

ANIMAL CARE ON AUSTRALIAN DAIRY FARMS

RESULTS OF THE DAIRY AUSTRALIA
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY SURVEY 2019



DAIRY ANIMAL WELFARE AT A GLANCE

96%
farmers not docking tails
91% in 2016



AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

77%
farmers have a copy
47% in 2016



BIOSECURITY

58%
farmers have a written plan*



29%
farms using beef genetics to increase percentage of calves reared for dairy beef*

26%
farmers using some polled genetics



DISBUDDING CALVES

72% do so at the correct age**

77% of those provide pain relief



CALVES BORN ON FARM

37% retained as heifer replacements

38% sold as bobby calves

16% become dairy beef

9% stillborn, died or euthanased

96%
farmers have a lameness plan

96%
farmers have cooling infrastructure
91% in 2016



INTRODUCTION

The Dairy Australia Animal Husbandry Survey (AHS) has been regularly conducted since 2005 to track on-farm practices and to provide insights into decision-making on animal health, welfare, fertility and genetics over time.

In November 2019, 500 dairy farmers were interviewed from all dairying regions of Australia (see Appendix for full details of statistically valid survey methodology).

Tracking on-farm animal husbandry practices is critical information for improving farm performance, maintaining community trust and providing transparent assurance against the Australian Dairy Industry Sustainability Framework (ADISF). The latest survey indicates improved performance trends in animal husbandry practices, including animal welfare, across the industry. Industry is currently reviewing the results to determine priorities for what additional actions are needed.

The results of the 2019 Animal Husbandry Survey have been supplemented by the results of additional animal husbandry questions asked in the National Dairy Farmer Survey (NDFS), conducted in February 2020.

The 2020 NDFS was conducted with the same methodology, but with a sample size of 800 farmers. The results from the NDFS included in this document relate to antibiotic use and organic status.

Sector-wide targets and policies

The Australian dairy sector has three main mechanisms for a) setting industry policies and animal health and welfare sustainability targets, b) investing in research, development and extension to achieve on-farm practice change, and c) demonstrating progress. Key committees along with their purpose are detailed in Table 1.

The AHS provides the data required to measure progress, refocus and reprioritise investment and efforts to continue to make improvements aligned with changing community expectations.

The Australian Dairy Farmer's Animal Health and Welfare Policy Advisory Group policies (see Appendix) are developed into targets in the ADISF. Progress against these targets is published annually. Current goals and targets are detailed in Table 2, overleaf.

Table 1 Decision making groups and committees for dairy animal health and welfare in Australia

Group	Purpose
Australian Dairy Farmers Animal Health and Welfare Policy Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops animal health and welfare policies for the sector and prioritises focus areas for practice change• Comprises representative producer membership from each State Dairy Farmer Organisation• Makes recommendations on policy to the peak body Australian Dairy Farmers National Council
Dairy Moving Forward Animal Husbandry Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes the animal health and welfare priorities set by ADF and DA to the Research and Development (R&E) sector• Comprises skills-based membership including welfare researchers, Dairy Australia animal health and welfare experts, Dairy NZ experts, RSPCA, dairy farmers, and a member of the peak body Australian Dairy Farmers
Australian Dairy Industry Sustainability Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sets out dairy sector commitments to sustainability and publicly reports annually against targets.• Owned by the Australian Dairy Industry Council (comprising farmer and processor peak bodies)



How we support practice change

Dairy Australia is the dairy industry owned national service organisation. It invests in RD&E on behalf of dairy farmers to improve the profitability and viability of dairy farms, which includes helping farmers adapt to changing community and government expectations.

As described in Table 1, the Dairy Moving Forward Animal Husbandry committee develops, oversees and guides the coordination of research, development and extension to ensure outcomes on the priorities set by ADF and ADIC.

Extension

The Dairy Australia extension network covers all dairying regions of Australia, providing resources, training and support to all dairy farmers on productivity and compliance topics. The eight regional offices, called Regional Development Programs, operate with their own regional manager and farmer-led boards to direct extension efforts to the national, regional and local needs. These are detailed in the appendix. Dairy Australia provides resources, trained local presenters and pre-developed programs to enable consistent delivery of important animal welfare and health workshops throughout the country. Some of the producer-focused animal health and welfare extension programs are detailed in Table 3.

In addition to the producer and farm worker programs, Dairy Australia provides training for advisors working with farmers, which ensures that best-practice messages are reaching producers who do not engage with the workshops and other events provided through their local regional team.

