainability commitments and progress through the Our Dairy Promise campaign across television, video on demand, YouTube, podcasts, content partnerships, social media, search and digital display. As a result, community perceptions improved with trust increasing by eight per cent.
- Demonstrated the actions farmers are taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions intensity through a television segment – Planet Shapers – with Network 10. The segment, supported by broader advertising and case studies, drove an increase in consumers who agree the dairy industry is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 35 per cent to 55 per cent.
- Built trust with the community by providing answers to their questions through the You Ask, We Answer online platform. The tool was used 405,959 times from July 2023 to June 2024 with questions and answers on dairy and lactose, weight gain, gut health and how cows produce milk, among the most viewed.
- Promoted the high quality of Australian dairy foods by driving awareness of the Australian Grand Dairy Awards winners. Paid advertising and influencer partnerships resulted in 14 million impressions across Facebook and Instagram and reached 2.2 million Australians on TikTok, resulting in a three per cent increase in consumers who prefer to buy Australian made.
- Engaged teachers through the Discover Dairy website, providing access to curriculum-linked lesson plans and activities on the Australian dairy industry. Over 100,000 resources were downloaded with teachers rating the website content as 9.7 out of 10 for usefulness and credibility.
- Educated primary school aged children about the dairy industry through Picasso Cows, virtual farm tours and content at Royal Agricultural shows. As a result of participating in Picasso Cows, teachers reported an improvement of 3.7/10 to 9.7/10 students having a good knowledge of where dairy foods come from after completing the program.
- Reinforced the robustness of the industry sustainability commitment by supporting the initiation of a review of the Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework goals, targets and indicators. This saw an increase in industry people wanting to be involved with the framework steering committee.
- Identified 10 key actions to reduce waste, environmental impacts and costs across the sector through the launch of the Dairy Sector Food Waste Action Plan. Secured \$125,000 in funding from Sustainability Victoria, which will be used in partnership with Dairy Manufacturers Sustainability Council members and Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF) to support the industry to deliver improved waste outcomes.
- Increased the number of trained farmer ambassadors to 90 and supported them to promote the industry by participating in over 300 opportunities including media interviews, school and community presentations, careers events and articles telling their stories.

Strategic outcome 3b

Australian dairy is valued for superior health and nutrition benefits

There continues to be differing opinions about the role of various foods for good health and nutrition, which compete with established science-based advice. Consumers require access to information that supports their ongoing consumption of healthy and nutritious foods.

There is an opportunity to further increase the strong support for dairy products and the industry and continue to reinforce the reasons to consume and buy Australian dairy.

The voice of farmers is essential to convey pride in their industry and to speak positively about being in dairy.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2023 actuals	2024 actuals
Consumers trust dairy as a wholesome and healthy food.	87% of consumers	83%	81%	85%
Consumers hear positive health messages about dairy foods from health professionals.	86% of consumers	85%	91%	89%
Consumers make an effort to consume dairy every day.	55% of consumers	49%	47%	53%

Key achievements

- Addressed lactose intolerance misconceptions and promoted dairy's role in gut health, natural nutrition and sports performance by publishing a health content series targeting younger adults with news site Pedestrian. The series, which was supported by additional advertising, drove an uplift in consumers who agree cow's milk is more nutritious than alternatives, from 57 per cent in 2023 to 70 per cent in 2024.
- Encouraged women aged 50 and over to increase their dairy intake to the recommended four serves a day through the Healthy Bones Action Week campaign. Over one million consumers were reached through GP waiting rooms, a Studio 10 segment, media coverage and influencer content, resulting in a seven per cent increase in older adults making an effort to consume dairy every day.
- Promoted the health and nutrition benefits of dairy foods for children through the Life Education partnership. Close to 250,000 students and 180 educators learnt about dairy foods through nutritional modules in the classroom and the Healthy Harold van.
- Communicated dairy's role in 'powering strong, healthy bodies at any age' through the annual World Milk Day campaign. A campaign video featuring industry sporting identities with dairy farming connections reached 5.7 million Australians and was supported by strong media coverage and influencer engagement.
- Engaged dietitians and general practitioners to share the latest science on dairy's role in a healthy diet and address key consumption barriers including digestion and gut health through targeted communications and events. As a result, 89 per cent of consumers are hearing positive health messages about dairy foods from health professionals.
- Engaged over 100 key health opinion leaders through a hybrid breakfast event focusing on dairy's role in a healthy, sustainable diet with a panel of experts including a nutrition academic, a farmer and a dairy manufacturer. As a result, 93 per cent of attendees strongly agreed/agreed they felt more positive about dairy as part of a healthy, sustainable dietary pattern.
- Promote the important role of dairy foods for older adults through a policy morning tea at Parliament House in Canberra, in partnership with ADF and ADPF. Forty MPs, their staff and aged care representatives heard the latest evidence from the University of Melbourne on dairy's key role in prevention of falls and fractures.
- Published the final paper from the Fractures Trial in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. This paper shows that increasing dairy food intake from 2 to 3.5 serves per day not only reduces falls and fractures in aged care residents but can be done so without increasing risk of heart disease, which is a key barrier to dairy consumption.
- Provided evidence to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on consumer confusion around labelling and marketing of plant-based products promoted as dairy alternatives. In partnership with ADF and ADPF, supported a voluntary framework that provides clear guidance on the labelling and marketing of plant-based alternatives to dairy products.

Strategic outcome 3c

The Australian dairy industry is committed to animal wellbeing

The wellbeing of animals is critical to the Australian dairy industry. Appropriate care for our animals is essential to the success of every farming business, and a moral responsibility. There is opportunity to continue to improve our practices, report transparently on how we are progressing and identify where we need to do more to ensure industry practices align with community values.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
The community believes the dairy industry meets their expectations in doing the right thing.	77% of consumers	73%	72%
Consumers agree that dairy farmers do a good job caring for their animals.	80% of consumers	74%	77%

Key achievements

- Increased the number of consumers who agree that dairy farmers do a good job caring for their animals by communicating the industry's commitment to animal wellbeing through Our Dairy Promise campaign, Discover Dairy curriculum resources and You Ask, We Answer platform.
- Engaged over 100 stakeholders to inform the development of the Calfways Roadmap, which will guide how the industry achieves the goal of 'all calves to enter a valued market chain by 2035'. A regionalised operational plan, the Tasmanian Calfways plan, is also in development to create a regional roadmap which reflects national goals and local challenges.
- Initiated a project which will improve our understanding of dairy antimicrobial use and stewardship in partnership with Sydney University and University of Melbourne. The project will benchmark antibiotic use in dairy cows, informing practice change and providing opportunity for surveillance of antimicrobial resistance.



Case study

Building trust through our Dairy Promise

Objective

To improve trust in the Australian dairy industry and increase the perceived importance and health benefits of dairy foods.

Background:

Australian consumers are increasingly engaged in the food supply chain and want to know more about where their food has come from and how it has been produced. To maintain community trust and support for Australian dairy, Dairy Australia delivers marketing campaigns that communicate the industry's sustainability commitments and progress, and provide transparent, evidence-based information on the areas that matter to the community.

