**2018 DairySA Innovation Day success**

‘People, Pastures, Pathways’ at The Barn, Mt Gambier

Dairyfarmers, service providers and dairy industry representatives gathered in Mt Gambier last month to hear from a range of speakers around the topic of ‘People, Pastures, Pathways’.

Lee Astridge from New Zealand’s Human Resource company No8HR captured the audience’s attention with her top tips for recruiting. David Nation detailed the exciting ‘Targeted, High Impact’ joint projects between Dairy Australia and the Victoria Government including DairyBio, DataGene and DairyFeedbase.

A farmer panel examined the theme of ‘Options for a farming future’, offering a frank and open discussion on pathways through the dairy industry, giving delegates plenty to think about.

Dairy Australia’s Managing Director Ian Halliday provided an insightful update on the current challenges and opportunities in the dairy industry, both here and internationally.

The day culminated in an uplifting presentation by Udder Delight’s Sheree Sullivan.

The DairySA Innovation Day is the result of a collaborative approach between DairySA and South East South Australian dairy farmers who drive the ideas for the topics, speakers and format of the day, managed and coordinated by DairySA’s Extension Officer Bec Walmsley.

It continues to be a highly anticipated event on the dairy industry calendar, and DairySA would like to thank all the sponsors of the Innovation Day who made it possible.
And the winners are...

Two aspiring dairy industry leaders were awarded the inaugural ‘Next Gen Challenge’ Award at the DairySA Innovation Day Dinner held in Mt Gambier in early June.

Ebony King from Hope Forest was the winner in the Employee Category and Steph Walker from Mt Compass in the Owner/Operator category—and were each awarded $2000 toward an agreed program, study tour, course or activity.

Twelve young and ‘young at heart’ SA dairy farmers signed up to the DairySA ‘Next Gen Challenge’ earlier in 2018, ready to step up and make an impact in their business, community or the industry. Through a workshop, presentations and interviews, it was designed to give participants an opportunity to develop confidence and skills to plan, prepare, and deliver their message, whilst also allowing for networking with other like-minded young people in the dairy industry.

It was also valuable for clarifying their goals within the dairy industry, gaining skills and experience in an idea or plan that they’re passionate about, relevant to their interests.

According to judge James Mann all the participants showed exceptional initiative and had developed both their confidence and goal setting skills over the weeks of the course.

“The judging panel were very impressed with the standard of applications, which centred around a clear goal and path from each of the participants,” James said.

“We congratulate Ebony and Steph on the personal and professional development they have achieved to date, and wish them well with their plans for future enterprises in the dairy industry,” he added.

Farmer Panel offers frank insights at DairySA Innovation Day

Six South Australian dairyfarmers—including owners and sharefarmers—took to the ‘hot seat’ at the recent DairySA Innovation Day, offering a frank and open discussion around their aspirations, goals and journey in the dairy industry.

We’ve picked some of the key learnings and take home messages from their discussions on the day.

What would you advise others when entering the dairy industry?

1. Be patient in looking for the right opportunity.
2. Develop a strong work ethic. Grasp opportunities. Respect the older generation (they provide the opportunities).
3. Identify best practice and best farmers. Set time specific goals. Understand that debt focuses the mind. And dairy is tough, it requires commitment but can be very rewarding.
4. Surround yourself with good people. Start your journey ASAP.

Your view of mentors?

1. They can be valuable and can come from anywhere – they are where you find them.
2. They’re essential. Use local identities and relationships built through networking.
3. Use Industry peers. And seek specific advice through networks.
4. Use other sharefarmers and people outside of industry.

What would you do differently?

1. Get a better understanding of work/life balance earlier, and choose learning subjects more wisely.
2. Try to better evaluate opportunity. Understand ‘Return on Investment’ as early as possible.

DairySA would like to thank the following panellists for their time and thoughts: Don and Jen Stolp, Chris Proctor, Bec Middleton and Duncan Irving and Perrin Hicks.
US trip for young SA dairyfarmer
South Australian dairyfarmer Mikaela Baker, 24, from Beachport is one of four up-and-coming dairy scientists set to make her mark on Australia’s dairy industry after receiving a grant to attend one of the world’s biggest dairy science conferences.

The four, aged 24 to 44, attended the 2018 American Dairy Science Association Annual Meeting for a week long trip in June where they collected insights into the latest industry research and innovation to share on their return.

As recipients of the latest round of Dairy Australia’s Dairy Science Travel Grants, the four were recognised for their passion for dairy and work already undertaken in the sector.

Mikaela Baker grew up in Mansfield and studied a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at Charles Sturt University. After graduating, she went to work as a farmhand before landing her dream job as a farm productivity consultant at Total Result Ag Consulting in Beachport, South Australia. She is particularly interested in ruminant nutrition, calf and heifer rearing and dry cow management.

