



Your Levy at Work

## Tactics for Dry Times

**Nambrok:** Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December at Mike and Sarah O'Brien's  
**Yarram:** Held Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at Lachlan and Vicki McLeod's  
**Lardner:** Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November at Rob and Jenni Marshall's  
**Inverloch:** Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November at Warren and Kerrie Redmond's

Copies of these notes available at [www.gippsdairy.com.au](http://www.gippsdairy.com.au) or  
contact John Gallienne 0407 863 493

**These *Tactics for Dry Times* days are supported by Dairy Australia through GippsDairy. The days have been jointly organised by GippsDairy and John Gallienne, as well as the voluntary contribution of local farmers.**

The farmer's role in these days goes above and beyond, and they have kindly opened their farms, their bank of knowledge and their situations for the benefit of all in the dairy industry. We sincerely thank them for the contributions in time, knowledge and for offering to be host farms or case study farms.

The unprecedented dry conditions experienced in south and west Gippsland commenced in mid-2014, with reduced rainfall and generally an absence of any run-off in many parts. This has put farm stock water levels at dire levels, with some farmers around particularly coastal Gippsland having to move and pump water for the second year in a row. The dry conditions came to a head in September and October 2015, with many areas recording nothing more than 10mm of rain for a six-week period, limiting the ability to harvest much pasture as silage, and grazing pasture availability dwindling by late October at the time of normally 'peak growth rates'. Dryland farms around Yarram, Tarraville and Hedley produced little if any silage at all, following on from a tough 2014 year.

It is times like these when the dairy farming community pulls together and draws on each other's experience, knowledge, good will and resilience. There is a wealth of knowledge and resources that exist in printed form, amongst the service sector of the industry, and most importantly in people's heads. Many have been through times like these before, even though recent tough seasons didn't have the combined water and feed deficit problems. But there are some positives. Milk price is not too bad in historic terms, grain and fodder are available, although fodder reserves are likely to run low and will get dearer, and cash reserves for many are intact at this point following two reasonable years.

The case studies of the farmers who have contributed to the day are in the notes. Please be aware that these are *their* plans and situations at the time of preparing for the day, and that these may not be perfect, may not be 'technically' or 'nutritionally' the best option, but it is what they plan to run with at this point. The plans may change as well, depending on how the season pans out.

We have deliberately chosen not to extend the plans beyond about April. This doesn't mean that the problem will be solved by then, or that there will be 100% grass in the diet by then (although that would be great!), but rather that it is hard to write a plan out with any degree of accuracy some six months in advance when so much will, or may have changed. If things are still tough, the industry will be putting more information and days like these together to help on specific issues such as drying off, feeding over the dry period, recovering damaged pastures etc.

Once again, thanks to the host farmers, as well as the case study farmers, who have all gone over and above their duty to help other farmers and the industry in general. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Matt Harms, ONFARM Consulting



## A look at feed value and price comparisons in December 2015

Feed type	Price \$/t as fed	\$/t dry matter	Av energy value (MJ ME/kg DM)	Protein %	NDF %	c/MJ ME	"Feed value"
Wheat	\$330	\$367	13	11	12	2.82	√√√
Wheat 6kg plus 18c additive	\$360	\$400	13	11	12	3.07	√√√
Grain mix	\$390	\$433	12.5	14	14	3.46	√√√
Barley	\$300	\$333	12	10	15	2.78	√√√
High quality pellets	\$390	\$433	12.8	14	15	3.38	√√√
12/12 pellets	\$360	\$400	12	12	18	3.33	√√√
Lucerne hay or vetch hay	\$360	\$411	10	20	41	4.10	√√
Cereal hay (eg wheaten)	\$270	\$300	10	9	52	3.00	√
Canola hay	\$270	\$300	9.8	16	41	3.06	√√
Own-made good silage (\$70/tDM grass)	\$52/bale	\$208	10	16	50	2.08	√√
Almond Hulls	\$180/t	\$200	10	5	35	2.0	√
Urea 10:1 response 90% eaten	\$580/t	\$140/t DM	12	20	45	1.17	√√√

- Energy drives production, so generally purchase on energy levels.
- Responses to protein are generally seen when protein is limiting, eg summer.
- These are 'general' market prices and are not necessarily what you should or will be paying, so don't use it as a way of screwing down your feed supplier!

