

ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR THE DAIRY SECTOR

To guide state and federal governments in establishing essential services lists, Dairy Australia has developed this **list of associated services and industries which dairy farmers rely upon** to produce safe food, to ensure the welfare of their cattle and ensure business continuity. Also in this document, is a similar list of **associated services and industries which milk processors rely upon** in their role in transporting, processing, packaging and delivering safe dairy products.

These lists have been contributed to by dairy farmers and milk processors through Australian Dairy Farmers, State Dairy Farmer Organisations, Australian Dairy Products Federation and the regional farmer boards of Dairy Australia.

The lists are as comprehensive as possible in developing in a short time frame, though is evolving as additional information is provided. This list is current as of 3 pm 26/03/20.

FOR DAIRY FARMS – RANKINGS

On-farm essential services

Ranked as per critical for business and animal welfare. Please note – this is guide to what is deemed as essential services, and not a definitive list.

High – Need continued access

Medium – May have short breaks (7-10 days) from access, but would need to return access to prevent impact on ongoing productivity and animal welfare

Low – may have longer breaks in face to face access

Service	Rank	Frequency of visit	Description	Alternative	Possible ramifications
Milk processors/ tanker access	High	2 x day → every 2 days	Pick up of milk via milk tanker, operated by tanker driver. Mostly employed by milk processor, some by third-party transporters Contact milk vat and surrounds	Dumping of milk. Environmental issues if done for more than 2 milkings	Loss of milk supply and important food source for population Welfare implications for cattle not milked Environmental issues of dumped milk
Veterinary services	High	Time critical when required	Vital for treatment of sick or injured animals Preventative treatment/access to medications	Euthanasia of cattle Animals untreated for minor illnesses (mastitis)	Poor welfare outcomes for animals, and associated community trust issues
Mechanical support: Milking machine technicians/ refrigeration technicians/ plumbers/ electricians/ mechanics	High	Time critical when required	Specialised machine technicians required to fix plant breakdown	Milking unable to occur or occurs to sub-optimum standards	Low risk but potentially large ramifications → see milk tanker ramifications

Fuel delivery	High	Weekly – Monthly	Most farms have fuel tanks on farm for generators, tractors, pumps, other machinery	Do not use the machinery	Some dairies in more remote regions are run from generators - no fuel would prevent cows from being milked. Other machinery is required for feeding cattle and other essential on-farm tasks, especially if contractor access is limited
Stockfeed supplier – Grain merchant, stockfeed mills, other farmers selling fodder	High	Weekly – Monthly	Delivery of grain, fodder, calf milk powder to farm Most farms (90%+) require external stockfeed supplies to maintain production	Rely on grass/stored feed only	Large drop in production as grass is low-density feed Use of stored feed supplied required for future, leading to longer-term issues Potential welfare implications (metabolic disease, starvation etc)
Essential consumables: Chemical + milking equipment sales/delivery Access to rural supplier	High	Weekly – Monthly	Cleaning and sanitising chemicals for vats and milking plant - essential for food safety Gloves, teat dip, other personal protection equipment – required for hygienic milking and preventing the spread of mastitis	Reduce or dilute chemicals to make stretch Wash with water only	Implications for food safety of milk produced welfare implications – reduced or improper use of teat dip can lead to increased rates of mastitis. Ineffectual plant cleaning will also lead to the spread of mastitis
AI Technicians, access to genetic/semen supplies	High	Daily in joining periods	Artificial insemination is used by 87% of farms, breeding most of the replacement cows Some farmers are trained, but others rely on external services AI techs provide skilled services, and may also transport semen to the farm 18h period to inseminate cow once she comes on heat. If missed, will only return on heat in 3 weeks	Use herd bulls if available Farmer AI if have equipment and trained	Missing joining will lead to late calving cows, which may lead to an increase cows being induced. Farms match calving period to peak feed availability. Missing this will have long term production impacts. Access to enough herd bulls to complete entire herd will be limited (3 bulls per 100 cows required) Herd bulls limit the genetic gain of the herd, and are a safety risk to staff

