

How Now Gippy Cow



Your Levy at Work

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Taking another look at drying off

A study being conducted on Gippsland dairy farms could cut the amount of antibiotics being used in drying off cows. Early results from a small study sample have shown low risk cows have had no adverse effects from withholding antibiotics while continuing to teat seal. Dr Lauren Foster, a University of Melbourne dairy resident at Gippsland Veterinary Hospital in Maffra, explains how the findings could improve outcomes for farmers and their animals.

Drying off is one of the most critical times of the year to set the cow up for her next lactation. The dry period is a key time to treat existing infections in the udder, prevent new infections occurring and allow the udder tissue to regenerate. For this to occur cows should be dried off 6 – 8 weeks prior to calving when they are producing between 5 – 12 litres/day. Cows producing less than this may result in milk quality issues associated with antibiotic residues. If cows are producing more than 12 litres per day they need to be managed to reduce their production prior to drying off, this is most commonly done by reducing concentrates and pasture available for one week, while still ensuring the energy requirements for a heavily pregnant cow are being met.

There are two main decisions that need to be made before drying off:

1. The product to be used

There are a number of different dry cow antibiotics available containing different antibiotics and having different withholding periods, if you have had a problem with mastitis or high cell counts discuss with your regular veterinarian which product would be best suited to your farm. In addition to this you need to decide if you will use teat sealant in conjunction with dry cow. Teat seal forms a plug at the end of the teat closing it off from bacteria for the duration of the dry period, reducing the risk of mastitis during the dry period and around the time of calving.

2. Selective or blanket dry cow therapy

Traditionally dry cow antibiotics were used in all cows at dry off, with or without teat seal. Recently there has been more discussion about the use of selective dry cow therapy, in which dry cow antibiotics are only used in cows that are considered a high mastitis risk (cows with a high individual cell count or history of clinical mastitis).

Discussions around the use of selective dry cow therapy stem from concerns around antibiotic resistance, the consequences of miscalculating withholding periods resulting in antibiotics in the vat and the potential of reducing the cows' natural defence against mastitis by using antibiotics in a non-infected udder. There is currently a study being run in the Macalister Irrigation District funded by GippsDairy and Zoetis on the use of selective dry cow therapy.

The study is looking to see if using teat seal alone in 'low risk' cows during dry off results in similar milk quality and udder health as using dry cow antibiotics and teat seal in conjunction. Low risk cows are animals with a low individual cell count (for this study less than 150,000 cells/ml) and no history of mastitis in that lactation. A small scale study involving autumn calving cows has shown positive results with no increase in mastitis or individual cell counts of the animals that received only teat seal, the study will be replicated on a larger scale using spring calving cows this season.



Selective dry cow therapy is not recommended for all farms but for farms producing premium quality milk with a low rate of clinical mastitis it should be considered. For more information or if you are unsure if this is something that would be suitable on your farm have a chat to your regular veterinarian, field officer or visit Dairy Australia's website which has a number of resources discussing dry cow therapy options.

Regardless of the product or protocol used hygiene is paramount when drying off cows. Unfortunately we can create cases of mastitis with poor dry off technique; this mastitis is often incurable toxic mastitis and can result in cow death or the loss of a quarter. Even if using dry cow antibiotics hygiene is important as the antibiotics are not effective against some types of bacteria found in the environment. Teat ends must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with appropriate teat wipes or cotton wool balls soaked in 70% alcohol prior to treatment and sprayed with teat spray after. Cows should be clearly marked, recorded in the computer and walked quietly to a clean dry area on the farm.

There are a number of resources available on the Dairy Australia website with tips and tricks to ensure good dry off technique, alternatively your regular veterinarian can do a dry off refresher course for you and your staff to ensure everyone is competent prior to dry off. With the cost of a case of mastitis averaging \$277.00 and the potential to reduce cow production in the coming lactation dry cow management is a really important step in your dairy management system.

How right does repro have to be?

The annual dairy calendar has changed with some interesting questions raised as a result! Twenty years ago most herds had one calving period per year and most farms actually stopped sending milk for a month or two. The pressure was on to get a high standard of reproductive performance in your herd, or bear some serious consequences re profit.

Now the majority of herds calve during more than one period per year, and only two percent of farms actually stop sending milk for a time. So, in these times of carrying over empties, having multiple calving periods, and supplying milk all year round, how good does reproductive performance have to be to succeed as a profitable dairy farm?