# FACTS, NOT OPINIONS!

	Full year 15/16 Traditional no step ups	Full year 15/16 max FMI	Milk price December Traditional	Milk price January Traditional	Milk price March Traditional
Milk price \$/kgMS	\$5.34	\$5.64	\$4.94	\$5.25	\$5.46
Milk price c/l	39.8	42	36.8	39.1	40.7
Grain mix/pellet price	\$390	\$390	\$390	\$390?	\$390?
kgMS to pay for 1kg	0.074kg	0.07kg	0.08kg	0.07kg	0.07kg
Litres to pay for 1kg	1	1.08	1.06	1	0.96
Milk price to grain price ratio	1:1	1.08	0.94	1	1.04

## Some further facts to note:

1. In late lactation, more energy is partitioned to body condition and less to milk production.
2. It takes more energy to put body condition on a cow when she is dry than when she is still milking. To gain 1kg in late lactation takes 44MJ but 55MJ as a dry cow.
3. The additional weight in one extra condition score is 44kg (Friesian) and 38kg for a smaller cross-bred.
4. Diets for milking cows require a minimum 33% NDF (fibre) and considerable chew factor (functional fibre). So on a diet of 18kgDM total if there is no or very little grass, one third of the diet needs to be high fibre feeds such as hay and silage with no more than two thirds of the diet as 'high energy' feed such as grain and turnips.

## Some rules of thumb:

- One standard silage bale is 500kg wet weight and most are 50% dry matter, so a standard silage bale is 250kgDM. One bale will provide 50 cows with 5kgDM (but remember wastage). A standard round bale of hay is 290kgDM.
- Wastage can easily be 10%, so 5kgDM = 4.5kg eaten
- To work out the weight of bales on a truck of hay, divide the tonnage delivered by the number of bales.
- Hay is typically 85-90% dry matter, so allow for this in calculations.

## And a few 'opinions':

Look hard at the margin you are making per cow (if you need help with this, don't be scared to ask, as there are plenty of people out there who will help).

As water is a limited resource, and therefore grass is a limited commodity, the value of the grass needs to be included in such calculations, as every kg that one low-producing cow eats is a kg that the other cows could be eating.

# WHAT PRICE FOR GRASS?

1. Some use the variable cost of pasture. That is, the direct costs that go into producing it (nitrogen, fertiliser (P,K,S), water, resowing costs) and this will give a price anywhere between \$70/tDM and \$120/tDM, or 7c-12c/kgDM.
2. Others will use the total cost of pasture over the year, based on how much has been grown and consumed for the year and include all the costs such as N, fertiliser, resowing, irrigation and diesel/power for irrigation, some R&M associated with managing the pasture. This will give a price of around \$140/tDM.
3. And a further way to look at it is to say "what is the value of the pasture today, based on the alternative feed that needs to be bought when there is no grass"? This will value the pasture at the next best alternative, and will look something like a vetch-equivalent, or \$410/tDM or 41c/kgDM.

Whatever way you value pasture, it will give a break-even production level somewhere between 10litres or 0.75kgMS and 17 litres or 1.3kgMS. It would be a brave person to dry off cows at 17litres (there may not be many cows milking in a month or two!), BUT, what it means is that cows below around 0.75kgMS or 10 litres need to be looked at hard!

## The calculations:

What is the breakeven production for a cow consuming 6kg concentrate, 2kgDM silage and 10kg DM pasture?

6kg @\$390/t = \$2.34 in concentrates

2kgDM @ \$170/tDM= \$0.34 in silage

Total = \$2.68/cow/day. At \$0.40/litre = 6.7 litres

Then...

Less 10kg pasture at 7c/kgDM = \$0.70 (A) or 1.75 litres

or less 10kg pasture at 14c/kgDM = \$1.40 (B) or 3.5 litres

or less 10kg pasture at 41c/kg DM = \$4.10 (C) or 10 litres

**Actual breakeven production including the grass is 8.5 litres (A), 10.2 litres (B) or 16.7 litres (C).**

But, remember when she is dried off, she needs to be fed something, and in a year like this, it doesn't come for nothing.

*"It costs around \$2.70/cow/day to feed a dry cow on 100% purchased dry cow fodder this year, for no return - so a loss of \$2.70/cow/day, equivalent to 6 litres of 'summer milk'. Even a low return on milkers may be better than a large loss on a dry cow!"*

So, the value of this feed needs to be "added back on" to the calculations!

**The actual breakeven production becomes 2.5 litres (A), 4.2 litres (B) and 10.7 litres (C).**

## What About The Young Stock?

It is often said that the replacement heifers are your superannuation...well the returns from superannuation fluctuate, and when there isn't spare funds to put into super, it is an easy investment to ignore.