“There is so much happening in dairy science all around the world and I feel so honoured to be entrusted with bringing that back and putting it to work in our dairy industry.”

Discussion Groups power on with Industry Funding
DairySA supported Discussion Groups continue to build in strength with twelve active groups operating through the SA dairy regions.

Mt Torrens dairyfarmer Michael Kowald sees his local Discussion Group as a valuable opportunity for both networking and information sharing.

“The local Dairy Discussion Group allows me to get off farm to socialise with other farmers in my region and those further afield,” he said.

“The group enables us to speak to experts and gather information, provides a different perspective and updates me on new ideas,” he adds.

“It also gives me the chance to see what other farmers are implementing, which may lead me to changing my methods on farm and in business,”.

DairySA Chairperson Michael Connor agrees.

“The Discussion Group format gives farmers the opportunity to get together to share ideas, information and support. We always have positive feedback from tours, trials and workshops run through discussion groups as farmers take ownership of the content and format,” Michael said.

For over twenty years, DairySA has supported Dairy Discussion Groups with funding, resources and coordinators.

“The DairySA Discussion Group network is one of our best platforms for connecting farmers to industry resources and is an excellent example of farmer levies contributing directly to farm outcomes,” Michael said.

Discussion Group funding will continue into 2018–2019. The traditional arrangement of 50:50 funding from DairySA/Dairy Australia will be offered to all DDGs up to $3000 per group. Through the Tactics for Tight Times program Discussion Groups were fully funded and no fees were charged to farm businesses.

“As the funding for Tactics ends, DairySA and Dairy Australia will continue to support discussion groups on a dollar for dollar basis. This provides groups with up to $6000 for extension workshops, speakers, tours and coordination for group meetings,” said Michael.

For more information on how to apply for Discussion Group funding or how the program works, please contact one of the DairySA Team.
**Mycoplasma bovis in Australia**

The New Zealand Government announced in May 2018 that an attempt will be made to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis* from New Zealand.

Since this announcement, some farmers in Australia have been interested to learn about how *Mycoplasma bovis* is managed in this country.

Australia has been tracking *Mycoplasma bovis* since 2006, but it was first isolated from milk from Australian dairy cows in 1970. *Mycoplasma bovis* is found worldwide, including the US, UK, Ireland and most European countries. It is not a notifiable disease in Australia, and there are no trade restrictions for any of our markets. *Mycoplasma bovis* does not have any effects on meat or milk for human consumption.

A three year research project with the University of Sydney was commissioned by Dairy Australia in 2013 to find out more about the disease in Australia, which looked into the strain present in Australia, the modes of transmission and laboratory testing procedures.

The research found that there is only one strain of *Mycoplasma bovis* in Australia, which means it is likely that it was only introduced once into Australia before 2006 and not again since.

*Mycoplasma bovis* is found in all dairy areas of Australia, though only small numbers of farms have been affected. For affected herds, the disease caused by *Mycoplasma bovis* can have a significant financial impact on a business due to lost production, culling and the death of cows and calves.

The infection can be difficult to detect as heifers and cows may carry *Mycoplasma bovis* without showing any signs of infection. These carrier animals are an important source of infection whether they are introduced or home bred cows. *Mycoplasma bovis* infections also appear with a range of different symptoms on different farms, including calf pneumonia, head tilt, conjunctivitis, ill thrift, joint swellings, mastitis and even sudden deaths. Once the infection is established in a herd it is difficult to eradicate, as there is no effective vaccination or treatment, so farm biosecurity measures are vital to keep *Mycoplasma bovis* infections out.

**How do I keep it out?**

Biosecurity is the best defence against *Mycoplasma bovis*.

Possible sources of infection for a herd include:

- Introduced livestock (cows, calves and bulls)
- Equipment (particularly equipment that contacts the mucosal surfaces of stock e.g. AI guns)
- People (service providers, AI technicians, veterinarians)
- Biologics (semen, embryos).

*Mycoplasma bovis* does not live well in the environment, and most transmissions occur animal to animal. This means the most common source of a new infection on farm is from introduced livestock. Heat and dryness are the enemies of *Mycoplasma bovis*, so sterilisation and pasteurisation are also good control measures. The risk of spread from semen and embryos is generally considered low. Service providers and their equipment could be a risk of carrying *Mycoplasma bovis* from farm to farm, depending on their contact with infected farms and how well they follow sound biosecurity practices. It is reasonable and a good idea for farmers to discuss their biosecurity protocols with service providers to manage this risk.

**Want to know more?**

Head to the Dairy Australia website [www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

Information sources include:


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