

LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE

Saving Water in the Dairy



By Robyn McLean, GippsDairy

Typically, dairy farms use a lot of water, so it is important that effective measures are implemented to protect this valuable resource and consider all available water sources and supplies.

Water usage can vary significantly across dairy farms – the most efficient operations use less than 2,000 litres per cow each year, compared to some which use almost 20 times that amount on each cow. Implementing efficient process for milk cooling, vat wash and yard hosing can create big water savings.

CONTINUED OVER

VATBUSTER

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PASTURE SEEDS

Base AR37, 4Front NEA, Reward Endo5, Matrix plus Clovers



Saving Water in the Dairy

Be Prepared this Facial Eczema Season

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Alternative water supplies

A back-up supply of water from a bore can be widely used on farms. It can be used to supply yard wash water directly or mixed with re-used yard wash water. In many areas, the temperature of bore water is constant throughout the year and is typically 16 to 18 degrees Celsius. This means bore water can be used to supply the pre-cooler too.

Licensing from the water authority is generally required to construct a bore and then use it to supply water for dairy wash-down. You can save money by using bore water to fill the header tank on off-peak power or via a windmill.

Diverting and using rainwater

The dairy yard can catch a huge amount of rainwater. You can calculate how much has fallen over the course of the year by multiplying the annual rainfall in millimetres by the area of the yard in square metres. Using diverters in the dairy yard enables this water to be captured for future use by storing or pumping before it enters the effluent system.

This system means the waterflow is intercepted between the yard and sump. Diverters, which come in metal bridge or valve types, are particularly useful in high-rainfall zones where yards are cleaned twice daily. The collected and stored rainwater is suitable for washing yards. Diverters are easy to install if there is one drainage point from the yard. A large sump is needed, and it is best if gravity can help rainwater diversion.

Re-using water from effluent ponds

Water can be pumped from the second or third effluent pond and stored for use in high-flow yard cleaning systems. This reliable method is commonly used for flood wash and hydrant wash systems. Using raw or untreated effluent can make yards very slippery and increase odour.

For a single pond system, a pontoon and a pond stirrer will also be required if crusting is an issue. Water can be pumped into a storage tank overnight and used to feed the wash pump. If there is no crusting of the pond, avoid using the pond stirrer when pumping water for yard washing. Use an effluent pump for this purpose, not a water pump. Avoid using the recycled water close to, or inside, the dairy and mix fresh water in with reused water to control salt levels.

Other options

- Store and re-use plate cooler water providing there is a sufficient volume to ensure effective heat exchange.

- Re-use detergent wash for yard cleaning.
- Catch rainwater from the dairy shed roof.

Water usage efficiency

To reduce water use and improve efficiency in the dairy consider:

- Only washing the section closest to the shed.
- Limiting washing to the section of the yard closest to the dairy to save water and reduce the risk of cows slipping as they enter the dairy. This can be an option if smooth concrete, steps, or ramps make using scrapers too risky.
- Using a low-pressure or high-flow rate hoses and give the whole yard a thorough hosing regularly to wash away the solids and keep the drains open. This method works best if a scraper can be used first to remove most of the solids.

Yard wash frequently

There are times when the frequency of yard washing can be reduced substantially. Periodic hosing and the regular use of mechanical scrapers to remove the bulk of dry solids can help achieve this. For optimal outcomes, the cows need to have good footing on the concrete through a dimpled or cobbled pattern. Careful stock handling and use of a backing gate will minimise slips and injuries.

In drier times, farmers have reported scraping the yard every one to three weeks, only giving it a complete clean when rain can soften the built-up manure before a complete hose down. Drains should be covered, and the drier solids scraped away, while remaining solids can be broken up. The yards can then be pre-wet before flushing the remainder with a high-flow rate wash. The manure will be less of a hazard if the water can evaporate or drain away. Having dry weather and a yard slope of 2-3 per cent will help.

Other options

- Wet the dairy platform and yard surfaces prior to milking.
- Use low-pressure or high-flow rate hoses.
- Use trigger nozzles.
- Use manual or mechanical scrapers.
- Install non-stick surfaces in the dairy.
- Use correct flow rates through the plate cooler – two to three litres to every one litre of milk.

By Kristen Davis, GippsDairy

We are seeing spore counts on the rise early this facial eczema season given the favourable sporulation conditions across Gippsland.

Facial eczema is a liver disease, often accompanied by photosensitisation, caused by spores of a pasture fungus that multiply rapidly in warm and humid conditions. The spores of the fungus release a potent mycotoxin known as sporidesmin in the gastrointestinal tract, which causes damage to the liver, bladder, and mammary gland. It can therefore have devastating impacts on herd productivity and animal welfare.