In 2023, Dairy Australia's consumer tracking showed that while dairy foods are trusted by most consumers as healthy and wholesome, the perceived importance of milk, cheese and yoghurt in their diet was declining. In addition, there was an opportunity to improve perceptions of aspects of the industry that are known drivers of distrust, including greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of dairy farming on the environment.

Action:

Building on the success of the Dairy Matters 'Our Dairy Promise' campaign, Dairy Australia delivered an advertising campaign targeting health and environmentally conscious consumers and aimed to improve their perceptions by communicating our industry sustainability commitments and the proven health benefits of dairy foods.

A 'dairy fact bites' series was delivered through advertising, providing key messages on:

- dairy and lactose intolerance
- weight gain
- milk for post-exercise hydration
- natural nutrition and digestive health.

The advertising also featured sustainable dairy farming practices including:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- using renewable energy sources
- recycling water.

Campaign channels were selected to reach a large proportion of the audience and encourage click through to dairy.com.au to learn more. Channels included Google search, digital display advertising, social media, YouTube, broadcast video-on-demand and Foxtel, which achieved than 5.3 million campaign views.

The advertising was supported with a five-minute television segment on the Network 10 program Planet Shapers. The segment demonstrated the actions farmers are taking to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions intensity and how this is tracked via the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator. It featured three Gippsland dairy farmers, alongside the chair of the Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework.

Impact:

Tracking showed that 31 per cent of Australian adults recalled seeing the campaign, and 4 out of 5 of those took action as a result, including seeking out Australian-made dairy and searching online for more information.

The advertising drove 480,000 views of related articles on dairy.com.au. The most viewed articles were:

- Intolerances and allergies
- The power of fermented dairy
- How the dairy industry is tackling climate change
- Aussie farmers shaping environmentally positive farms.

The campaign led to an increase in community trust, from 75 per cent in 2023 to 83 per cent in 2024 and improved perceptions of dairy's health benefits and protection of the environment.

- 70 per cent of consumers who saw the campaign were more likely to agree that the 'dairy industry is meeting their expectations and doing the right thing' compared to 56 per cent who did not see the campaign.
- 73 per cent of consumers who saw the campaign were more likely to agree that 'dairy foods can provide benefits to digestive health' compared to 57 per cent who didn't see the campaign.
- Consumers who agree cow's milk is more nutritious than alternatives increased from 57 per cent in 2023 to 70 per cent in 2024.
- Consumers who believe the 'dairy industry is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions' increased from 35 per cent in 2023 to 55 per cent in 2024.
- 67 per cent of consumers who saw the campaign were more likely to agree that the 'industry does a good job for caring for the environment' compared to 50 per cent who did not see the campaign.



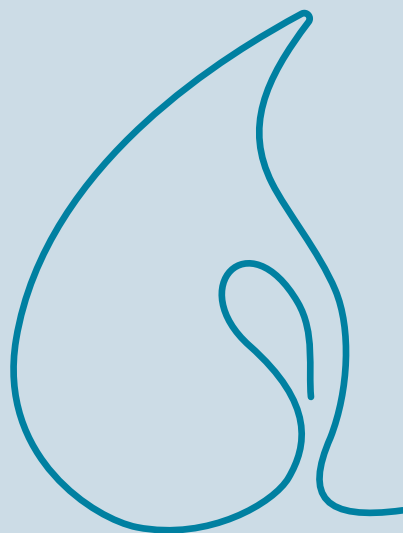
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Thrive in a changing environment

Profitable farm businesses that adapt to the changing natural environment and provide good stewardship of resources.

Strategic outcomes

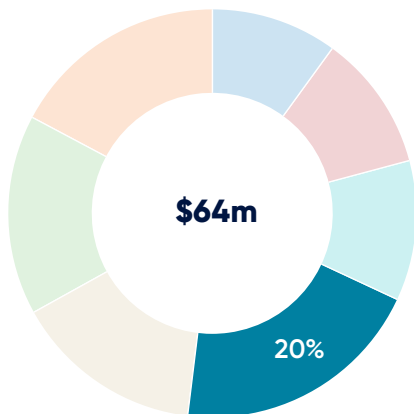
- a Greater ability to adapt to changes in the natural environment.
 - b Efficient and profitable use of land, water, carbon and energy resources which nurtures and sustains the natural environment.
 - c Proactive action to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.
-



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes		
	4a	4b	4c
Adapting dairy farming systems	●		
Climate change adaptation pathways for dairy	●		
Sustainable dairy products (National Landcare Program Smart Farms)			
Supporting manufacturing sustainability		●	
DairyHIGH 2	●	●	
DairyFeedbase – Cool Cows		●	●
A Circular Economy for Silage Wrap	●		●
Adapting to Climate Change on Dairy Farms		●	
C4Milk bridging project	●		
DairyBio – Forages	●		
Dairy Feedbase 23-28	●	●	●
National Pasture Genebank	●	●	●
Measuring emissions intensity at dairy farm and industry scale	●		
Building advisory capability in nutrient management planning			●
Dairy Sector Food Waste Action Plan		●	
Dairy Manufacturers workforce webinars		●	●
Scaling out multi-species - drought resilient soils and landscape grants program		●	
Fall Armyworm	●	●	
Soil function in varied pasture systems	●		
Economic and risk analysis of intensive feeding systems	●	●	
Northern Victorian Flood Response 2022	●		
Farm Environmental Tracker development and extension	●	●	

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$12.5m**



External investment 2023/24 **\$1.18m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Gardiner Foundation	\$0.86m
Barenbrug Australia	\$0.13m
Dairy NSW	\$0.10m
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources	\$0.06m

Key partners

- Commonwealth and state governments, including National Landcare Project
- Regional Development Corporations
- Australian Dairy Farmers Natural Resource Management Policy Advisory Group
- Dairy Manufacturers Sustainability Council
- Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, University of Melbourne Dairy Innovation Hub
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Australian Alliance for Energy Productivity
- Stop Food Waste Australia
- Processors

Performance summary

Enabled farmers to demonstrate climate and environment performance, and plan for improvements through accelerated use of the Farm Environmental Tracker tool and the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator.

Commenced work to enhance farmer management of climate risks by building a national climate change adaptation framework.

Investigated options to maximise farm productivity in pasture-based systems with reduced reliance on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser through our research investment in partnership with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture.

Continued supporting dairy farm businesses to explore changes in their farm system, such as moving to a contained housing system, through the Raising the Roof 2024 event, along with continued roll-out of tools and resources to support decision-making.

Continued critical research in soils and multi-species pastures to investigate options to reduce synthetic fertiliser use. Commenced planning for an inaugural event, Grounds for Growth, to be held in 2025 to further the discussion on biodiversity in soils and pastures and the benefits it may provide.