					Inexperienced farmer AI may lead to low pregnancy rate, and a potential risk of increased request for routine calving induction
Farm contractors – Seeding/ silage/ hay/ effluent spraying/ fencing/ fertiliser	High	Time critical when required	Provide contracting services for essential tasks on farm often requiring specialised equipment	Delay task – which may lead to missing short window for seeding/harvesting/etc	Severe longer-term production loss, reduced or inability to preserve stockfeed. Low risk activities as limited need for contractor to exit the vehicle, except for opening gates Fire affected regions may still be refencing, reseeding property
Knackery services	Med	Varies as needed	Remove carcasses of animals unsuitable for abattoir Often provide euthanasia services for farmers unable or unwilling to do so themselves (est. 16% nationally, 20% in Vic)	Carcasses disposed of on farm	Environmental issues with disposal of stock and water table Managed at a council level Issue for farms euthanasing calves at birth (calf bins supplied by knackery) Potential for euthanasia to be delayed or not performed where required – serious welfare implications. Potential for dangerous levels of overstocking if bobby calves retained in numbers beyond farm’s rearing capacity
Direct consign animals to abattoir – Bobby calves	Med	Twice weekly → as needed	Many farms (especially in more intensive dairy regions) do not have the infrastructure capacity to house all calves born on farm, relying on regular pick up of 5-day old bobby calves. Calves are picked up from designated pens and loaded onto trailers or trucks by truck driver/stockperson	Growing out/holding back calves until service resumes Euthanasia on farm	Potential for dangerous levels of overstocking if bobby calves retained in numbers beyond farm’s rearing capacity Ethical/community trust issue Emotional/mental health risk for some farmers

					Environmental issues with disposal of stock and water table
Direct consign animals to abattoir – Adult animals	Med	As needed	<p>Cull cows may have health issues which are still fit to transport to abattoir but may deteriorate if not sent or treated (withholds would then need to be applied).</p> <p>Stocking rates/feed supply may also be an issue if prolonged interruption to services</p>	<p>Prolonged treatment/keeping animals on farm/Euthanasia</p> <p>(poor cases animals may not be treated and left in poor welfare state)</p>	<p>Potential for dangerous levels of overstocking if cull cows are retained once replacement stock come into milk</p> <p>Animals may not be treated for illness/injury</p> <p>Ethical/community trust issue</p> <p>Environmental issues with disposal of stock and water table</p>
Stock transporter	Med		<p>Stock transporters move cattle from farm to farm or to stockyards. Farmers rely on transporters to move animals from outblocks/agistment back to main farm, or to move dry or young stock off farm</p> <p>Transporters may also transport herd bulls to farm</p>	Animals remain in location	<p>Potential welfare implications (metabolic disease, starvation etc) of overgrazing and reduced access to feed</p> <p>Access to herd bulls – and joining at the correct time – may be limited</p>
Non-veterinary disbudding contractors	Med	limited time frame when required	<p>Provide skilled contracting services to cauterise horn buds to prevent horns from growing</p> <p>Time sensitive as must be performed under 2 months of age</p> <p>Service also provided by veterinarians but would not have enough capacity to cover all dairy farms</p>	<p>Remove horns as older animals</p> <p>Leave horns</p>	<p>Removing horns from older animals is a welfare concern, as it is significantly more invasive and painful.</p> <p>Leaving horns on the animals is a health and safety concern for staff and other animals.</p>
Non-veterinary animal husbandry services – pregnancy	Med	As required	Provide skilled contracting services to perform animal husbandry tasks	Use veterinary services, which may not be available in that region, and vets may only be performing emergency tasks	Missing time brackets for essential husbandry tasks

testing, hoof trimming					Reduced welfare if hoof trimming and lameness mitigation not able to be performed
Technical Support Agronomists	Med		Provide technical support to farmers, often requiring physically looking at part of the farm Should be able to physically separate from other staff on farm	Online/phone communication	Challenges will arise for more technical issues that arise that are hard to understand remotely. This may lead to ongoing plant pest and weed issues
Technical Support Milk processor field officers/ Nutritionists/ stock agents/ extension officers	Low		Provide technical support to farmers, often requiring physically looking at part of the farm/animals.	Online/phone communication	Challenges will arise for more technical issues that arise that are hard to understand remotely. This may lead to ongoing milk quality, nutritional, and pest issues.
Farm business consultants/ bank staff/ rural financial counsellors / health and wellbeing counsellors Accountants/ bookkeepers	Low	Varies	Provide technical support to farmers, requiring access to paperwork/office	Online/phone communication May need paperwork sent/dropped	Production and decision making support may be less detailed/tailored Tax and reporting requirements may be delayed
Herd testing	Low	Monthly – quarterly (51% farms herd test)	Test milk to assess quality and production from individual cows to assist in treatment and production decisions	Either not occur, or the equipment could be dropped off and picked up later	Production information and culling decisions are less precise