To try and answer that question, OMJ Agricultural Consulting (John Mulvany) and Herd Health Pty Ltd (Richard Shephard), as part of the Dairy Australia In-Calf program, conducted an investigation of seven very profitable dairy farms from Victoria, NSW, and Tasmania. Do these very profitable dairy farms have best practice reproductive performance, and if they don't how do they compensate to still be very profitable?

Features of the farms analysed:

- The herds included single calving, split calving and an all year round calving herd
- There was also a mixture of breeds: cross breeds and Holsteins
- Each farmer indicated that they “chose” their calving frequency, particularly the all year round calving and split calving herds. It was NOT because reproductive performance had been poor
- Two of the farms were in Gippsland
- All achieved consistently high profit
- All had good quality reproductive data

The investigation had two parts:

- An analysis of the farm's historical reproductive performance data using the key indicators recommended in the In-Calf program.
- Completion of a survey in an effort to “get into the heads” of these very profitable farmers, and find out what their program is, what they measure and what they believe is important in reproduction.

Some key findings:

- All farms placed a strong focus on matching the herd's feed requirements with their farm's pasture growth pattern, aiming to achieve a maximum number of days during lactation with a high pasture intake. This meant that the right cow had to be in the right place at the right time.
- All farms measured several key reproductive performance measures accurately and had a good understanding of the measure.
- All farmers used the simplest system possible to achieve their targets, indicating that simple systems were easier to monitor and implement.
- The farms fell into one of two groups:
 - o One group achieved excellent reproductive results. On these farms the intensity of reproductive monitoring and the

achievement of high reproductive performance impacted on getting all the annual activities correct- it was the foundation for annual performance and an absolute focus for the operators. These farms tended to have fewer replacements and actually considered too many replacements as a cost to the business. (Interestingly this group included some of the single calving period herds and an all year round calving herd in NSW.)

- o The second group consisted of those who achieved “good” but not outstanding reproductive performance. They accepted a lower level of performance, but had some very clear guidelines below which they were determined not to fall as they felt that it would then impact negatively on profit. For example, one commented that greater than 20% empty rate after a twelve week joining would be regarded as potentially impacting on profit and unacceptable.

Those with “good but not excellent” reproductive performance were absolutely uncompromising in targeting at least 30% replacements of peak milker numbers. This was considered the number that would allow the operator to still achieve the “right cow in the right place at the right time”. This has a cost to the business, but the businesses in the survey were still able to perform extremely well financially because the higher replacement number meant that other compromises which might impact on profit did not have to be made. Some examples of this were: carrying over cows with mediocre production, or having too many cows calving late, therefore not achieving their lactation potential or doing so at a higher cost due to lack of pasture.

- All of the farmers in the project could very clearly explain why they wanted certain measured outcomes.
- They all highlighted their focus on certain activities such as transition feeding, calving and joining.

Contrast all of the above to another group of farmers not represented in this sample group. As a result of poor breeding outcomes they “drift” into accepting cows calving at the wrong time and being forced to keep too many sub-optimum carryovers. You always hear about the rare one that lasts the distance with high levels of production, not the cow producing 1.0 kg MS that's kept because she does a bit more than cover cost-that's a long way from an optimum cow. It all sounds a bit like the punter who only talks about their wins!

For those who want to look a little deeper, the survey results presenting the joining, calving and transition cow management details of the herds studied in this project will be available on the In-Calf website in late June.

Interestingly, following the survey and analysis, one of the farms decided that they had “slipped a bit” in repro performance and might be near the cliff that affects profit, so recently completed the In Calf course.

It's worth considering: Have you “drifted” to where you are in terms of herd reproductive pattern and performance? Perhaps it's time to re-assess the current situation and clarify where you actually want to be and focus on what's needed to get there.

For further information contact Richard at richard@herdhealth.com.au, John at omj@dcsi.com.au or GippsDairy at info@gippsdairy.com.au

Grow winter grass for less

In a tight year, Gibberellic acid can be a handy tool for farmers wanting to grow low cost feed over winter.

Gibberellic acid boosts the growth of pasture in cold conditions as it contains a naturally occurring plant growth regulator that enlarges the plant's cells resulting in higher growth rates.

Results from Gibberellic acid applications can be variable depending on conditions, such as soil temperature, moisture and nutrient availability. When combined with nitrogen fertiliser, growth rates tend to be more consistent.