Greater ability to adapt to changes in the natural environment

Dairy has immediate and substantial risks from the impacts of climate variability, far more so than our competitors. Pressures from changes to the natural environment are wide-ranging, from restricted access to water, to more extreme climatic events and less secure access to nutrients and feed sources. These pressures will increase with predicted impacts from climate change and require innovation to counter these pressures.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farmers have access to enough information to understand the impacts of changes in the environment.	90% of farmers	74%	70%
Farmers have the right information and skills to thrive in increasingly volatile climatic conditions.	95% of farmers	84%	90%

Key achievements

- Supported farmers to take advantage of location and commodity-specific climate change data projections through dairy-centric input into development of the My Climate View tool in collaboration with Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and other RDCs. Completed training for Dairy Australia staff in the use of the tool.
- Developed a national climate change adaptation framework to enable more efficient development of resources and extension, and knowledge sharing between regions, improving outcomes for farmers.
- Enabled farmers to make informed decisions about farm system changes before undertaking any significant investment in feeding and/or housing infrastructure by delivering training for internal and external advisors on the Farm Systems Evaluator tool. Initial workshops were also delivered in the storm and flood impacted areas of NSW.
- Initiated an additional research component that will support farmers to optimise the use of manure in forage crop rotations and reduce reliance on synthetic fertilisers through the C4 Milk program.
- Delivered an analysis of the cost structures and drivers that can make contained housing systems profitable by examining 15 farms using contained housing systems in Northern Victoria and inland NSW over a seven-year period. The results were presented at the Raising the Roof event.
- Provided support to dairy farmers considering and implementing the transition to multi-species swards by sharing the findings of our investments in scientifically rigorous research into multi-species pastures at field days in Victorian dairy regions.
- Expanded the evidence base on the effects of increased pasture species richness and reduced synthetic nitrogen application by completing soil sampling and analysis to investigate the changes on soil properties, such as carbon, nitrogen and microbes.

Strategic outcome 4b

Efficient and profitable use of land, water, carbon and energy resources which nurtures and sustains the natural environment

Future success depends on efficient use of natural inputs with a focus on land, water, carbon, and energy. This efficiency needs to be considered over a longer term in a way that nurtures and sustains the natural environment and is profitable for dairy businesses.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Dairy farm businesses have adopted technologies and management practices to achieve land, water, carbon, nutrient, and energy efficiency.	70% of farmers	66%	97%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Equipped dairy farmers with tools, resources and insights to make informed decisions about feedpads and contained housing infrastructure through the Raising the Roof event. The three-day event had 260 attendees and received very positive feedback.
- Completed research and held field days on the physical and economic benefits of multi-species swards across nine multi-species pasture sites in Victoria. Economic analysis is now underway.
- Commenced planning for an event in 2025 – Grounds for Growth: Soils and Pasture Biodiversity – to deliver practical information on the impacts of soil and pasture biodiversity on soil function, dry matter production and profitability, and options for transitioning to a multi-species pasture system. The agenda is currently being drafted with support from a farmer advisory group.
- Collected data to better understand the potential to maintain a highly productive intensive grazing system with low nitrogen input through the DairyHIGH 2 program. A further two lactations are planned in this farmlet study.
- Established trials of short-term rye grass for nutrient and water use efficiency at Agriculture Victoria's Hamilton Smartfarm.
- Commenced genomic sequencing to identify areas of the genome responsible for improved resilience to drought and higher yield at lower nutrient application at Agriculture Victoria's AgriBio facility.
- Identified and assessed opportunities to convert animal industry waste streams into biogas for renewable energy production and commenced a detailed feasibility study into developing a utility-scale biogas facility in Western Victoria. This project is supported by partnerships with ADPF and other industry stakeholders, along with funding from Sustainability Victoria.

Strategic outcome 4c

Proactive action to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions

The dairy industry has committed to being part of the solution to global warming. This will require a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, especially in the farm sector. Investment is required to identify commercial solutions.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2023 actuals	2024 actuals
Dairy farm businesses generating renewable energy.	85% of farmers	61%	57%	64%
Dairy farm businesses have access to and have adopted commercial solutions for reducing on farm emissions.	40% of farmers	17%	43%	75%*
Dairy farm businesses with 300+ herd size understand their carbon footprint.	50% of farmers	26%	13%	24%

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Published a suite of new and updated resources to empower farmers to implement energy efficient and renewable energy practices on farm.
- Enabled dairy farmers in Western Australia to identify profitable emission reduction opportunities by delivering practical support to calculate their carbon number. Approximately 80 per cent of the milk pool in Western Australia now comes from farms with knowledge of their carbon number.
- Increased support for farmers to understand carbon and make use of the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator through delivery of extension, enabled by a grant from the Commonwealth Government.
- Completed planning the rollout of one-to-one support for large dairy businesses to calculate their carbon number using the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator. Following a successful pilot in Western Australia, support will be made available to the 40 largest dairy businesses nationally.
- Continued exploring options to empower farmers to calculate their carbon number through engagement with the dairy supply chain and other external bodies to identify partnership opportunities.





Case study

Feeding and housing infrastructure

Objective

To provide access to evidence-based information to support farmers and service providers make decisions on feedbase alternatives, cattle feeding infrastructure and housing infrastructure.

Action

To showcase innovative thinking and global insights into dairy feeding and housing infrastructure, Dairy Australia held a three-day event titled Raising the Roof. Over 260 farmers and industry professionals attended the February 2024 event held in the Hunter Valley, NSW. The program featured interactive presentations, panel discussions, networking opportunities and virtual and in-person farm visits.

The Farm System Evaluator tool was launched during the event. The Farm System Evaluator is an industry endorsed method to support farmers to identify and mitigate risks before any capital is invested and farm systems changes are enacted. Farmers using the tool and attending the accompanying workshop are equipped with:

- Guidance on the farm system options best suited to their goals and needs.
- Visualising and preparing for the changes through a strategic action plan.
- Understanding the benefits and limitations of operating with different feeding and housing infrastructure.

Impact

Raising the Roof attendees gained practical insights into the design and management of modern dairy farming systems.

A survey of attendees indicated the event was highly valued and has supported practice change, with 88 per cent of participants indicating they would make a change on farm in the next six months. A significant increase in the confidence and skill level of attendees was also noted, utilising the knowledge gained at the event.

There has been strong uptake of the Farm System Evaluator workshops nationally with over 100 users of the Farm System Evaluator tool.

Acknowledgement

This project was co-funded by Dairy Australia, the Commonwealth and NSW Government's Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program and Agriculture Victoria. It also received significant support through sponsorship partners.



Case study

Multi-species pastures

Objective

To provide information with scientific rigour to support Victorian farmers considering and implementing the transition to a multi-species pasture system.

Background

This work provides the science to support decision-making on multi-species pasture systems and builds on previous research examining the impact multi-species pastures can have on dry matter production, soil health and function and building drought resilience. It was developed in response to farmers trialling multi-species as a solution to reducing synthetic fertiliser use and to build soil health.