Table 2 The Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework

Goal 7 Provide best care for all animals for whole of life

Target 7.1 100% ongoing compliance with legislated animal welfare standards

- % of farmers who have a copy of the *AHW Standards and Guidelines*
- % of farmers agreeing they comply with animal welfare standards

Target 7.2 All of industry adopting relevant recommended industry practices for animal care

- No tail docking
- No routine use of calving induction
- All calves managed appropriately
 - sale calves sold at a minimum of 5 days old
 - sale calves fed within 6 hours of transport
- All calves disbudded
 - prior to two months of age
 - with pain relief
- All farmers implementing a lameness strategy
- All farmers where relevant have cooling facilities
- All farmers have a documented biosecurity plan

Target 7.3 90% of consumers believe dairy farmers do a good job caring for animals

Target 7.4 Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS). The dairy industry uses antibiotics responsibly – as little as possible, as much as necessary – to protect the health and welfare of our animals

- All dairy farmers access antibiotics from a registered vet
- All dairy farmers use antibiotics responsibly under veterinary direction
- Antibiotics of high importance to human Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in Australia are only used to treat dairy livestock in exceptional circumstances where no other alternative exists



Table 3 Animal Health and Welfare extension programs

Producer-focused extension programs	Content
InCharge Fertility	Five-day workshop working through the many areas which may be limiting the fertility of a herd, and ways to improve
Rearing Healthy Calves	One-day workshop focusing on the care of calves, including colostrum management, hygienic environment management, residue management in sale calves and strategies for improved growth and disease prevention
Euthanasia of Livestock	One-day course (can be accredited) training participants on humane methods of euthanasing adult cattle and calves, confirming death and maintaining and safely handling a captive bolt device
Countdown Cups On Cups Off	One-and-a-half-day course (can be accredited) training participants on strategies to prevent mastitis and improve milk quality. Includes information on appropriate use of antibiotics
Heifers on Target	Half-day workshop exploring benefits of improved heifer growth, and strategies on how this may be achieved
Down Cow workshops	Half-day workshop working through appropriate care practices for cows unable to stand
Cool Cows workshops	One-day workshop looking at strategies for mitigating the impacts of heat stress on cattle
Healthy Hooves workshops	One-day workshop on preventing and treating lameness

Table 4 Animal Health and Welfare advisor extension programs

Advisor-focused extension programs	Content
Countdown MQ	10-month intensive program focusing on mastitis prevention and milk quality improvements. Alongside technical information on mastitis, milk quality, preventative health and antibiotic stewardship, much of the training centres on practice-change and communication strategies. Open to all farm advisors including milk processor field services staff and veterinarians
ReproRight	10-month professional development program for dairy reproduction advisors to improve their ability to provide intensive problem-solving and whole herd reproductive management services to dairy farmers



RESULTS

Herd

Calving system

The calving system reflects the seasonal conditions and milk demand for a particular location. There are three main systems: seasonal (one calving per year), split or batch (calving occurring in two or more batches), or year-round (calving spread out throughout the year).

Farm businesses with year-round or split/batch calving systems tend towards supplying fresh milk markets, which require a constant quantity of milk throughout the year. Subtropical Dairy (93%) and NSW (74%), are dominated by year-round calving. Western Australia and South Australia are predominately split/batch systems (50%, 43%), with high proportions of year-round calving as well.

Regions less reliant on fresh-milk markets are more likely to match their calving patterns to the grass-growing seasons to ensure peak grass availability occurs at the same time as peak lactation of the herd. Tasmanian farmers are most likely to calve-down seasonally (70%), followed by western Victoria (54%) and Gippsland (53%).

Standards and guidelines

Industry policy All farmers have a copy of the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle*

Nationally, 77% of dairy producers report having a copy of the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle* in their possession. This is significantly improved from 2016 (47%). The standards and guidelines are important as they set out the minimum welfare requirements for dairy animals since endorsement in 2012 by all state and territory governments and the Australian dairy farmers. Many milk processors now require producers to hold a copy to meet their quality assurance requirements.

More information on the standards and guidelines at animalwelfarestandards.net.au/cattle.