Gibberellic acid is most effective when:

- Soil temperatures are between 6 and 13 degrees Celsius.
- Applications are timed 1 to 5 days after grazing.
- The Gibberellic acid is applied with a wetting agent.
- The Gibberellic acid is applied with 32 to 46kgN/ha.

- The treated pasture has at least a 28-day break from grazing (typical best rotation in winter for Ryegrass is 40 to 60 days).
- The pasture growth rates are not limited by soil moisture or nutrients.
- Pastures and paddocks are selected to allow cows to utilise the newly grown pasture without excessive wastage and pugging.

Gibberellic acid should not be used on newly sown pasture. Because it is foliar absorbed, ensure adequate leaf growth before application.

For more information on Gibberellic acid talk to your agronomist.



Dairy's border security priority

Foot and mouth are three words that Australian dairy farmers never want to hear in that order.

A highly contagious viral disease, foot-and-mouth (FMD) is characterised by fluid-filled blisters and erosions in the mouth, nose, teats and feet. Although not usually lethal in adult animals, it causes serious production losses and has the potential to cost Australian farmers billions of dollars.

Endemic in some parts of the world, FMD has not been recorded in Australia since 1872, when an outbreak in Werribee was controlled more by good luck than good management.

Keeping Australia free from the disease, which only affects cloven-hooved animals including cows, sheep, pigs and goats, is one of the biggest priorities of the nation's agriculture and biosecurity sectors.

GippsDairy regional extension co-ordinator Tony Platt recently travelled to Nepal where he studied with the European Commission for Foot-and-Mouth Disease. The program selects veterinarians, industry personal and farmers to be trained in better recognising the disease and applying appropriate biosecurity should a country have an outbreak.

By the end of their time in Nepal, course participants were able to:

- Recognise FMD and age lesions to determine the length of infection and possible risk pathways
- Understand the basic epidemiology, including infection and spread, of FMD;
- Take the correct samples for laboratory diagnosis
- Understand the basics of FMD vaccination, including the advantages and disadvantages of vaccination, the challenges in determining if vaccination should be used and the importance of vaccine matching
- Carry out an effective biosecurity procedure, ensuring FMD is not transferred within Nepal or back to Australia
- Understand FMD preparedness or control activities in the participants' respective countries, and their role in them

Tony said the prevalence, speed and high rate of FMD infection in Nepal offered a lesson in how important it is to maintain Australia's strict bio-security controls.

He also said training Australians in identification and response protocols was critical to minimising the impact if FMD ever did reach our shores.

"The lesson from the UK's major outbreak in 2001 was the importance of having people trained and ready to respond," he said.

"Unfortunately the disease was misdiagnosed in the first place because someone didn't understand it or didn't recognise the signs. Then in three weeks' time it had spread throughout the country."

The impact of FMD on the Australian economy is shown through Department of Agriculture modelling that estimates a small outbreak, controlled in three months, could cost around \$7.1 billion, while a large 12 month outbreak would cost \$16 billion.

It's a massive potential hit to the agriculture sector and the impact on individual farmers would be even greater, with many dairy importers likely to turn their backs on Australian products, even after the disease had been eradicated.

"The instantaneous outcome is a cease of all trade, but once a country says no to trading with us, we don't know when and if they would ever come back," Tony said.

Tony's experience in Nepal, where farmers have to constantly endure the economic cost of outbreaks, has reinforced his belief that bio-security measures need to be respected by every person crossing Australia's borders.

"Our quarantine measures are the only thing stopping us from getting this," he said.

"The main thing for people entering Australia is to respect our quarantine laws. Declare everything, even if it's just to be safe rather than sorry, and clean anything that may have mud or dirt on it.

Tony is available to speak to groups of farmers or industry organisations about the lessons learnt as part of his EufMD training program. Contact Tony on 0477 440 339 or tony@gippsdairy.com.au



Tony Platt (centre) helps diagnose a case of foot-and-mouth disease in Nepal.



Rudimentary conditions in dairy sheds allow disease to spread easily.



The European Commission for Foot-and-Mouth Disease team with a local farmer near Kathmandu.

contact us

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What a year for dairy farmers

By Kathryn Croatto and Catherine Hanrahan

Over the past 12 months a lot has happened in the dairy farming industry. There have been tears, questions, disbelief and distress within our farming communities. While some farmers absorbed the information regarding price cuts with sadness but optimism, others have struggled to see a future in the industry. Some farmers are able to accept that the dairy industry has 'good years and bad years', for others it has been a source of great stress and distress. We have seen farmers working longer and harder than the average wage earner (at a loss). Most farmers live with the constant worry about their economic survival.