Farmers can be provided the equipment, or a technician assists on farm

Off-farm essential services

Service	Rank	Frequency of requirement	Description	Alternative	Possible ramifications
Milk processor	High	daily	Process milk post-delivery from farm	Dumping of milk. Environmental issues if done for more than 2 milkings	Loss of milk supply and important food source for population Welfare implications for cattle not milked Environmental issues of dumped milk
Abattoir	High	Weekly in calving periods	Process animals (bobby calves, cull cows and dairy beef)		
Rural resellers	High	Weekly – monthly	Provide essential equipment and supplies, including cleaning chemicals for the dairy, calf milk powder, dog food, some grain supplies (eg. for calf grain)		
Grain/stockfeed supplier	High	Weekly – monthly	Store, mill, blend or process grain for animal feed Most farms (90%+) require external stockfeed supplies to maintain production		
Semen/Genetics suppliers	High	Joining periods	Breed, collect and store, or import and store genetics Supply genetics/semen through to famers and techs to artificially inseminate cows		See “AI Technicians”

Liquid nitrogen supply	High	Joining periods	Required for storing semen		See "AI Technicians"
Rural telecommunications networks (4G, NBN)	High	Constant	Telecommunications networks required for accessing information, contacting staff and for farmers to communicate expectations for on-farm biosecurity and human health		Loss of access to information will lead to more farmers visiting others to seek information. Spread of disease on farm will stop food supply and lead to potential animal welfare implications.
Seed suppliers	High		Access to seed is important for maintaining feed supply for cattle, especially in regions using multiple crop rotations eg. maize, summer crops, annual ryegrass, etc. Regeneration of permanent species (ryegrass, Lucerne)	n/a	
Calf scales/saleyards	Med		Many farms (especially in more intensive dairy regions) do not have the infrastructure capacity to house all calves born on farm, relying on regular sale of calves through calf scales or sale yards	Growing out/holding back calves until service resumes Euthanasia on farm	Potential for dangerous levels of overstocking if bobby calves retained in numbers beyond farm's rearing capacity Ethical/community trust issue Emotional/mental health risk for some farmers Environmental issues with disposal of stock and water table

For milk processors – rankings

26/03/2020

Processor Site essential services

Ranked as per critical for business, product development and distribution. Please note – this is guide to what is deemed as essential services, and not a definitive list.

High – Need continued access

Medium – May have short breaks (7-10 days) from access, but would need to return access to prevent impact on ongoing productivity and animal welfare

Low – may have longer breaks in face to face access

Service	Rank	Frequency of visit	Description	Alternative	Possible ramifications
Milk Freight	High	Continuous	Delivery of fresh milk off farm to the factory. This includes services (mechanical, testing) and fuel	Milk dumped on farm.	Disastrous environmental and economic implications.
Finished Goods Freight	High	Daily	Collection of finished goods for distribution to market and external warehouses	None	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unable to process milk 2. Product dumping/ environmental impact. 3. Economic – no product clearance / storage full
Stock food Freight	High	Daily	Third party cartage of by-products as liquid stock food to farmers/farms.	Use internal fleet	Unable to process milk
Couriers – Sample Collection	High	Daily	Samples are collected from processors and taken to laboratories within 12 hours of milk collection for analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No sample testing 2. Set up internal laboratories 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unsafe food products 2. Cost and time (6 -10 weeks) to set up and train people

Couriers – General Parcels	High	Daily	Documents and small parcels for continuity of operations and supply chains	Reduce frequency	Delayed supply chain and product availability
Hard Waste Collection	High	Weekly or more	Rubbish collections to landfill	Stockpile bins until they reach capacity	Hygiene risk of uncollected waste
Organic Waste Collection	High	Weekly or more	Dairy sludges associated with WWTP.	Dump to TW or lagoon systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unable to process milk. 2. Licence breach and odours.
Packaging	High	Daily/weekly	Delivery of product packaging elements - including labels, closures, secondary packaging etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stockpile packaging needs for next six months. 2. Make product to suit available packaging. 3. Stop production & dump milk 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High upfront costs, reduced warehouse storage and reduced packaging flexibility. 2. Grow inventories of products that market does not have a home for. De-valuing of product mix. 3. Disastrous environmental and economic implications.
Ingredient Freight	High	Weekly	Delivery of ingredients required for making food products – including cream, dairy powders, lactose etc from other dairy companies.	Make food stuffs that do not meet market requirements	Grow inventories of products that market does not have a home for. De-valuing of product mix.
Ingredients Suppliers	High	Daily/Weekly	Suppliers of ingredients (salt, sugars, macro ingredients)	None	Unable to process milk and/or deliver customer orders
Technicians & Service Contractors	High	Multi Weekly	Maintain continuity of operations (includes hydraulic, cooling towers, boiler chemical testing/monitoring, mechanical maintenance, tyre fitting/repair)	Plant failure & milk losses	Environmental and product supply

