18–35 Join the Young Dairy Network!

The Young Dairy Network SA is a network of people associated with the dairy industry including farm operators, employees, sharefarmers, contract milkers, students and service providers aged from 18 to 35(ish).

DairySA’s Beck Burgess steers the Young Dairy Network group in South Australia, which sees her identify learning opportunities and experiences for young dairy farmers designed to provide them with valuable insights into a range of dairying operations and professional development.

The YDN SA welcomes everyone who is keen to network in a professional yet relaxed forum, and be kept in the loop about news and events in the dairy industry. Events may include dinners, discussion groups, farm visits, tours, guest speakers and seminars on specific topics such as share farming. Members can also participate in tailored field days and events, and be sponsored to attend major dairy conferences and specialised dairy farm tours such as the annual Don Campbell Memorial Tour.

YDN SA circulates a regular eNews full of information and resources for young dairy people.

Joining the network is easy and free. To join, and to be kept up to date with the latest YDNSA news and events, contact Beck on 0438 262 966 or beckburgess@dairysa.com.au
Alternatively head to the Sign Up form here: dairyaustralia.tfaforms.net/332893

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Farmers are driving force behind DairySA major events

DairySA’s two major events held each year don’t ‘just happen’ but are driven by a committed group of dairyfarmers who meet regularly in the months leading up to them.

Since 2002 the DairySA Innovation Day (or DID) has been a highly anticipated event on the dairy industry calendar with the most recent DID attracting nearly 200 delegates including farmers, service providers, sponsors, speakers and other dairy industry members.

In 2019, the DairySA Central Conference was held at the newly opened ‘The Bend Motorsport Park’ attracting over 160 delegates and receiving rave reviews. Now stronger than ever, next year will be its seventh consecutive year (excluding 2017 due to the Australian Dairy Conference).

Behind the scenes a committed group of around eight to ten dairyfarmers and service providers work steadily alongside a DairySA Extension Officer in each region to ensure a quality line-up of topics, speakers and farmer panels that best reflect dairyfarmers’ interests and challenges.
Key learnings set to benefit dairyfarmers

‘Homegrown fodder is King’ – that’s the clear message

agronomist Matt Howell took from the Dairy Research Foundation’s 2019 Symposium held at Bega in July.

Matt, an agronomist with Platinum Ag based in Meningie, attended the Symposium with support from DairySA’s Young Dairy Network.

The annual Symposium is the Dairy Research Foundation’s signature event attracting up to 200 delegates from throughout Australia. It is the largest Dairy event in NSW and is widely recognised as a showcase of science into practice.

According to the Dairy Research Foundation, feed accounts for more than 50 per cent of production cost in any production system, so an efficient home-grown feedbase can have a massive impact on the bottom line of individual farms. This year’s Symposium had a focus theme of ‘Homegrown Feedbase’, but there was a wide variation in how it is viewed.

“Here at Meningie we focus on quality, however people are conserving fodder for a number of reasons whether it be a focus on pasture management, drought proofing or feed quality preservation,” he added.

“Day one saw a range of interesting speakers discussing the benefits of homegrown feed base, with the following day featuring excellent content by several young researchers having a red hot go at solving some of the issues dairy farmers face,” Matt explained.

“One of my key highlights was hearing Meningie dairy farmer Brad Fischer’s presentation detailing how he integrates high feed production into a high intensity system,” said Matt.

“I also got a lot out of hearing Colin Thompson’s experience in setting up his Cowra dairy from scratch in the early 2000’s – negotiating their way through challenges such as droughts, floods, low milk prices and a planning regulation minefield,” he said.

“Colin reminded us of the importance of getting the details right – key processes such as feeding, cropping and effluent management – whilst continuously working on the small details like silage stack waste management, timing of effluent application and feed storage, will pay dividends in the long run,” Matt said.

Matt was also impressed by how quickly dairy research is progressing, with many researchers and farmers embracing ‘pie in the sky’ ideas to solve challenges in the dairy industry.

“From microwaving feed types to satellite fenc ing of stock, through to analysing cattle behaviour for maximising feed intake, nothing seems to be out of the question to improve efficiency and profitability,” Matt said. And Matt’s clients are set to benefit from his experience, with new learnings and ideas helping him to assist them with their own unique operations.

Don’t miss this!

Tour of dairy region in Tassie

Applications for the Don Campbell Memorial Tour are now open. This is a great opportunity as a Young Dairy Network member to be able to gain professional and personal development whilst visiting farms and dairy events in Tasmania.