Action

Nine sites across three Victorian dairy regions were selected to evaluate the seasonal dry matter production, soil function and drought resilience of a conventional ryegrass system and multi-species pasture system. Two field days were held in each region over the life of the project with economic case studies conducted at one site per region. At least one field day per region was held on a farm site and attendees had the opportunity to inspect both the multi-species pastures and the conventional ryegrass pastures.

Each of the field days explored the local results of the conventional and multi-species system. Information was presented by University of Melbourne and Dairy Australia staff including:

- pasture production, composition and quality, including the shoulders of the season
- soil health parameters, including carbon and nitrogen
- soil moisture at depth and soil microbial biomass
- economic analysis of the multispecies pastures.

Impact

This work has begun to build the scientific knowledge to support anecdotal reports of the benefits of multi-species pastures, their impact on soil health, and the ability of the system to be productive using less synthetic nitrogen. It provided a platform for farmers to come together to discuss ways to change the pasture system without reducing productivity and highlighted the areas where differences in the two systems occurred.

As a result of this work, further Future Drought Fund money has been secured to extend one site in each Victorian dairy region and investigate the longer term and ongoing impacts of the multi-species system on soil health and function.

Acknowledgement

This project was conducted by University of Melbourne and jointly funded through the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund and Dairy Australia.

5

Success in domestic and overseas markets

Improved access to high-value dairy markets, backed by trusted market insights and a favourable regulatory and policy environment.

Strategic outcomes

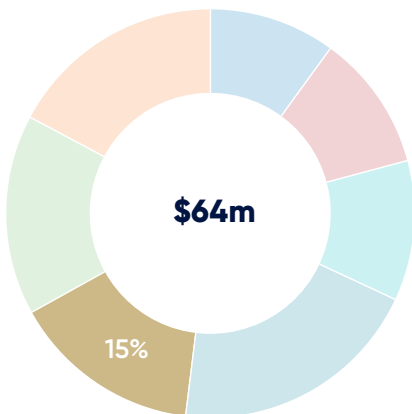
- a Australian dairy is valued around the world for its premium products.
- b A favourable policy and regulatory environment.
- c Access to trusted market insights that inform decision-making.



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes		
	5a	5b	5c
International trade messaging implementation	●		
International market development	●		●
Market access and policy		●	●
Industry insights and analysis			●
Technical policy support		●	●
National bulk milk cell count statistics	●		
Dairy Export Assurance Project		●	
Lumpy Skin Disease transmission studies in milk		●	

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$9.5m**



External investment 2023/24 **\$3.17m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	\$2.56m
Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade	\$0.20m
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	\$0.17m
Australian Trade and Investment Commission	\$0.07m
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions	\$0.07m

Key partners

- Commonwealth and state governments
- Dairy representative organisations – Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF), State Dairy Farming Organisations (SDFOs)
- Processors
- Exporters
- Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), particularly through the Emerging National Rural Issues (ENRI) forum
- Gardiner Dairy Foundation
- Animal Health Australia
- National Foundation for Australia China Relationships

Performance summary

Improved market access while building and maintaining strong international trade relationships.

Deepened relationships with key markets through the longstanding scholarship program that hosted delegates from South-east Asia and China.

Played a critical role, working with representative groups in the negotiation of the European Union Free Trade Agreement. This outcome is underpinned by the strong recognition and value of Dairy Australia trade policy support to all stakeholders.

Delivered strong policy support in biosecurity, particularly with the development of the Milk Movement Matrix under a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) scenario, along with water, climate, aged care nutrition and calf management. Multiple submissions have been developed and new projects initiated, which has been warmly welcomed by representative groups.

Contributed market insights and thought leadership through the initiation of a milk pool scenario study, to help determine the implications of various future milk production scenarios on the dairy industry.

Strategic outcome 5a

Australian dairy is valued around the world for its premium products

Favourable trade arrangements are linked to recognition that Australian products are premium in terms of food safety, provenance and meeting tight product specifications.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
	% of surveyed customers		
Australian dairy products are nominated as preferred status by customers in the key markets of Japan, Greater China and South-east Asia.	Japan – 70%	50%	80%
	Greater China – 60%	40%	85%
	South-east Asia – 60%	62%	85%
Australian dairy makes tangible market access gains in all completed trade negotiations involving Australia.	All	100%	100%

Key achievements

- Fostered relationships with key trade partners through three in-bound scholarship visits for Japan, South-east Asia and China, in collaboration with the Victorian Government as a funding partner. The relationships developed from these technical training visits for dairy professionals support Australian farmers through additional, overseas sales channels for Australian milk.
- Provided new tools for Australian dairy companies to accelerate, gain and maintain export registration, which will increase the competitiveness of Australian dairy globally through the Dairy Export Assurance Program, funded by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).
- Supported farmers to manage mastitis by providing a technical submission to Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) in support of continued registration of Mastalone. Mastalone is an important product in the treatment of mastitis as it is efficacious, broad-spectrum and importantly, the only available intramammary lactating cow antibiotic which contains active constituents of 'low' importance to the development of antimicrobial resistance in Australia. The APVMA decision is pending.
- Demonstrated the quality of Australian dairy through the analysis of Australian dairy farms' bulk milk cell counts as part of Dairy Australia's Milk Quality Awards, and analysis of bacteriological data. The evidence-based analysis supports the reputation of Australian milk domestically and internationally.



A favourable policy and regulatory environment

Credible and fact-based insights matched with incisive policy analysis and broad industry backing are powerful tools to create a favourable policy and regulatory environment.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Industry and government stakeholders value the work of Dairy Australia to inform policy discussions.	100% of stakeholders that use policy related services	100%	89%
Stakeholders value the work of Dairy Australia to help ensure access to markets.	90% of stakeholders that use market access related services	81%	89%

Key achievements

- Maintained close contact and provided policy support to key stakeholders regarding the European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) negotiations and other FTA-related discussions, to strengthen market access.
- Delivered research showing for the first time that pasteurisation kills the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) virus. The LSD transmission study was conducted by the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness and will be highly relevant to protect international trade, should an LSD incursion occur into Australia
- Provided an opportunity to clarify and navigate market access issues by convening Trade Reference Group meetings that featured briefings on the import regulatory environment from DAFF Minister Counsellors (Agriculture) based in Vietnam and China.
- Established an industry-wide Water Technical Reference Group to support industry with technical information sharing and policy development, including technical support with industry submissions on Murray-Darling Basin consultations.