Figure 1 Calving system by dairy region

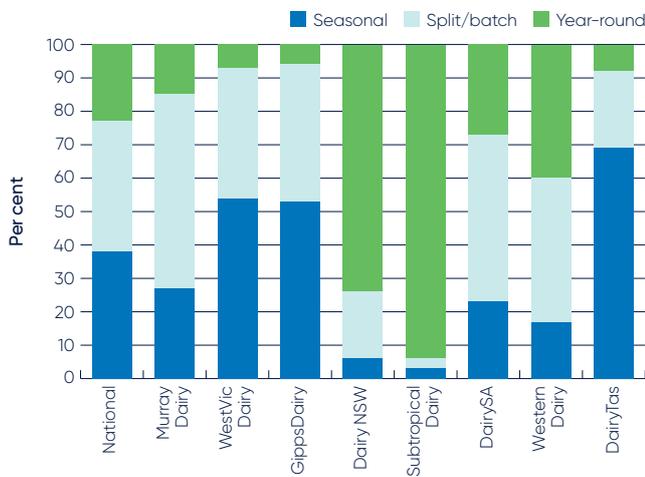


Figure 2 Farmers owning a copy of the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle*





Biosecurity planning and practices

Industry policy All farmers have a written biosecurity plan

In the 2019 survey, producers were asked for the first time if they have a written biosecurity plan for their farms. Nationally, 58% of farmers reported having a plan, with Queensland and Western Australian farmers being the most compliant. This regional difference may be due to state legislation related to biosecurity plans supported by farm extension programs.

As the dairy industry is a signatory to the national Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), all dairy farms are required to have a written biosecurity plan. More work is required to help farmers meet their requirements in all southern states.

While the survey highlights room for improvement regarding written farm-level biosecurity plans, most farmers who buy in stock (note: 46% of farms run 'closed herds') complete some biosecurity measures (detailed in Figure 4) to reduce the risk of novel diseases spreading in their herd.

Tail docking

Industry policy Tail docking must not occur

Tail docking is no longer an accepted practice on Australian dairy farms and the sector has been working successfully to phase it out. Only 4% of farmers surveyed in 2019 are still performing this procedure, down from 9% in 2016 and 18% in 2012.

Farmers who tail dock state that docking is performed for the convenience of the farmer to avoid having soiled tails close to their face while milking, however it is a painful procedure. It prevents the cow from swishing away flies, and is easily replaced by annual trimming of the cow's tail hair.

Results suggest that it is in wetter, muddier areas that the practice still occurs, with a small percentage of farmers in western Victoria, Gippsland and Tasmania still docking tails.

Figure 3 Farmers with written biosecurity plan

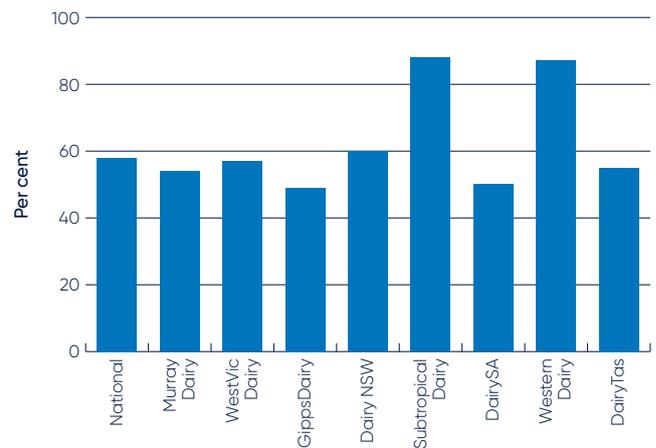


Figure 4 Biosecurity practices for introducing stock

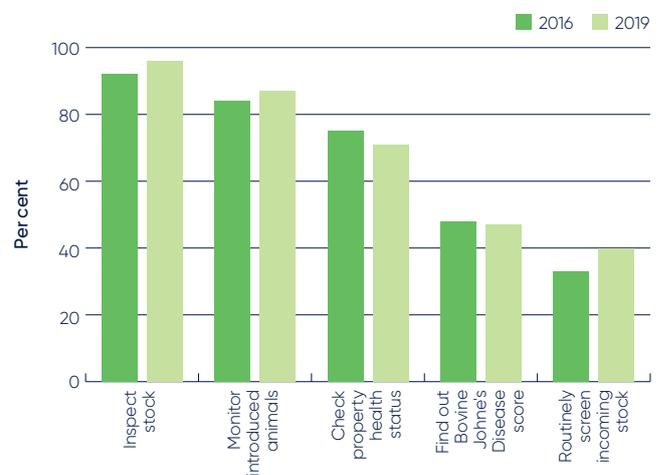
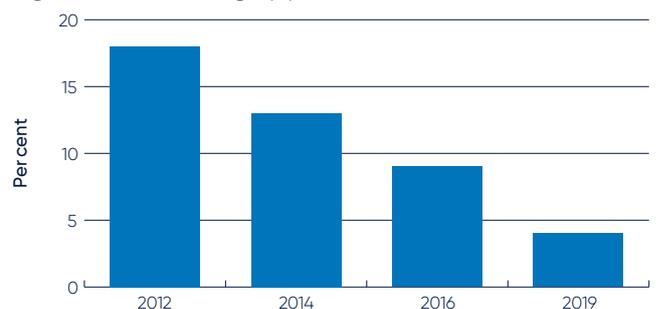