**Well simply...DON'T!**

### Managing young stock

It is important to remember that heifers that are less well grown, and in poorer body condition, at calving are likely to have when compared to better grown heifers: reduced production; lower reproductive performance as 1<sup>st</sup> calvers and; an increased rate of culling from the herd.

### Nutrition of young stock

Speaking from personal experience, we do not always feed our young stock so that they grow well enough so that they calve for the 1<sup>st</sup> time as well grown heifers in good body condition

If heifers are to reach the target of around 85% of the weight of the mature cows in the herd at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> calving, they need to be kept growing well throughout the period from weaning until calving. In general, they need to gain weight at a rate of approximately 0.7 kg per day. To do this they require adequate amounts of good quality pasture throughout this period - I am talking about providing pasture of quality that is equal to that provided to the milking herd. If this CANNOT be provided, they need supplementation with good quality concentrates.

For many of us it is difficult, when we see our young stock on a fairly regular basis, to assess how well they are growing. There really is merit in weighing your young stock on a regular basis (say every 3 months) so that you can actually measure how well they are growing, and take corrective actions if they are not achieving the required rates of gain.

Provided with these notes are some really good facts, figures, tables and guides such as the DA Heifers on Target guide. There is a good online tool to calculate the feed requirements of heifers, given the target growth rates, and this can be found at [www.dairyaustralia.com.au/HeiferDietCalculator](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/HeiferDietCalculator)

To keep things simple, below is a table with typical Friesian heifer weights for typical Gippsland calving dates, being May-born and August-born (mid-way period for autumn and spring calvers) and the age and expected weights they should be in Jan/Feb, and their minimum feed requirements given typical summer paddock feed (i.e. little to no pasture!). Any green pick or summer crop is a bonus!

	Friesian Rising one year olds		Rising two year olds	
	Autumn born	Spring born	Autumn born	Spring born
<b>Age months</b>	9-10	6-7	21-22	18-19
<b>Target weight January</b>	210-235kg	150-175kg	500-520kg	380-400kg
<b>Minimum MJ ME and protein % required for maintenance and 0.8kg/head/day growth</b>	50MJ and 17%	44MJ and 17%	94MJ and 14%	80MJ and 14%
<b>Diet to provide requirements option 1 (pellets and silage) per 50 head</b>	2.6kg as fed 18% protein pellets and 2.5kgDM silage <b>= 140kg pellets per day and 1 roll silage every second day</b>	2kg as fed 18% pellets and 2kgDM silage <b>= 100kg pellets and 1 roll silage every second day</b>	3.8kg as fed 15% protein pellets and 5kg DM silage <b>= 200kg pellets and 1 roll silage per day</b>	3.1kg as fed 15% protein pellets and 4kgDM silage <b>= 160kg pellets and 1 roll silage per day</b>
<b>Diet to provide requirements Option 2 (cereal grain and protein or cereal hay) per 50 head</b>	1.6kg as fed wheat and canola (2/3 1/3 mix) and 3kgDM vetch <b>= 85kg grain and 1/3 bale vetch per day</b>	1.5kg as fed wheat and canola mix and 2.5kgDM vetch hay <b>= 80kg grain and 1/4-1/3 bale vetch per day</b>	4.4kg wheat and canola and 4.5kgDM good cereal hay <b>= 230kg grain and 1/2 bale cereal hay per day</b>	3.3kg as fed wheat and canola mix and 4kg good cereal hay <b>= 170kg grain and 1/2 bale cereal hay per day</b>

# Control of liver fluke and worms

## Jakob Malmo, Maffra Veterinary Centre

Liver Fluke has been recognised as a major problem in the MID for many years and a study undertaken in the MID in 2014 detected fluke eggs in the manure of cattle in 18 out of 20 herds tested. Liver fluke burdens in young cattle can be monitored by undertaking egg counts on a sample of cattle in the mob at regular intervals (and then treating as necessary), or by treating with Trichlabendazole (e.g. Fasinex) approximately every 6 months until calving.

Gastrointestinal parasites represent a major risk to calves in the MID and can severely impact on rate of weight gain of young cattle. Resistance to worm drenches has been now demonstrated in parasites in beef and dairy cattle in many parts of the world, and Steph Bullen's work has shown it is a potential major problem in the MID.