Access to trusted market insights that inform decision-making

The Australian dairy supply chain is characterised by a sophisticated collection of market data that is readily available to support decision-making by industry and government stakeholders.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Dairy Australia is considered by industry stakeholders as the most trusted and credible source of information to inform decisions related to dairy markets.	85% of stakeholders utilising Dairy Australia market analysis or data	81%	75%
Dairy Australia's market information is widely utilised by industry and government stakeholders.	90% stakeholders utilising Dairy Australia market analysis or data	86%	85%
Dairy Australia is considered the most trusted and credible source of dairy market information by the media.	200 annual dairy market related media articles referencing Dairy Australia analysis or data	153	226
Dairy Australia maintains and grows its access to industry milk production data to inform market analysis.	95% of milk production	92%	88%
Dairy Australia maintains and grows its access to industry domestic sales data to inform market analysis.	90% of domestic market sales (liquid milk, cheese, butter and yoghurt)	81%	79%
Dairy Australia maintains and grows its access to industry manufacturing production data to inform market analysis.	90% of manufacturing production data	82%	90%

Key achievements

- Delivered key strategic insights and helped to inform industry planning through completion of the Milk Pool Study, which analysed the longer-term implications and issues associated with differing milk production trajectories. This study was conducted as part of a formal partnership with ADF and funded by equal contributions from Dairy Australia, ADPF and Gardiner Foundation.
- Informed a wide range of policy initiatives and everyday decision-making by farmers and milk processors by providing high quality data and market analysis as part of the market information and insights activity.

Case study

Dairy Australia China Scholarship Program

Objective

To amplify the profile of Australian dairy and generate a competitive edge for dairy exports in Australia's largest and most valuable export market through the Dairy Australia Scholarship Program that has spanned 25 years.

Action

To mark the 25th year of the Dairy Australia China Scholarship Program and alumni networks, an Australian dairy industry delegation met with key Chinese stakeholders in China to reinforce Australia's commitment to producing quality, sustainable dairy.

The delegation included dairy farmers Phil and Symone Vines, Callum Moscript and James Mann, Dairy Australia Chair.

Funding from the National Foundation for Australia China Relations enabled the activities in China to mark this important milestone.

The final element of the investment included the China Scholarship dairy professionals visiting Australia to undertake technical training farm visits. The activities in Australia were funded by the Victorian Government.

Impact

The benefit to Australian dairy farmers of ongoing, strategic trade engagement is that the relationships nurtured with the Chinese industry increase the profile and demand for Australian dairy in our largest export market. This in turn creates profitable export revenue and opportunities to grow dairy production.

Valuable two-way learning was fostered between our industry delegation and the Chinese alumni of the Scholarship Program – many of whom are now senior business leaders – through panel discussions, seminars and particularly through dairy farm and supermarket visits.

It was the first time the Australian dairy farmers had visited China, and they were impressed with the scale of potential demand. Dairy farmer Callum Moscript noted: "I don't think we've scratched the surface for potential of exporting our dairy to China, there is high demand for Australian dairy."

Symone Vines, a farmer who hosted Scholarship Program delegates in Australia reflected: "This Dairy Australia Scholarship Program is a chance to build relationships, because when they are importing into their country, they have actually been to an Australian farm that may have produced this milk and they will look back at that and think, I wonder if this milk came from a farm we visited."

In his opening speech at our event, Mr Song, the Honorary Chair of International Dairy Federation China remarked, "We feel such a closeness with Australian dairy because of our connection through the Dairy Australia Scholarship Program. It has brought us closer together as an industry in China as well. No other country has done what Australia has done over so many years. We are sincerely grateful and the onus is on us now to repay that generosity."

The Chinese alumni, many of whom have risen to become senior managers or CEOs, provide valuable insights, intelligence and connections back to the Australian dairy industry so we continue to have market access and trade opportunities. The strong personal relationships also help us weather geopolitical tensions.

Acknowledgement

This project has been funded through grants from the National Foundation for Australia China Relationships and the Victorian Government.



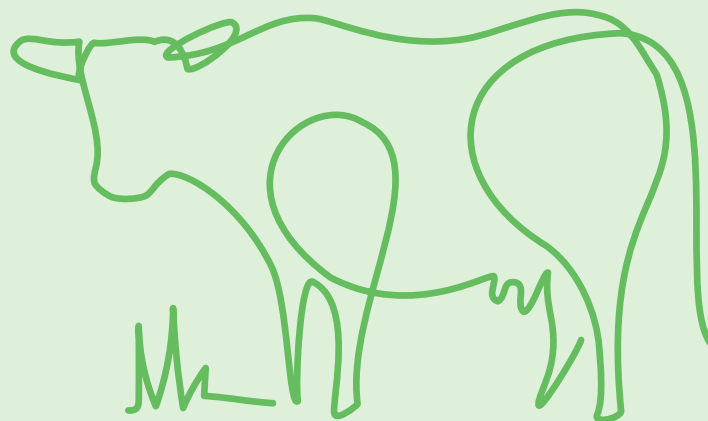
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Technology and data-enabled dairy farms

Inspire more agile and responsive dairy businesses through greater integration of technology and data.

Strategic outcomes

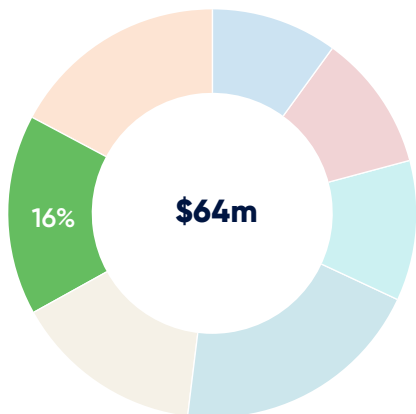
- a Accelerated genetic progress in feedbase and animal breeding.
- b More flexible and agile dairy production systems.
- c Greater use of high-value technology on-farm.
- d Connected dairy production systems utilising multiple data sources to enhance decision-making.



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes			
	6a	6b	6c	6d
Australian Pasture Genebank		●		
DataGene	●		●	●
DairyBio – Animals	●	●		
DairyFeedbase 23–28		●	●	●
DairyBio – Animals	●	●		
Forage Value Index	●	●	●	
Unlocking the potential of the cow				
Unlocking the potential of Kikuyu		●		
Clinical Mastitis Treatment Decision Tool	●	●		
Access to AgVet Chemicals			●	●
Dairy Feedbase Development – farm path to change		●		

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2022/23 **\$10.3m**



External investment 2022/23 **\$2.31m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Gardiner Foundation	\$2.00m
Barenbrug Australia	\$0.13m
Agriculture Victoria	\$0.12m

Key partners

- Commonwealth and state governments
- DairyBio and DairyFeedbase investors and commercial partners
- Gardiner Dairy Foundation
- DataGene
- Pasture Trials Network
- Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture
- Regional Development Corporations
- University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Charles Sturt University,
- Scibus
- Coles Milk Department

Performance summary

Invested in world-leading research and innovation to improve genetics, herd management and nutrition through DairyBio and DairyFeedbase. In partnership with Agriculture Victoria and the Gardiner Foundation, this portfolio of work has delivered several significant outputs across the reporting period.

Improved access to information that supports farmers to make decisions by integrating ryegrass nutritive values in the Forage Value Index (FVI) for the first time.

Contributed to the development of more resilient pasture, as research results from the DairyBio Forages program resulted in the commercial release of the Barenbrug ryegrass variety, Samurye. This variety contains a new endophyte which confers enhanced resistance to pasture pests.