Good reliable financial advice can help a farmer feel more in control. Farmers should be encouraged to access all means of support available to them. The local field officers are educated on grants available to farmers and support services they may access. A supportive family and good family relations may help to buffer stress. Family and friends play an important role in helping people through difficult times.

There has been one positive to come out of this dairy downturn. Farmer distress has become a topic at the front of many people's minds. Much has been invested over recent times to ensure that farmers and farm workers are cared for mentally. The government has recently announced ongoing funding to ensure that the mental health of farmers is taken care of. There have been many community events held to show the farmers support, these events have certainly boosted morale. But where to seek help if a farmer is suffering?

If you or a loved one is concerned about the mental health of a farmer please consider taking them to visit their G.P. The G.P. can do a thorough assessment and make a mental health plan to ensure they get the ongoing appropriate care. Many dairy farmers who are distressed may not acknowledge it and may not seek help even when it becomes serious. The importance of having close family contacts is vital. It is often a family member or close friend that recognises that not all is well. Someone who is usually social and outgoing may suddenly decline invitations to outings. They may lose or gain weight. They may feel like sleeping more. They may be more angry or tearful. They may drink more alcohol.

A lot of farmers display a tough façade, they tend to just grin and put up with the difficulty. Adding to this, many farmers work alone on their farm. It is vitally important for farmers to have well-functioning social networks to combat loneliness.

So, how can you make each day better?

- Relax, give yourself some time out each day. It doesn't need to be long. Practice some deep breathing (as recommended by Beyondblue)
- Exercise regularly, going for a walk, playing tennis, swimming or bowls are some activities you may enjoy. Any activity you choose



Catherine Hanrahan and Kathryn Croatto.

will provide great benefits. Even though farming is an active occupation, it is not exercise.

- Spend time with positive people who make you feel good about yourself.
- Eat well. A healthy diet is very important for the body and mind.
- Get enough sleep. While sleep requirements vary, the National Sleep Foundation recommend between 7 – 9 hours per night.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, break your tasks down and tackle them one at a time. It's okay to ask for help, sometimes you can feel alone, it's important you know there are people out there who can help.

It is important that everybody has someone they trust whom they can talk to, whether it is their partner, friend, G.P. or church leader. If you or someone you know is suffering, please ring the numbers listed.

(Beyond blue – 1300 224 636) www.beyondblue.org.au

(Lifeline – 13 11 14) www.lifeline.org.au

(Rural Financial Counselling Services – 1800 900 090) <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service>

Catherine and Kathryn are health professionals, dairy farmers and GippsDairy's current Agricultural Health and Medicine Scholarships holders.

Help GippsDairy track beetle pests

African black beetles are, literally, spreading their wings across Gippsland – and GippsDairy wants to know where they have landed.

The destructive pests have now been identified as far south as Fish Creek, a long way from established African black beetle hot spots.

GippsDairy is seeking to map the spread of the pasture pests as the first step of a potential study into distribution, damage and control methods.

GippsDairy regional extension officer Karen Romano said farmers who find the beetles should let GippsDairy know so a clear picture can be formed into how widespread the problem is.

"Once we know the extent of the problem we can start the process of trying to deal with it," she said.

"We know they are spreading, but we need to find out just how far they have gone."

Murray Goulburn agronomist Damien Adcock has watched with growing concern as the African black beetle has increased its range across Gippsland.

"They are a voracious pest and all aspects of their lifestyle cause damage to pastures. Some farmers are facing significant re-sowing costs this year."

"They have spread from Labertouche, Modella, Drouin West and Lardner Park down to Athlone, Nyora and Poowong. They are also quite well established around Darnum and Gainsborough."

"Now we have identified them in Meenyan late last autumn and in Fish Creek, so they are spreading out into South Gippsland as well."

The African black beetle is also present in the MID, but numbers can be controlled by regular irrigation.

According to Damien, the issue must be tackled before the pests spread even further.

"I think it is more than serious, it's an issue we haven't understood properly and we have allowed numbers to build up."

Most damage is caused in the autumn months before daytimes temperatures start dropping below 15°C.