Options for worm control in young stock vary from:

- A production focussed approach with routine drenching of young stock every 6 weeks until they reach 12 months of age. This will minimise the risk of reduced weight gain associated with worms, but these routine treatments are likely to increase the risk of development of resistance of parasites to drenches.
- A sustainable approach could involve regularly checking worm egg counts (possibly every 3 weeks) in manure samples from these calves from weaning through until May (and treating them if worm egg counts start to rise) and in May treating them with an effective product.

Whenever drenching, to minimise the risk of resistance developing it is important to have an accurate estimate of the weight of the calves and to check the drenching equipment to ensure that the correct dose is given.

## Case Study 1: Wilfour Farms and Mike & Sarah O'Brien

### *Maximum efficiency of inputs under a sharefarming operation*

The O'Briens are in a share arrangement with the farm owners, Wilfour Farms, on a 40/60 basis. They own 1/3 of all cattle, mobile plant and equipment and provide all the labour. They also own a turnout block that is irrigated, and provides young stock grazing as well as some fodder. All parties involved in this farm have been, or are involved in share arrangements, and so there is strong focus on "all being on the same page" as much as possible.

**Milking area:** 92.5ha

**Cow numbers :** 325

**Irrigated area:** 80ha

**Stocking rate:** 3.53 cows/milking ha or 4.06cows/ha on irrigated area

**Fodder on hand as at 4/12/15:** 260 rolls of silage, 50 bales of hay can be bought back from the turnout block if necessary

**Purchased fodder:** 100 rolls of annual ryegrass can be purchased @ \$180/t and 36t of oaten hay has been ordered @ \$278t delivered in Jan/Feb

**Young stock:** 110 Rising 1 year olds and 80 Rising 2 year olds; These all run off the farm from soon after weaning until a month prior to calving.

The focus on the farm is always ensuring optimum response for the inputs being used. This applies to pasture, water, concentrates, nitrogen and most importantly labour. Everything is scrutinised to ensure that every response can justify the expense.

A water budget has been done and a plan put in place, involving stretching out the water on hand, purchasing any shortfall, possible fodder requirements and purchasing any fodder shortfall. It all centres on making tactical decisions early, given the knowledge at hand.

Marginal paddocks have now been dried off, being those requiring large amounts of water for the pasture grown on them. A further 9ha will be dried off after the next watering (around the time of the meeting). The aim will then be to water the remaining areas as best as possible, and not stretch out the watering interval and limit pasture growth.

There are good levels of silage on hand, and this will be used to fill the summer feed deficit if there is one, but crucially will be used to push out the round length in autumn as growth rates slow.

#### **Key points:**

- Marginal cows will be monitored for production and poor producers will be culled early;
- A pregnancy test will be done early and culling decisions made as required;
- Rotation length will be held at around 25-30 days but push out in early autumn;
- Possibly purchase additional water to help get through;
- Spray channels and drains to ensure efficient watering;
- Keep nitrogen and possibly P,K,S fertiliser up to grow as much as possible;
- Be positive...this is the fun of farming...highs, lows and challenges!

## O'Brien's/Wilfour's plan for the irrigation season

Mike and Sarah O'Brien share farm on the Wilfour farm at Denison, and at the current time it looks like they will be short of water this year. Mike and Sarah have done a water budget and calculated that they will be 4.5 irrigations short this season. So what is their plan?

### *The water situation*

The Wilfour/O'Brien farm has High Reliability Water Shares of 378 ML, and low reliability of 167 ML. At 100% HRWS they currently have 378 ML to irrigate their 92.5 ha flood irrigated farm. Whilst their irrigation infrastructure might not be the fanciest, Mike is able to get their irrigation efficiency down to 0.4 ML/ha/irrigation, this is well below the district average of 0.7 ML/ha/irrigation. To date (2/12/2015) Mike has already irrigated 4.25 times and only has 225 ML of channel water remaining. Based on plant water requirement and their water budget, they have planned on another 11 irrigations to get through the irrigation season.

### *Dry off areas?*

Mike made the call early, and made the decision to dry off poorly irrigated/inefficient paddocks early in October, including paddocks 35 and 39 (5.9 ha). Once the weather gets warm he will also stop irrigating his couch grass paddocks (40 & 41). Mike has decided to dry off 12.5 ha of the farm, saving some water but he is still four irrigations short.

### *Other sources of water?*

The O'Brien's have an irrigated turn out block, so they will transfer an irrigation over to the dairy farm.

All of the farm's runoff is captured in reuse dams. Whilst Mike hates to waste water in a dry year and minimises runoff from the bays, he is lucky that the reuse system is there to capture any runoff that does occur. He keeps the reuse system low just in case we get rain.