Completed interpretation of research to maintain and improve milk yield and reduce cow health issues from the DairyFeedbase Cool Cows, First 100 Days and Smart Feeding studies. These research outcomes were demonstrated at an open day at Agriculture Victoria's Ellinbank Smart farm and are now available for farmers.

Supported farmers to apply pasture management research outcomes on farm through the launch of the PastureSmarts app, the result of research completed through DairyFeedbase17-23. The user experience is being refined through consultation with farmers as we work toward commercialisation.

Strategic outcome 6a

Accelerated genetic progress in feedbase and animal breeding

Genetic improvement remains a major productivity driver on-farm due to its ability to deliver permanent and cumulative gains in performance. Further innovation in genetics (including the expanded use of genomics and new breeding methods) will accelerate genetic gain, as well as broaden the range of traits and species/breeds that can be improved.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
The rate of genetic gain in ryegrass.	>2% genetic gain	<1%	<1%
Usage of Forage Value Index to select grass pasture varieties sown.	25% of farmers using Forage Value Index	9%	28%
The rate of genetic gain for sires of cows in Balanced Performance Index (BPI) units.	\$30/year	\$24/year	\$31/year (2018-2023 period)
The rate of genetic gain of cows in BPI units as a result of heifer genomic testing.	\$25/year	\$18/year	\$16/year (2012-2021 data)

Key achievements

- Improved access to information that supports farmers' decision-making by including information on ryegrass nutritive values for the first time in the Forage Value Index (FVI). This is further to the existing dry matter performance estimates and was released in the 2024 FVI.
- Increased the reliability of the Heat Tolerance Australian Breeding Value (ABV) by around 10 per cent, following the results of research from the DairyBio Animals project.
- Contributed to the development of more resilient pasture, as research results from the DairyBio Forages program resulted in the commercial release of the Barenbrug ryegrass variety, Samurye. This variety contains the new endophyte, NEA12, which confers enhanced resistance to pasture pests.



Strategic outcome 6b

More flexible and agile dairy production systems

Many modern dairy farming systems need to modify their production systems according to seasonal conditions and changes in major input costs. These modifications are more extreme in warmer climates and with less reliable access to water.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Development of new feedbase options that increase flexibility and agility.	20 new from baseline	0	12 available 13 in development
Development of new non-feedbase system options that increase flexibility and agility.	10 new from baseline	0	11 available 3 in development
Dairy farm businesses have access to the information and tools that they need to run their chosen farm system.	75% of farms	65%	54%

Key achievements

- Completed interpretation of research from multiple studies to maintain and improve milk yield and reduce health issues. Research outcomes from the DairyFeedbase Cool Cows, First 100 Days and Smart Feeding studies were adapted for farmers via the Dairy Feedbase Development project.
- Demonstrated research outcomes from the DairyFeedbase17-23 program and their path to change on-farm through the Dairy Innovation Open Day at Agriculture Victoria's Ellinbank Smartfarm. The event was attended by over 200 people.
- Began the process of seeking a permit from the APVMA to use the herbicide Trezac Arylex in dairy systems to control weeds in brassicas, supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government.
- Examined manipulation of cow longevity in multiple dairy farm systems through the Unlocking the Potential of the Cow (DairyUP) project.
- Continued to unlock the potential of kikuyu through the establishment in larger plot studies of three pre-commercial varieties of Kikuyu, through the DairyUP project. The three new varieties show promising performance relative to the established commercial cultivar of Kikuyu.

Strategic outcome 6c

Greater use of high-value technology on farm

Access to on-farm technology is increasing rapidly, while capacity to deliver insights from technology is lagging. Improvement will require a greater understanding of adoption challenges and greater alignment between the technology that delivers insights and farmer preferences for use of insights.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
Farm businesses have successfully adopted technology that provides new insights for farm operations	80% of farmers	48%	67%*

* Question reviewed to improve alignment with success indicator.

Key achievements

- Completed initial research design and studies in the majority of the six focus areas for DairyFeedbase23-28. DairyFeedbase is a five-year research program with our partners, Agriculture Victoria Research and Gardiner Foundation.
- Completed development and moved to the final testing phase of the Clinical Mastitis Decision Support Tool, which is based on research conducted by the University of Sydney. When complete, the tool will be available via a smartphone app and aim to improve cow health and welfare and reduce the use of antibiotics.

Strategic outcome 6d

Connected dairy production systems utilising multiple data sources to enhance decision-making

A proliferation of data will be of value to dairy businesses when it can be integrated and available for generating insights. This will require integration for both on-farm usage as well as to improve service provision. Improved decision-making will need to account for farmer preferences for use of insights.

Our progress against strategy

Key strategic success indicator	2025 target	2021 baseline	2024 actuals
New methods of collecting or analysing multiple sources of physical data on-farm.	5 new from baseline	0	7
Dairy farm businesses are routinely collecting three or more sources of physical performance data for decision-making (e.g. herd testing, pasture measurement, lameness scoring).	80% of farmers	65%	91%
Routine management decisions of dairy farm businesses (e.g. sire selection, irrigation scheduling, culling) are informed by multiple data sources.	95% of farmers	92%	76%

Key achievements

- Increased the ability to pull data stored in on farm systems into the industry-owned Central Data Repository, via successful piloting of the Ori software through DataGene, enhancing how individual farm data can be aggregated for local, regional and national use.
- Improved data sharing from on-farm herd management providers through integration of older versions of the DeLaval on-farm software into the International Dairy Data Exchange Network (iDDEN) program. iDDEN is an international integrated database platform facilitated in Australia by DataGene.
- Supported farmers to apply pasture management research outcomes on farm through the launch of the PastureSmarts app, which is the result of research completed through DairyFeedbase17-23. The user experience is being refined through consultation with farmers as we work toward commercialisation.



Case study

DataGene

Objective

To deliver genetic evaluation and improvement to the Australian dairy herd for the benefit of dairy farmers.

Background

Delivering genetic evaluation and improvement in a national dairy herd requires industry-level investment. DataGene is an independent and Australian dairy industry-owned organisation responsible for driving herd improvement and enabling data-driven decisions. Over the past decade, it has been an initiative of Dairy Australia and the broader dairy industry. DataGene brings together non-competitive functions under the one umbrella, including genetic evaluation, herd recording and data systems. It is the conduit to on-farm adoption of DairyBio – Animals research. DataGene also provides software development services and strategic consulting services in technology which in turn, lessens the organisation's reliance on levy funding.

Action

DataGene delivers services to the dairy industry in two broad areas: genetic evaluation and extension, and delivery of research outcomes.

The organisation provides genetic evaluations which have been the mainstay of genetic improvement for over 30 years. This includes weekly genetic evaluation runs and three public releases of Australian Breeding Values (ABVs) with the associated revision of the Good Bulls Guide. DataGene maintains and regularly expands the Central Data Repository (DataVat) in addition to providing genomic assessment services for Australian cows and maintaining the Australian reference population (Ginfo herds). DataGene has carriage of building, through consultation, the National Breeding Objective which commenced its five-yearly review phase this year.