To report African black beetle sightings, email karen@gippsdairy.com.au or call 5624 3900.

A comprehensive guide to common pasture pests, including the African black beetle, can be found at www.gippsdairy.com.au under 'items of interest' on the homepage.

Dairy Australia recently commenced a project that aims to better understand the geographic spread and population dynamics of insect pests of pastures across southern Australia.

If you didn't get a chance to contribute to the survey, please pass on any insect pest information to GippsDairy and we will add it to the survey data.



African black beetle

Focus on farm safety

Focus Farms are about improving farm business outcomes – and safety is a big part of making change for the better.

Graeme and Jenny Cope, who farm with their son Shaun at Fish Creek, have used the Focus Farm to work on succession planning and improving their volume in the vat.

But a push from Jenny for a greater emphasis on farm safety has seen significant changes to the way they run day-to-day operations.

Jenny and Graeme's first involvement in the farm safety project was in February when they attended the Women in Dairy session in Leongatha where Michael Vanderzalm for WorkSafe was the guest speaker. This particular event was open to partners.

Since then, Jenny had led the way in accessing information and implementing change.

"Since we started the Focus Farm, we've improved safety on the motorbikes," she said.

"We've introduced helmets and are making sure the staff wear them. We've developed policies on that, written them up and we make sure everybody reads it through, understands it and signs off on it."

"We're hoping by the end of the Focus Farm, we have a lot of the policies worked out and everyone knows exactly what they should and shouldn't be doing and taking extra caution in everything they do."

For Jenny, increased safety on farm means less chance of harm coming to people or the business.

"The bikes are actually coming in slower around the house which, especially with grandchildren walking around now, is much better," she said.

"If something happens, we are the ones who lose out. So we have an obligation to make sure the workers know what they should be doing."

"They're starting to realise that it's not so bad to put a helmet on their head. It's not so bad to be thinking about safety when their doing their job. If everybody is on the same wavelength then hopefully they will watch out for each other and keep an eye on things."

The Farm Safety Starter kit was used as an entry point for the Copes to obtain a safety system snapshot. The kit provided an overview of current farm safety system compared to Work Health and Safety legislation.

Murray Goulburn field officer and Focus Farm support group member, Jol Dutton, went through the starter kit with Graeme and Jenny, covering areas including:

- setting up a safe workplace
- consulting with employees
- managing hazards
- informing, training & supervising
- maintaining a safe workplace and keeping records.

Areas for improvement were identified and an action plan developed. Initial focus areas were quad bikes, machinery and cattle handling and completing the free Worksafe safety consultation. From there, staff were taken through induction training with Graeme and a written record for each employee was kept.



Jenny and Graeme Cope have changed equipment and usage policies for quad bikes, including helmets and operator protection devices which included rebates.

GippsDairy workforce co-ordinator Leah Maslen has also been working with the Copes as they move towards running a safer farm business.

Leah believes the way Graeme and Jenny have approached the farm safety issue is a great example of how to make the most of the industry services on offer.

"Developing safety policies can seem intimidating at first, but once they accessed the right information through the Farm Safety Starter Kit and spoke to people from GippsDairy and their milk supplier, the Copes were able to implement policies that suited their farm business," Leah said.

"Making that step to formalising safety procedures around the farm has made it a safer place for the family and employees and protected the business financially."

Dairy Australia is working on the development of the Farm Safety Manual to be released later this year, with Farm Safety Champion project participants road testing the manual to ensure it is 'farm-ready' when released.

For more information contact Leah on 5624 3900 or leah@gippsdairy.com.au

Reminders

JULY

Pastures and Grazing

- Aim to grow as much pasture as possible whilst keeping costs under control. The use of Nitrogen and Gibberellic acid increased growth rates and when combined with good grazing management can increase available pasture to cows. These inputs come at a cost and when combined with low pasture utilisation, typically in wet conditions, the cost can be quite high.
- If you have not sprayed your broad leaf weeds do so at the first opportunity to have denser, better producing pasture for the rest of the year.
- If you are highly stocked you will need a bigger wedge of pasture for calving cows. More cover will give you more management options in wet conditions, but this is a balancing act as a wet farm and too much pasture in early spring may result in lower quality pastures with limited silage cutting options if it too wet.
- Preventing nitrate poisoning when grazing ryegrass pastures containing capeweed or marshmallow by avoiding grazing within 21 days of nitrogen application and by including other low risk feeds in the diet before grazing these pastures.

