

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION ISSUE #2

The South Australian dairy industry including DairySA, PIRSA, SADA and milk processors, and nationally Dairy Australia and ADF, are actively rolling out strategies to assist farmers manage the current dry season.

A shortage of home grown fodder in some areas, the high cost of bought in feeds, and serious water issues for lower River Murray and Lakes areas, is having a range of impacts on dairy farms across the state. Industry recognises that we need multiple strategies to address this. Here's a quick summary of some of the strategies to date and what's coming up in the near future.

If you are looking for a specific service or strategy that isn't listed here, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss it.

1. Dairy Updates on the radio

A short radio bulletin ("Dairy Update") is on air in South Australia week days, just before the 7:00am news bulletin. These bulletins cover a range of topics including technical issues, market developments (e.g. grain pricing & availability), support & assistance available, and regional activities. Feedback on the relevance, topics, timing etc. is welcomed. *Please provide your feedback to DairySA dairysa@border.net.com.au or 8766 0127.*

2. Drought Management Information.

An information sheet was circulated to all SA farmers with information on planning, contacts and resources. *Contact DairySA for a copy of the information.*

3. Drought Hotline

Access drought information and referrals to a wide range of services, to help with managing the drought. *Phone 180 2020*

4. Taking Stock

The Taking Stock Program is still being delivered across SA. It may be a good time to "take stock" of where your business is at now to help with your planning. It can be repeated so if you have done it before, consider doing it again. *Contact your field officer or Kirstie Murphy (08) 8536-3958*

5. SAFF fodder, agistment and seed register for all SA farmers

The register, which can be accessed through the toll free number **1800 753 277**, comes in response to an urgent need for farmers to obtain seed / fodder requirements for next year. The register is intended to be a convenient way of bringing buyers and sellers together, but negotiations beyond that would be done by the individual parties. The register is not about farmers getting cheap feed or seed, but a mechanism for matching demand with supply; buyers with sellers.

6. Current Grain Market Situation.

Following a request from the dairy industry and other domestic grain users, the Federal Government has agreed to undertake a stock-take of grain stock in Australia. The results will include improved information on supply and enable grain users to make informed choices on the purchasing of grain. Industry groups are helping to fund the survey. Initial results should be available by the end of November 2006.

7. South Australia Grain & Hay Report

As part of the national Dairy Industry Drought Response, Dairy Australia now has available a weekly grain and hay report. It provides an independent and timely assessment of grain and hay markets for dairying regions across the nation.

The reports can be accessed directly from the South Australian Dairy Industry website from next week (www.dairyindustrysa.com.au) or the Dairy Australia website (http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/index.php?option=com_remository&func=fileinfo&id=453).

A free email subscription service will also be set up so you can be emailed directly each week, as the report becomes available. To subscribe, email dairysa@bordernet.com.au with the subject line “subscribe SA grain and hay report”. Please promote this service to people in the dairy industry that may find it a useful tool.

8. Seeking help is a sign of strength!

There are a variety of services available including some good fact sheets from Centrelink and Beyond Blue to help deal how people may be feeling during this difficult time. You might want to read the Beyond Blue fact sheet “How can you help someone with depression” because sometimes it’s important we look after ourselves, our friends and community during this time. It gives some practical ways to help and how to approach difficult conversations. There are also a wide variety of services for available to access. Go to www.beyondblue.org.au or contact DairySA for a copy of these fact sheets.

9. Farm Walk

a. River – a farm walk looking at strategies to manage irrigated pastures with reduced water allocations as well as other drought strategies will be held near Murray Bridge on **Thursday 14th December**. Irrigation, pasture and dairy business specialists will be presenting along with other service providers in attendance to discussions in the breaks. A BBQ will follow for socialising and talking with service providers. This is a technical production session with the focus on irrigated pasture management and strategies to help manage the drought. A flier will be sent to all river dairy farmers with details.

b. Other regions – farm walks can be organised for other regions as well with key topics dictated by farmer need in the region. If you’d like a farm walk and BBQ organised in your area, please *contact Verity at DairySA to discuss on 8766 0127*.

10. Drought Regional Coordination for South Australia

Dairy Australia and DairySA are collaborating to fund regional drought coordination for extension and communication in SA. This will be coordinated through DairySA and will provide relevant and up to date information to SA’s dairy farmers. If you have a specific need or idea for technical or support information in relation to the drought or want to discuss issues affecting your farm, *please contact DairySA on 8766 0127*.

11. Exceptional Circumstances Applications

SADA with support from PIRSA is facilitating a range of strategies to incorporate dairy businesses into appropriate regional submissions in the next few weeks and months. SADA has already provided funds for dairy consultants Steve Scown and Sam Acheson to prepare background information and preliminary farm financial data to support this process. *Contact Ken Lyons (08) 8293-2399*.