DataGene also provides the pathway by which new research in animal improvement can be delivered to farmers. Recent examples include:

- An increase in the reliability of the Heat Tolerance ABV.
- The provision of mid-infrared spectroscopy (MIR) prediction of reproductive performance through herd test milk samples.
- Delivery of the Clinical Mastitis Decision app into a final on-farm testing phase.
- Piloting software for retrieving, aggregating and utilising significantly increased on-farm data.
- In future, DataGene will also deliver the research that emerges from the DairyBio – Animals project to farms.

Impact

DataGene's activities have delivered benefits to farmers through significant improvement in the rate of animal genetic gain over the past 10 years. Through the organisation's carefully planned and executed efforts, Australia now sits well above the average rate of dairy cattle genetic gain worldwide. Farmers can tailor their breeding through the three indices produced by DataGene (Balanced Performance Index, Health Weighted Index, Sustainability Index). If a farmer wishes to focus on individual ABVs, this can be accomplished using the Good Bulls Guide and app.

Over the past eight years, DataGene has delivered several new ABVs developed by DairyBio for use on Australian farms, providing an efficient and timely pathway from research to industry adoption. This has included two world-leading traits: the Feed Saved ABV and the Heat Tolerance ABV, as well as the Mastitis Resistance ABV and the Gestation Length ABV. Maintenance of both genotypes and performance information in the Australian reference population (Ginfo herds) is crucial to enabling farmers to make decisions on new generations of heifers based on genotypes that perform well and are validated under Australian conditions.

Acknowledgement

This project has been funded by the farmer services levy with support from DataGene derived income.

Post investment impact assessment – DataGene

Background

DataGene has delivered net benefits to the Australian dairy industry in the order of \$638 million (with a benefit-cost ratio of 17.9 to 1). The net benefits occur through improvements in rate of genetic gain in the industry, improvements in the efficacy of breeding and herd management decisions and the efficacy of data management and use.

Activities

DataGene develops tools and resources to drive genetic gain in the Australian dairy industry. DataGene brings together non-competitive functions under the one umbrella, including genetic evaluation, herd recording and data systems. DataGene also provides software development services and strategic consulting services in technology. DataGene is the sole entity calculating and supplying Australian-specific breeding values for the dairy industry. As part of this, DataGene incorporated the services previously provided by the ADHIS and the MISTRO Centre.

The external evaluation focused on the impact of services DataGene has provided since 2016/17. These services and outcomes include, among others:

- Various improvements to the Balanced Performance Index (BPI) to improve the rate of genetic gain.
- Several herd health and fertility management tools that improve the efficacy of breeding and management decisions on farm.
- Provision of data provision and management services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of data use and contribute to outcomes described above.

Benefits

This post investment impact assessment assessed the DataGene research, development and extension (RD&E) activities from its inception in July 2016 to June 2023. The net benefits of the DataGene activities overall are estimated to be \$638.4 million over a 30-year period, with a benefit-cost ratio of 17.9 to 1 and a modified internal rate of return (MIRR) of 16 per cent. Gross incremental benefits are estimated at \$676.1 million in present value terms and total costs across RD&E activities are estimated at \$37.8 million in present value terms.

The consultants were able to discern nine discreet types of benefits from:

- growth in BPI over time, compared to the counterfactual, which led to improved farm incomes
- implementation of the Sustainability Index
- growth in BPI for Red breed
- application of the herd ranking tool

- increase in genomic testing
- MIR predictive tool which provides conception data and heifer selection data
- improved management of fertility
- improved management of mastitis
- the provision of data and data management services.

Key observations

In terms of value, most of the net benefits of DataGene's activities result from improvements in the rate of genetic gain associated with the Balanced Performance Index (BPI), that are higher than would have otherwise been the case. This is largely driven by improvements in the reliability of the BPI that have resulted from DataGene activities. The BPI is an economic index that drives improvements in the traits that affect lifetime contribution to the farm business: production, health, fertility, longevity, workability, feed efficiency and type.

Most DataGene resources are devoted to improving the outcomes associated with the BPI. In doing so, DataGene is able to deliver a range of additional services at relatively low cost. These additional services include extending the application of the BPI; leveraging tools to aid breeding decisions; and herd health and fertility management. While improvements in these areas are also important contributors to the net benefits generated by DataGene (particularly for affected farmers), these are significantly smaller in quantum.

Management response

Dairy Australia's management has carefully reviewed the ex-post economic impact assessment for DataGene activities (2016/17-2022/23) as prepared by Marsden Jacob on behalf of Dairy Australia and accepts the benefit cost summary presented in this analysis. We agree with the program logic that has been constructed to determine likely adoption on-farm and the resulting productivity benefits.

In summary, these benefits, applying to the analysis find:

- a. improvements in the efficacy of dairy animal breeding
- b. improvements in herd level management decisions and efficacy
- c. improvements in data management for individual farms and the dairy industry more generally.

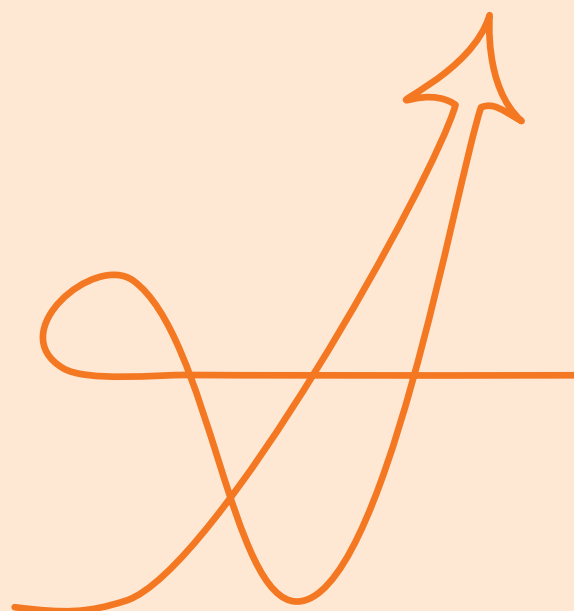
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Innovative and responsive organisation

An organisation that is farmer-focused, with talented people who embrace innovation and take decisive actions.

Strategic outcomes

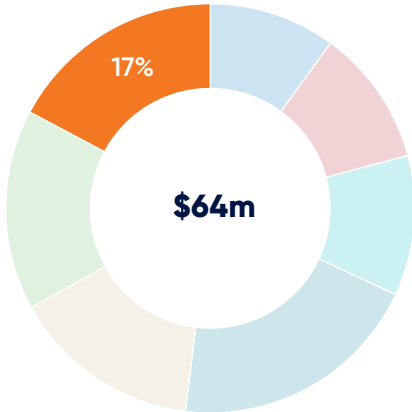
- a We have a farmer-focused service delivery model.
- b Our culture of learning and innovation, values and ways of working deliver success.
- c Our infrastructure, resources and processes allow us to be informed, agile and responsive.
- d We have effective and transparent management of resources.