Early intervention is critical. Use prevailing weather conditions in combination with pasture spore counting to predict and identify periods of pasture toxicity, whilst taking preventative action when local pasture spore counts trend upward of 20,000 spores/gram and weather conditions look favourable for sporulation.

Remember that by the time you see some cows in the herd affected by the photosensitisation caused by facial eczema, a large proportion of the herd is likely to have already suffered liver damage, for which there is no specific treatment. (Zinc can only prevent facial eczema. It cannot reverse liver damage already done from exposure to the toxin).

Feeding the correct amount of zinc oxide in grain/concentrates at milking can be highly effective for facial eczema prevention in the milking herd. However, dry stock such as heifers, bulls, and dry cows are also at risk of facial eczema. Utilisation of zinc oxide rumen boluses provide highly effective prevention against facial eczema in these classes of stock for four weeks. Discuss with your veterinarian or nutrition advisor about your farms specific risk and prevention options.

There are also several accompanying strategies that can be used to help reduce the risk of cows ingesting large numbers of toxic spores, which tend to concentrate at the base of the pasture sward. These include careful grazing management, use of alternative pasture species, crops and supplements such as hay, silage and grain/concentrates.

MORE INFORMATION

The Facial Eczema Spore Monitoring Program is taking place again in 2024, funded by GippsDairy and DairyNSW, and supported by Dairy Australia. If you would like to subscribe to the fortnightly spore monitoring report, please contact the GippsDairy office at info@gippsdairy.com.au or 5624 3900.

GIPPSDAIRY

We welcome two new staff to the GippsDairy team



Linda Waugh



Belinda Griffin

Last month we welcomed two new members to the GippsDairy team.

Belinda Griffin has joined us as the Workforce Attraction Lead, a role previously filled by Extension Team Lead Veronica McLeod.

Belinda has extensive experience in the dairy industry as a farmer, industry advocate, and field services manager, and is a recent graduate of the Gippsland Community Leadership Program. She will be working with farmers, schools, education, and employment organisations across Gippsland to encourage people into the dairy industry. This will be a natural extension of a mentoring role Belinda has held in the Gippsland Dairy Learn Pathways Program in secondary schools.

Belinda feels as though she has been “bringing the city to country since moving from the suburbs into dairy farming 15 years ago.” She is passionate about our youth knowing where their milk comes from and is looking forward to working with the next generation of dairy farmers.

Also joining the team is Linda Waugh who will be providing administration support for the office on a temporary basis. Linda has 14 years’ experience in administration at a local aged care facility and has previously worked as a veterinary nurse.

Linda says she is looking forward to supporting the GippsDairy team to deliver innovative support and assistance to our farmers across the region.



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Young Dairy Network Gippsland Update

By Jessica Russell, GippsDairy

The Young Dairy Network (YDN) finished 2023 with a newly established Local Area Committee of 10 representatives who are a mix of Gippsland farmers and service providers.

Each region (MID, South Gippsland and West Gippsland) has 3-4 representatives, so be sure to link in with one of the committee members if you have any ideas or suggestions for future events.

We have a range of events planned for this coming year, including a mix of social events and technical workshops.

We will be starting in February with a series of 'Meet the Vets' nights in all three regions, followed by a Cool Cows workshop with Dairy Australia's Josie Garner in the MID.

In March we will kick off our social nights, 'Pub grub & Chat', so keep an eye on our Facebook page and GippsDairy events page for further details and to register.

MORE INFORMATION

To stay up to date with what is happening with the Young Dairy Network, please email **Jessica Russell** at jessica.russell@gippsdairy.com.au to be added to the mailing list, and follow our Facebook page: Young Dairy Network Gippsland.



| Upcoming YDN Gippsland events | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Date | Event | Location |
| Wednesday 7 February | Meet the Vets – MID with guest panel of local veterinarians | Berry Dairy, Maffra |
| Thursday 8 February | Meet the Vets – South Gippsland with guest panel of local veterinarians | On farm, Berry's Creek |
| Friday 9 February | Meet the Vets – West Gippsland with guest panel of local veterinarians | On farm, Nyora |
| Thursday 22 February | MID Cool Cows | Tinamba |
| Wednesday 6 March | MID Social Night – Pub Grub & Chat | TBC |
| Thursday 7 March | South Gippsland Social Night – Pub Grub & Chat | TBC |
| Friday 8 March | West Gippsland Social Night – Pub Grub & Chat | TBC |
| Thursday 28 March | Autumn Sowing | West Gippsland |
| Thursday 4 April | Autumn Sowing | MID |
| Friday 5 April | Autumn Sowing | South Gippsland |