### *Purchase temporary/seasonal water?*

Even with all of the other management strategies, the farm will still be short of water. They have crunched their sums and believe that it would be worth purchasing two irrigations (70 ML) worth of seasonal allocation from the market. Paying for extra water will ensure they can grow as much grass on their home farm – and it will still be the cheapest feed available for them (\*at current market prices).

### *Managing what you have*

The O'Brien's are proactively making decisions about their season, but understand that all of the above won't help them grow grass and pay off unless they continue:

- to maintain irrigation intervals, ensuring that intervals match plant water requirements
- maintain grazing rotation- they have enough fodder conserved to ensure they can maintain it even with 12 ha being out of the rotation
- keep utilising urea on areas that are fully irrigated to ensure that pasture produced is maximised

Mike splits his irrigations, and does half the farm each time (on 10 day interval he does half, then five days later does the other half) this reduces the risk of wasting a rainfall event.

***Each farm and situation is different. Do a water budget and plan out your season. Remember that Agriculture Victoria, DEDJTR irrigation officers are here to help. Call Sarah or Maria on 03 5147 0800.***

## Case Study 2: The Anderson Family, former Denison Focus Farmers

### *Fully feeding the herd and maintaining the farming system as best as possible*

The Andersons have the aim of fully feeding all animals (mature cows as well as young stock) so they produce well and the farm system is maintained in the best shape possible. Fodder levels, both purchased and home-made are such that farm production targets should be achieved. Water availability means that there are a maximum of seven irrigations remaining and the situation will be monitored closely as the season continues.

**Milking area:** 120ha

**Irrigated turnout:** 32ha + 30ha

**Dryland turnout:** 121ha

**Milking cows:** 508, split calving with 140 autumn calvers (early March) and 340 spring calved

**Average stocking rate:** 4.6 cows/ha

**Fodder:** 1100 bales silage made this year; 160 bales grass hay (some carried over); 180 bales cereal hay carried over

**Purchased this season:** 50 bales Lucerne silage; 41 squares Lucerne hay; 80 big squares oaten hay; 100 smaller rounds oaten hay; further 100 bales cereal hay purchased for springers

**Young stock:** 160 Rising 1 year olds; 167 Rising 2 year olds

All young stock are grazing a new irrigated turnout block of 31ha but only half of this is being irrigated. Younger spring-born heifers are still getting pellets. Autumn calving heifers and yearlings are grazing on dry country but these will move onto irrigation country where there is 140ML irrigation as well as re-use water. Heifers are a part of the Heifers on Target program and they are weighed regularly and growth is monitored.

There are dry cows on dry country, with ample water remaining in dams.

Milkers are fed to production, with current production levels (early December) at 30 litres average, with feeding rate of 7kg wheat, 2kg canola, and a mineral additive, as well as 2.9kgDM silage per cow per day.

#### **Key points:**

- Feed for production but monitor performance and margins
- Ensure the farming system is maintained as best as possible by feeding for production and having the required inputs on hand
- Look after young stock, by weighing and monitoring growth rates, and feed accordingly.

# Some thoughts about culling decisions

Jakob Malmo, Maffra Veterinary Centre

Unless we get a significant rain event, it is likely that many farms will run short of irrigation water later this season and pasture feed may become limiting.

One option to make best use of the available feed is to consider removing from the herd earlier than normal cows that will not be of use to us next year. I have seen many situations where some milking cows are removed from the herd, yet milk production in the vat changes only very slightly. This may well be the case if feed is limiting - more feed for the remaining cows will help maintain overall milk production.

But care does need to be taken in exercising this option - at least on my farms, we want to be sure that we have sufficient cows in good body condition to calve next spring. So we are loath to cull many cows until we have completed at least the 1<sup>st</sup> round of pregnancy testing, and we know how well (or otherwise) our cows are getting in calf this season.

But even before the 1<sup>st</sup> round of pregnancy testing, there are some cows that we know we will not want in the herd next year, regardless as to their pregnancy status:

- Cows that have had 3 or more cases of clinical mastitis this season - hopefully these will already have been culled.
- Cows that have had high cell counts for the last several years - these are unlikely to respond to treatment and are a potential source of infection for other cows in the herd.
- Any walking wounded cows - chronically lame cows, cows with blown udders or with other issues such as very bad temperament that mean that we do not want them in the herd next season.