Our projects, activities and services	Strategic outcomes			
	7a	7b	7c	7d
Farm engagement	●			●
Farmer communications	●			●
Service delivery	●			
Innovation strategy	●	●	●	
Living our values	●	●	●	●
Workplace health and safety		●		
Ways of working			●	
Issues and emergencies support			●	
External evaluations				●

Investment

Dairy Australia investment 2023/24 **\$11.0m**



External investment 2023/24 **\$0.03m**

Key funding partners	Contribution
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions	\$0.02m
Gardiner Foundation	\$0.01m

Performance summary

Continued our primary focus on increasing the value we deliver to dairy farmers. Our national relationship management practice involves visiting and working with farmers to gain a deeper understanding of their needs and connecting them to the right services and support networks.

Enhanced communications to farmers through key digital channels, including more effectively connecting them to regional teams and services based on their specific business needs.

Improved the way we design and deliver services. Updated processes and systems ensure feedback and insights from farmers and other industry stakeholders inform our decisions and priorities. There is also stronger collaboration across teams to turn research and innovation investments into services that address current and emerging industry needs.

Success in delivering value is driven by the behaviours of, and outcomes delivered by, our people. We are committed to attracting, developing and retaining people that are passionate about dairy farming. The performance of our people is managed and measured to ensure we consistently live our values of farmer first, one team, innovative thinking and decisive action.

Dairy Australia's teams are always prepared to provide dairy farmers with timely information, resources and tools to navigate critical issues and events such as droughts, floods and bushfires.

Given the internal organisational focus of this strategic priority, greater emphasis has been placed on key achievements, rather than detailed reporting on key success indicators.

Strategic outcome 7a

We have a farmer-focused service delivery model

The work that Dairy Australia delivers is strongly focused on a deep understanding of farmers and farm businesses. Our work continues to be tailored to the needs of our primary stakeholders who are dairy farmers.

Key achievements

- Continued to work with dairy farmers to better understand their specific farm business and offer relevant services and support. Our national relationship management approach involves dedicated Farm Engagement Leads working one-to-one with farmers, along with our communications directly connecting farmers to regional teams and services.
- Enhance our service delivery model to address the needs of dairy farmers. Our updated processes and systems improve the way we capture and use feedback and insights from farmers and other industry stakeholders to inform our decisions and priorities.
- Strengthened our capability to deliver services based on research and innovation investments that address current and emerging dairy farming needs. This involves our Development and Regional Adaptation team working closely with subject matter experts and Extension teams to engage farmers in the design and development of relevant and timely services.

Strategic outcome 7b

Our culture of learning and innovation, values and ways of working deliver success

A positive organisational culture guides the delivery of our strategic plan. Our way of working is highly collaborative with a strong focus on teamwork and decisive action.

Innovative thinking is highly valued to identify new opportunities to create value for farm businesses, co-create innovation projects with partners and pursue new approaches to innovation.

Key achievements

- Continued creating value for farmers through outcomes delivered by our people. This includes attracting, developing and retaining talented people that are passionate about dairy farming and measuring the performance of our people to ensure they live our values of farmer first, one team, innovative thinking and decisive action. The health, safety and wellbeing of our people also remains a priority with new processes and systems improving awareness and monitoring.
- Strengthened the organisation's innovation capabilities through the continued delivery of an innovation strategy and roadmap of initiatives. This includes the identification of domestic and global innovations in agriculture technology relevant to Australian dairy farm businesses. Sponsorship of an End Food Waste Australia challenge created opportunities for innovation in reducing waste across the dairy supply chain.

Strategic outcome 7c

Our infrastructure, resources and processes allow us to be informed, agile and responsive

We have the right balance of infrastructure, technical and digital capability supported by talented people and efficient processes.

Key achievements

- Continued to improve the way our people work to enhance the services and support we deliver to dairy farmers. Our national office space and operational costs reduced while providing a more collaborative and responsive way of working through technology.
- Provided dairy farmers with timely information, resources and tools to navigate critical issues and events such as droughts, floods and bushfires. This included taking learnings from past events to improve activities and processes for responding and communicating in a timely and relevant way.

We have effective and transparent management of resources

Effective governance and transparent reporting enable Dairy Australia to make the right decisions and be accountable.

Key achievements

- Continued to improve how we inform dairy farmers about the value of Dairy Australia services. We deliver communications via the channels preferred by farmers including social media, email and website, as well as create communications that provide farmers with direct connections to our people and services.
- Measured the value delivered to dairy farmers through an evaluation of our business planning program, Our Farm, Our Plan. This evaluation found that business planning was beneficial to farmers with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.5 and net benefits to the industry of \$9.3 million.
- Evaluated the value to dairy farmers from industry of research and innovation investments in key areas such as farm business, animals and environment. These investments resulted in a benefit-cost ratio of 5.9 based on 17 independent evaluations over eight years.



Case study

Farmer-focused service delivery model

Objective

Implement the practice of dedicated relationship management nationally to increase our understanding of, and relevance to, individual dairy farm businesses. The objective is to deliver greater value to farmers by creating stronger needs-based connections to Dairy Australia services and support networks.

Background

The work that Dairy Australia delivers is strongly focused on a deep understanding of farmers and farm businesses. Our work continues to be tailored to the needs of our primary stakeholders, the dairy farmers.

Action

Throughout 2023/24, we designed and progressively implemented the practice of dedicated relationship management for farmers across five regions, with timelines set for rollout to the remaining three.

Known as 'farm engagement', over 1,000 farms have been individually contacted and introduced to the practice, with approximately half agreeing to a farm visit from their Farm Engagement Lead. Almost all farms visited have agreed to the development of a tailored farm action plan. The tailored farm action plan is individually designed to match our capabilities to the current objectives of the farm, thereby supporting their business success.

In the example of NSW Far South Coast farmer Vanessa, a one-to-one session with their Farm Engagement Lead has resulted in a deeper understanding of, and introduction into, the services available to young farmers. Nat, a young student with no previous industry experience who had been working on Vanessa's farm, has connected into the local dairy community to overcome the risk of social isolation.

She has developed a passion for dairy, as a result of her participation in regionally delivered skills and leadership development opportunities such as Rearing Healthy Calves and Milking and Mastitis Management. Nat now has the capability to contribute to Vanessa's successful farm business as a skilled dairy employee and has a long-term ambition to work as a dairy farmer or as a dairy service provider.

Impact

More than 500 farms now have an individually tailored action plan to access Dairy Australia services and support for their dairy farm business, with rapid growth in numbers expected in 2024/25. While the impact of each action plan varies in style, scale and depth, depending on current needs and priorities, each is tangible evidence of a farmer-first approach.

Additionally, we are focused on evolving our internal capabilities to capture and report on the insights and priorities gathered from farmers. We are now well equipped to harness this for short and long-term decision making that tailors our approach to validated farmer needs across the areas of research, development, extension, marketing and communications, and strategic planning.



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Disclaimer

The content of this publication is provided for general information only and has not been prepared to address your specific circumstances. We do not guarantee the completeness, accuracy or timeliness of the information.

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