Calves/Heifers

- Calf losses are very expensive. Having a good planned system for calf rearing is very important, to avoid the following may be useful:
 - o Prevent disease by ensuring that all calves receive good quality colostrum.
 - o Disinfect calf pens on a regular basis, including rails and bedding.
 - o Ensure calves have a good supply of good quality water, fibre and pellets.
 - o Ensure you have a good supply of drugs, vaccinations and drenches for calves on hand.
- Develop an easy to follow and affordable

Pastures/forages

Ryegrass leaf appearance rate	15 to 20 days per leaf
Area of farm to graze today	1/45th to 1/60th of grazing area in 24 hours
Recommended pre-grazing decision	10 to 25kgDM/ha/day
Recommended post grazing decision	Aim for 3 leaf pastures to graze
Average daily pasture growth rate	To maximise pasture production, try not to graze pastures lower than 4 to 6 cm between clumps
Seasonal management tasks	Be flexible with pasture area allocation during wet weather. Consider options such as on/off grazing and stand-off areas which aim to minimise treading damage while accessing available pasture

program that works for heifer rearing including dehorning, vaccinations, drenching and feeding for well developed, healthy heifers that will stay in the herd for a long time.

Cows

- Deaths of cows or losses of production is very expensive and can be avoided. Normally freshly calved heifers and young cows are susceptible to acidosis. To successful manage this make sure the diet is well balanced and that you have the grain well buffered and have offered enough effective fibre in the diet.
- Freshly calved cows are susceptible to milk fever which may show up sub clinically as retained foetal membrane or paralysis at calving, to manage this:
 - o Plan your transition feeding to minimise the risk of metabolic disorders in fresh or calving cows. For more information go to www.dairyaustralia.com.au
 - o Having a plan for action when cows present with difficult calving's or metabolic disorder.
- Making sure your calving area is clean enough for cows to calve without excessive contamination of teats to better avoid mastitis.
- Making time to watch your cows walking on laneways to check for sore feet. If poor track surfaces are causing lameness and foot problems, consider adding sawdust, woodchips, even hay (e.g. at the lead in/lead out from the dairy shed). The use of foot mats on the walk in to the dairy in

conjunction with copper sulphate can be an effective solution to foot soreness in cows.

People

- Plan time for management that improves your attention to detail on critical issues such as grain crushing and feed rates of grain and mineral additives or any other critical issues that can result in big losses if they are not done well.
- If using staff, plan rosters to ensure you can get through the spring calving and harvest without them being too exhausted to pay attention to detail or to overwork people.

Dairy Shed and Machinery

- When the cows are dry or you have a reduced number of milkers, take the opportunity to carry out your annual shed maintenance tasks, e.g. check milking machine function and replace rubberware.
- Carry out preventative maintenance on fixed and mobile plant.

Business

- If you have not done it yet, do an annual budget to plan likely income and expenditure for the 2017/2018 year.
- Understand your system and the physical things on the farm you need to do very well to get the best financial results.

ComingUp

See the GippsDairy events calendar for more information
www.gippsdairy.com.au/eventscalendar.aspx

Stepping Back

Anyone interested in a Stepping Back workshop on 13 July with John Mulvaney is asked to contact GippsDairy.

No location has been decided yet for the one day workshop called "Getting a Game Plan for Stepping Back."

The workshop will look at the next steps of transition or family succession for farm owners considering reducing their level of active farm involvement.

It will explore:

- Finding and keeping a good manager
- Part ownership of the dairy business
- Share farming and leasing options
- Retirement, Family succession

If you are interested, please contact Leah Maslen on 0448 681 373 or leah@gippsdairy.com.au.

On Farm Irrigation Upgrades

Applications for funding under the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Irrigation Efficiency Incentives Program will close on Wednesday, 21 June, 2017.

Funding will be available to help landholders in the MID with on-farm works including:

- Irrigation Reuse Systems
- Flood to Spray Conversion
- Best Practice Surface Irrigation Upgrades

Funding is limited and will be allocated through a prioritisation process.

MID irrigation incentives aim to promote a productive, efficient and sustainable irrigation industry supported by improved infrastructure.

Funding is made available through the Victorian Government's Sustainable Irrigation Program.

For further information, interested irrigators can contact the irrigation team at Agriculture Victoria Maffra on (03) 5147 0800 or sarah.m.killury@ecodev.vic.gov.au