In years where we are considering getting rid of cows early, early pregnancy testing is, in my opinion, a no-brainer. I recommend that the 1<sup>st</sup> round of pregnancy testing should be undertaken some 6 weeks after the end of the AB period. Unless there is something seriously wrong with any of the pregnant cows, they are immediately removed from our list of cows from which to select culls.

The cows not in calf at this time are likely to be late calving cows next season. We will carry out a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of pregnancy testing some 6 weeks after the bulls have been removed from the herd and, in our case, these empty cows are sold. However, before this 2<sup>nd</sup> round of pregnancy testing we still like to watch closely for signs of heat in these cows - if they continue to come into heat they are most likely (but not guaranteed) to be not in calf and that little bit closer to the culling list. Because we have undertaken early pregnancy testing, we have accurate predicted calving dates and have the option if we have excess pregnant cows to sell the late calving cows to someone else who may be able to make better use of them.

The heifers should not be forgotten. In many herds, the heifers have a shorter mating period and any heifers not pregnant at an early pregnancy test can at least be considered for culling. The heifers that are late getting in calf are likely to have a shorter lactation length in their 1<sup>st</sup> season and may represent the less fertile animals in the group - do you want to introduce these into your herd?

Our overall aim is to remove the passengers from the herd early, but to be sure that we have a sufficient number of healthy and likeable cows and heifers to calve in good condition next spring so that we can hit the ground running next year. We do not want a potentially difficult season this year to impact negatively on our herd and production next season.

# Irrigating in a dry season

## Sarah Killury, DEDJTR

Plan early and consider contingencies. Lessons from previous dry seasons have highlighted the need to plan and make early decisions and then to monitor and adjust as you go along.

### Key things to consider during a dry irrigation season:

#### Do a water budget

Will you have enough water to get through the season? Once you know your water situation you can plan out the season. For help with a water budget contact a DEDJTR irrigation extension officer at Maffra on 5147 0800.

#### Purchase water

- Permanent or temporary water is available via trade. Check out the current market prices to see if that is a cost effective option for your farm. Some of the factors that need to be taken in to account when considering buying water to grow more feed include the price of equivalent quality feed supplements, your water use efficiency (ML/ha/irrigation), pasture consumption/ha, and the herd's requirements for particular nutrients (eg. protein, fibre or energy).
- For MID irrigators, Southern Rural Water is auctioning temporary water via WaterBid in December and January. For more information go to [www.srw.com.au/waterbid/](http://www.srw.com.au/waterbid/)

#### Use other sources of water

Utilise access to ground water where possible. Effluent ponds are a source of water that may substitute your irrigation water. With other sources of water - quality is important. Be cautious if bore water is salty, and don't forget to shandy bore water or effluent where possible.

#### Maintain irrigation intervals

Water stressing your plants and stretching out irrigation intervals will usually result in increased water use per irrigation and much lower pasture production per megalitre. Your clover and ryegrass growth will suffer while lower quality pasture species will flourish. Use the cumulative measured daily pasture water use figures (ETo) to help you schedule your irrigations. A weekly email with ETo is circulated on AusDairyL.

#### Be prepared to dry off paddocks

More pasture can be grown and consumed from a small quality area that is regularly irrigated than a larger area that is not regularly irrigated. The total area you can irrigate with your remaining water will be calculated in your irrigation budget. Keeping pasture green and ready waiting for rain is tempting in Gippsland, but it may be a risky gamble.

Dry off:

- Paddocks to be laser graded in the current season
- Poor performing paddocks in need of renovation
- Other poor performing paddocks eg saline areas, lacking fertility
- Paddocks that take a long time to water
- Paddocks that use a lot of water
- Paddocks that do not drain to a reuse system

#### Manage your reuse system

Make sure the water level is as low as possible at the start and end of each irrigation. This will leave storage capacity available in the reuse system to collect the maximum amount of run off.

#### Short water bays

If an area doesn't drain to a reuse system, consider short watering your bays to minimise runoff

#### Nitrogen

Utilise nitrogen on your irrigated pastures to get the most out of your water and grow the most grass.

#### Grazing management

Grazing management is as critical as always. Keep a good feed wedge in front of the cows to maximise pasture growth for every ML applied.

**MAKE THE MOST OF THE WATER YOU HAVE TO GROW THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRASS POSSIBLE.**

REMEMBER WE ARE HERE TO HELP – IF YOU HAVE IRRIGATION ENQUIRIES, WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SCHEDULING (INCLUDING BEING ON THE EMAIL LIST FOR ETO) OR WOULD LIKE TO DO A WATER BUDGET CALL SARAH OR MARIA ON 5147 0845.