| YDN Gippsland Committee Members | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Name | Region |
| Ellie Field | East Gippsland |
| Kallan Young | East Gippsland |
| Lucy Young | East Gippsland |
| Peta Dorrity | East Gippsland |
| Jason Collins | South Gippsland |
| Robert Hughes | South Gippsland |
| Tom Glen | South Gippsland |
| Alex Boileau | West Gippsland |
| Luke Johnson | West Gippsland |
| Sarah Kelly | West Gippsland |
| Will Ryan | West Gippsland |

Dairy Learn Pathways Program 2023



Farm visit with Grant Williams

By Stacey Alfred, GippsDairy

This year, GippsDairy launched the Dairy Learn Pathways Program in secondary schools across Gippsland. The program is funded through the Victorian Government Secondary Schools Agricultural Fund and aims to showcase to students the different career options across the dairy industry.

The 26 participating students were from Leongatha, Korumburra, and Foster Secondary Colleges, and Gippsland Grammar School. Throughout terms three and four, they had the opportunity to attend a mix of hands on and classroom-style learning, and visits to dairy focussed organisations to enhance their understanding of dairy career opportunities.

This program was coordinated by GippsDairy's Veronica McLeod, who has been working extensively over the last 12 months with Gippsland schools and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) to educate the upcoming generation on the different directions a career in dairy can take you.

A number of Gippsland farmers and service providers got involved with the program and gave valued insights into many of the different elements that make up the dairy industry.

Grant Williams hosted a farm visit to showcase the new technology available in robotic milking systems.

Amy Cosby provided knowledge on genetics, collars and careers in dairy.

Wilco Droppert and Sandra Jefford gave a tour of Willandra farms and discussed alternative farming practices.

Ellinbank research farm gave students a look at what new research is under way for the future of farming.

Nicole and Brendan Saunders of BNS Ag and The Berry Dairy talked to students about the different business opportunities available through share farming/leasing arrangements, and how they have diversified their business with the Berry Dairy.



Looking into methane emissions with Joe Jacobs at Ellinbank Smart Farm

HiCo Korumburra showed students around their facility to explore Artificial Insemination, semen despatch, herd testing, calf dehorning, and freezebranding.

Mentoring sessions were held with leadership and communications coach **James Freemantle**, and Westbury dairy farmer **Belinda Griffin**.

Nicole McDonald – gave a mentoring session and practical session on RIASEC Model. This model is a personality guide that is often used to assist with career development and vocational choices.

Veterinarian and dairy farmer **Andrew Perry** facilitated a Cups on, Cups off (COCO) course for 13 students, covering both theory and practical components.

Since completing the COCO, two of the participating students have secured part-time positions on dairy farms and two students have secured Structured Workplace Learning placements at a service provider.

The program will be running again in terms one and two of 2024. It is hoped that future funding can be secured to continue to provide these opportunities for students to develop their knowledge of dairying and encourage them to explore the multitude of pathways that can lead to a long-term career on and off the farm.

MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about the Dairy Learn Pathways Program please email **Veronica McLeod** at veronica.mcleod@gippsdairy.com.au.

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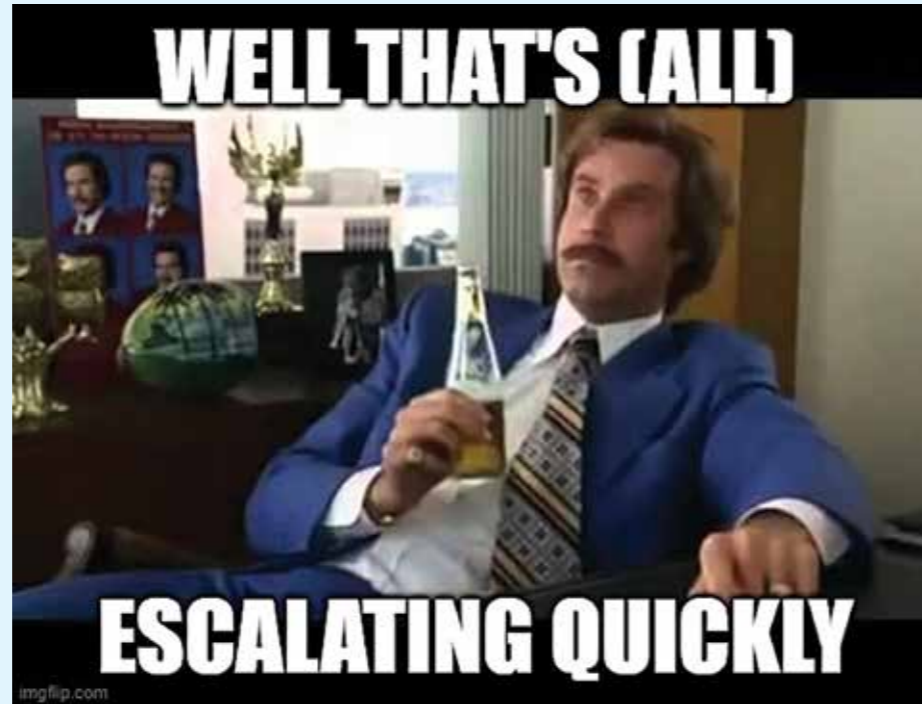
Digital Skills in Agriculture