Applications close October 4.

Head to bit.ly/2P75DPS or contact Beck Burgess 0438 262 966 or beckburgess@dairysa.com.au for further details.

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South East farmer James Mann has been part of the Innovation Day Committee since its inception in 2002.

“I originally joined because I thought the South East was not getting the attention it deserved, having come through a period of quick expansion in dairying in this region,” James explained.

“On a personal level, I was also keen to attract high quality speakers to address local and emerging issues, a reason which still drives me today,” he added. James believes that being part of the Innovation Day Committee gives value back for individual levy payers and is an example of “collective action benefiting local dairy communities”.

For DID Committee member Jen Stolp, joining the group has been an eye opener in terms of the time and thought that goes into attracting the best speakers on relevant and engaging topics.

“I always thought there must have been a lot more than I had expected,” Jen said.

“It’s given me a greater understanding of what goes into the Day and I’ve enjoyed contributing my opinions and ideas as we shape the topics and themes”. The Committees meet around six months out from the event, then as required in the lead up.

To find out how to get involved in an Organising Committee for the Central Conference or the Innovation Day, contact Beck Burgess on 0438 262 966 (Central) or Kylie Boston on 0407 231 547 (South East).
‘ifarmwell’ tool kit helps create positive outlook

An online tool kit to help farmers cope effectively with life’s challenges and get the most out of every day has helped changed dairyfarmer Jen Stolps’ approach to her daily life.

The ‘ifarmwell’ website has been designed based on what Australian farmers have said they want and what research shows will help. According to ‘ifarmwell’ their mission “is to equip farmers with new tools that reduce the negative impact that stressful situations have on their lives, so they have more time and energy to focus on the things that make them happy”.

It does this by sharing practical ways of coping with difficult circumstances, thoughts and feelings (especially worries about things you can’t control) and helping you to work out where it is most useful for you to put your attention and energy.

“I first heard of the ‘ifarmwell’ website at the Women in Agriculture Conference and liked the sound of what they were trying to achieve,” said Jen.

“Having completed two out of the five modules of ‘ifarmwell’, I can already feel the benefits, as I’ve got a better understanding of how to reduce the negative effects of stressful situations and have become more empowered to focus on the things that are great – and that can be fixed – in our busy lives,” she said.

Jen, based near Mt Gambier, explained that while there were quite a few questions at the beginning of the modules to get set up, most of them related to feelings and reactions to events and situations, which then explains current coping strategies to stressful situations and ways they can be improved.

“Having completed two out of the five modules of ‘ifarmwell’, I can already feel the benefits, as I’ve got a better understanding of how to reduce the negative effects of stressful situations and have become more empowered to focus on the things that are great – and that can be fixed – in our busy lives,” she said.

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Changes to industry policy on emergency euthanasia

A stronger industry policy has been implemented on emergency euthanasia. In May 2019, the Australian Dairy Farmers National Council passed recommendations which state:

1. Dairy farmers must create provisions for on-farm euthanasia through the use of a licensed firearm or captive bolt device, and provide training as required.

2. Euthanasia by blunt force trauma should not occur on Australian dairy farms, except in emergency situations, which are defined by the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle as ‘the calf is under 24 hours old and the calf is in severe pain or distress and there is no other practical alternative.’ The Australian Dairy Farmers National Council has revised its policy on emergency euthanasia.

The revised policy has been included in Euthanase Livestock training courses. For more detailed information, visit: bit.ly/19_Euthanase_Update

‘Promptly, safely, humanely’

A recent DairySA ‘Euthanase Livestock’ workshop held at both Tailem Bend and Mt Torrens saw twenty farmers hear from vet Dr Simon Edwards on the key points to consider when euthanasia is required.

Simon explained that where it is necessary to kill cattle, it must be done promptly, safely and humanely.

“Humane killing should be considered for any animal that is found to be in pain or suffering and where treatment is either not practical or not economically feasible,” he said.

“It’s vitally important that farm employees are trained and ready to undertake humane killing when required, and can identify the five signs of death once complete,” he said.

Signs of death

The following five head signs (the five finger head check) should be observed to determine whether the method used for humane killing has been effective in causing death. These are:

1. Absence of corneal ‘blink’ reflex when the eyeball is touched
2. Dilated pupils that are unresponsive to light
3. Flaccid jaw
4. Flaccid tongue
5. Absence of rhythmic respiratory movements for at least five minutes.

Repeat the shot or blow if you are not confident occurred. Aim between the ears again but use a different entry or striking point.