Chemical & detergents Deliveries	High	Weekly	Chemicals and detergents to clean plants at required 24-hour intervals or more frequent	Build stockpiles of packaged chemicals, still require same frequency of bulk deliveries	Safe chemical storage and Dangerous Goods Food Safety pre-requisite
Laundry services	High	Daily	Need clean uniforms every day to operate	Establish means of cleaning uniforms onsite	Space availability onsite will likely limit this option and require time and investment to build and implement uniform cleaning facilities. No uniform cleaning will result in unacceptable food safety risk and halt of production.
PPE supply	High	Weekly	Cannot operate without relevant PPE (hair nets, overalls, earplugs, new uniforms)	None	Unacceptable food and personal safety risks. Stop in production
Contract cleaners	High	Daily	Food safety	Train staff in commercial cleaning practices	1. Unsafe food products Cost and time (6 -10 weeks) to set up and train people
Casual labour hire	High	Daily	Labour Hire Services for Casuals employees	Use only existing part/full-time contracted personnel to fulfill all site labour needs	1. Burn out of staff through excessive overtime. 2. Increased COVID-19 transmission risk through shift overlap. 3. Skilled staff diverted to unskilled tasks. 4. Inefficient production. 5. Increased food and personal safety risk through staff diversion and exhaustion.

Pest Control	High	Weekly	Pest control specialists supply & handle poisons and assess hundreds of bait stations	Bring in-house and train	Cannot delay on removing/resolving, OH&S issues and Pest outbreak if not addressed
Gas Supply	High	Weekly	Inert gas supply for welding and/or modified atmosphere packaging. Combustible gas supply	None	Unable to complete maintenance tasks or correctly package goods. Stop production and unable to process milk
Yard Maintenance (Gardeners)	Med	Weekly	For pest control	Bring in house & Train people	People still required to do the service
Regulators	Low	Monthly/half-yearly	Regulatory bodies accessing site to ensure compliance (i.e. state and federal food safety auditors, EPA compliance officers)	None	Risk that operations drift outside of compliance with respect to food safety and/or environmental obligations.
Specialists & Consultants	Low	Infrequent but important if needed	Trouble shooting difficult situations	Internal knowledge base	Sub optimal performance
Recycling Collection	Low	Weekly can delay	Recycling collection	Stockpile	OK until not enough space

Processor Off-Site

Service	Rank	Frequency of requirement	Description	Alternative	Possible ramifications
Laboratories – Milk & finished products	High	Daily	Test dairy products for safe release to market	None	Unsafe food stuffs for consumption

Laboratories – Environmental Testing	High	Daily	Test water (GW, SW, raw water), wastewater, soil, etc for environmental quality purposes.	None	EPA regulatory non-compliance
Stockfood Receivers	High	Daily or weekly	Receive stock food/by-product materials from sites	Dump to lagoon or TW	1. Unable to process milk 2. Licence breach and odour
External Warehouse facilities	High	Daily	Off site warehousing for storage of products often run by third parties	Dump milk	Disastrous environmental and economic implications.
Third Party supply chain to port	High	Daily	Move products form distribution centre to the market domestic and export	Build inventory	Inventory grows to unmanageable levels and cease of cash flow
Port	High	Daily	Port operation essential	Build inventory	Inventory grows to unmanageable levels and cease of cash flow
Spare Parts Suppliers	High	As required	Maintenance hungry assets must have available parts	Run plants to failure or buy massive stock of parts	Plant failure
Liquid waste	High	As required	Factories cannot operate without supporting services to dispose of waste from washing of plant and equipment.	Unable to make products fit for human consumption	Hygiene failure EPA non-compliance
Personal hygiene	High	As required	Supply of toilet paper, sanitisers, paper towel, tissue (across the board)	Meeting hygiene and safety standards.	Hygiene and safety risk Minimise COVID – 19 spread
Chemical & Detergent Supply Companies	Med	As required	Chemical delivery to site as per schedules	Dump milk	Plants cannot operate without cleaning chemicals.

Significant environmental
and economic
implications.