The 2024 calendar year has started with a bang – literally in some cases.

Global shipping costs are on the way back up, and widespread supply chain disruption is back on the table as Houthi rebels in Yemen fire off projectiles at ships in the Red Sea. With increasing numbers of vessels avoiding the Suez route and diverting around the Cape of Good Hope, expect delays and extra costs for anything you need from Europe.

Fortunately, raindrops are the main thing landing across Australian dairy regions – in many areas there’s been a few too many of them lately, making wet conditions a somewhat unexpected challenge to deal with in January.

There’s also been an escalation in milk production, with strong numbers reported for November (up 6% year-on-year for the month nationally, and 7% in Gippsland). It’s all relative of course: Australia produced just over 150ML less milk during October and November 2022 versus 2021. In 2023, we picked up nearly half of that back through the same months (69ML).



By Gippsland Tech School

The Gippsland Tech School, as operated and managed by TAFE Gippsland, was awarded a grant in December 2022, via the Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund (SSAF) to support and increase secondary student engagement with careers, technologies, and applied learning in the Gippsland agriculture sector.

The “Digital Skills in Agriculture” (DSA) project commenced in February 2023 and will conclude in May 2024. The project is managed by Tony Lea, of the Gippsland Tech School, who has over 40 years’ experience in horticulture and adult education.

In January 2024, Tony Lea facilitated two workshops at the National Association of Agriculture Educator Conference to introduce the project and available resources to Victorian and Australian schools that deliver agriculture as part of their secondary school curriculum.

The DSA program is focused on supporting secondary school students in Gippsland through a range of resources and applied learning activities.

The digital assets which were produced as part of the project show how and where new and emerging technologies are being applied in the agriculture sector to encourage students to consider a career in agriculture. Students have a greater understanding of how the term “Agriculture” is used to cover a wide range of sectors and situations:

- Agriculture can be both on the farm or off the farm in cities or towns.
- Sectors include, but not limited to dairy, orchards, flower growing, beef, and intensive horticulture such as vegetable production.



The project has delivered more than 10 films that can be accessed from the Gippsland Tech School or by scanning the QR code:

To date, the project has supported students from 16 schools across Gippsland to visit a range of on-farm properties, with another 15 schools booked in for 2024. Tony has sourced more than

30 unique properties from Orbost to Phillip Island where students can visit to see how new and emerging technologies are being applied in their farming business – that’s more than 600 students visiting various properties since the programs inception.

The highlight of these visits is seeing the students engaged with the property owners and asking pertinent questions about their operations. They are all given an information sheet and questions about the property, which they have filled in on the day or later in class.

The response from the teachers about the program has been fantastic as they have watched their students interact and learn about robotic dairies, drones, robots, sensors, machinery, and much more. The emphasis has also been on the varied careers within agriculture as so many of the jobs are off the farm. The emphasis regarding employment is to look at how a job can be done more effectively, in response to the estimated labour shortages within the Australian agriculture sector which are predicted to be around 150,000 jobs by 2030.

To maintain their business efficiencies and production of products, agriculture producers are looking to new and emerging technologies to assist in a range of activities to improve efficiencies. This means the current generation of students will now be making, servicing, and training staff to use these technologies and the demand is very high.

This is the case with robotic dairies where service providers have given support before the robotic dairy was installed and then after in the form of computer and technical support to their customers.

Many of the property owners have told students that the number of career paths on their properties could lead students to work interstate or even overseas. The demand for agricultural products of every kind is just going to grow as the global population is predicted to expand. The DSA project is a key component which aims to influence and promote careers and opportunities for young people in the Gippsland region of Victoria.

Resources produced by the project, including digital and physical assets, will remain active for all schools to access.



GippsDairy Muster

Pastures | Pathways | Performance

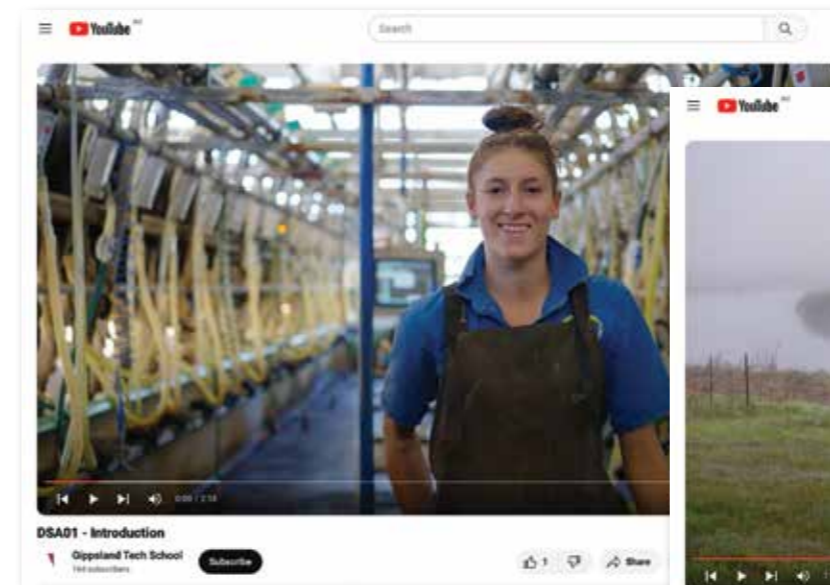
Thursday 14 March 2024, 9:30am–3:00pm, Trafalgar



DELIVERING for DAIRY



For more information and to register please scan the QR code or visit: dairyaustralia.com.au/gippsdairymuster



GIPPSLAND TECH SCHOOL


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| DATE | TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------|
| Tuesday 6 February 2024 | 10.00am-2.00pm | A Good Day on the Farm – mental health workshop | Traralgon |
| Wednesday 7 February 2024 | 6:30pm-8:30pm | Young Dairy Network MID – Meet the Vets | Maffra |
| Thursday 8 February 2024 | 6:30pm-8:30pm | Young Dairy Network South Gippsland – Meet the Vets | Berrys Creek |
| Friday 9 February 2024 | 6.30pm-8.30pm | Young Dairy Network West Gippsland – Meet the Vets | Nyora |
| Tuesday 13 February 2024 | 11:00am-12:30pm | Day 1 – Our Farm, Our Plan – National | Online |
| Wednesday 21 February 2024 | 9.30am-3.00pm | Growing Beef from Dairy Field Day | Woodleigh |
| Thursday 22 February 2024 | 11:00am-2:00pm | Young Dairy Network MID – Cool Cows | Tinamba |
| Tuesday 27 February 2024 | 10:00am-11:30am | Day 1 – Employment Basics – National | Online |
| Wednesday 28 February 2024 | 9:30am-2:30pm | Succession – Fair or equal? How to pass on the family farm... | Inverloch |
| Wednesday 13 March 2024 | 10:30am-12:00pm | Day 1 – Farm Business Fundamentals – National | Online |
| Thursday 14 March 2024 | 10:00am-3:00pm | GippsDairy Muster – Pastures Pathways Performance | Trafalgar |




How to pass on the family farm

Fair or equal?

Join our Succession Planning Day exclusive to dairy farmers where guest speakers Colin Wright from Phillipsons and Matt Harms from ONFARM Consulting will discuss:

- Tips and tricks to succession planning
- Business structures
- Tax implications
- Role changes
- Transferring assets.


Registrations essential.

For more information or to register, scan the QR code or contact Kim Price Regional Extension Officer at GippsDairy on 0456 657 162 or kimberley@gippsdairy.com.au.

Wednesday 28 February 2024

9:30am-2:30pm

RACV Inverloch Resort,
70 Cape Paterson-Inverloch Rd, Inverloch



DELIVERING for DAIRY

dairyaustralia.com.au

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Upcoming events

To view and register for any of our upcoming events, visit the GippsDairy events calendar:
<https://bit.ly/GippsDairyEventsCalendar>
 or scan the QR Code.



Hay and Grain reports

Scan the QR codes or visit the Industry Statistics page of the Dairy Australia website to view the most recent hay and grain figures.

Hay Report



Grain Report



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What's on?
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