Figure 5 Tail docking by year



Routine calving induction

Industry policy No use of routine calving induction with a complete phase out by 1 January 2022

In 2015, the Australian dairy industry committed to phasing out routine induction of calving for production purposes. A phase-out period was agreed, setting year-on-year within herd targets for reducing routine induction limits, recognising that changes to reproduction management are complex and can take a number of seasons to achieve. More information about the phase out is found at dairyaustralia.com.au/calvinginduction.

In 2019, 9% of farms used routine calving induction. While not a significant reduction in the use of this practice from 2016 (10%), there has been a reduction of the average percentage of the herd induced, from 9% in 2016 to 5% in 2019. This is in line with industry set targets, with the 2016 limit set to 15% of the herd, and 2019 8% of the herd. While more work is required to assist farmers to reach the complete phase-out in 2022, farmers have shown a willingness to change their practices.

Calf management

Industry policy All calves should be managed appropriately

Calf pathways

The percentage of calves destined to be reared as herd replacements, to be raised as beef or veal, processed at a young age as bobby calves (5–30 days old), or euthanased on farm due to the lack of options (no bobby calf market or no demand for dairy beef or veal) varies from region to region.

Most regions raise 32–50% of their female calves to enter the herd or to sell as older heifers. Some farmers have access to beef or veal markets, either raising the calves themselves or selling to specialist beef growers to do so. WA has the most reliable access to these markets nationally, with 42% of calves raised for beef. Recent investigation by Dairy Australia has identified that barriers for other regions to do the same include land price, calving pattern (lots of calves at once in seasonal calving herds can flood and devalue the market, affecting return on investment), infrastructure, and appropriate abattoir capacity and processing plant design.

Improving the value of non-replacement calves, and therefore reducing the number of calves processed or euthanased at a young age is priority for the dairy industry.

Farms are also using beef bulls and semen, in combination with dairy breeds, to breed more valuable calves for beef production. 23% of farms use some beef semen, and 29% of farms use some beef bulls nationally, and this practice is more common in smaller farms (21% AI, 43% bulls), and farms in WA (30% AI, 43% bulls) and Tasmania (48% AI, 53% bulls).

Figure 6 Routine calving induction by year

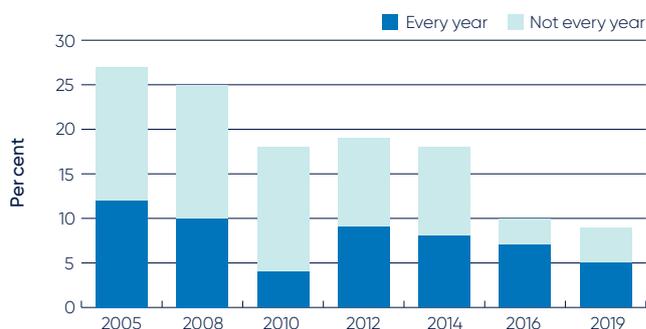


Figure 7 Calf pathways by region

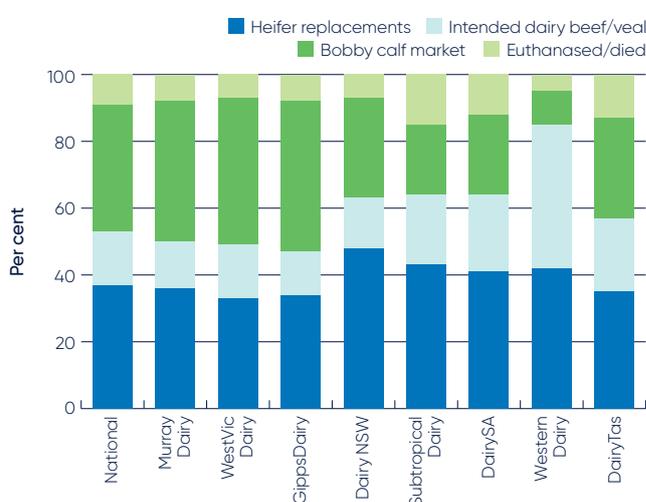
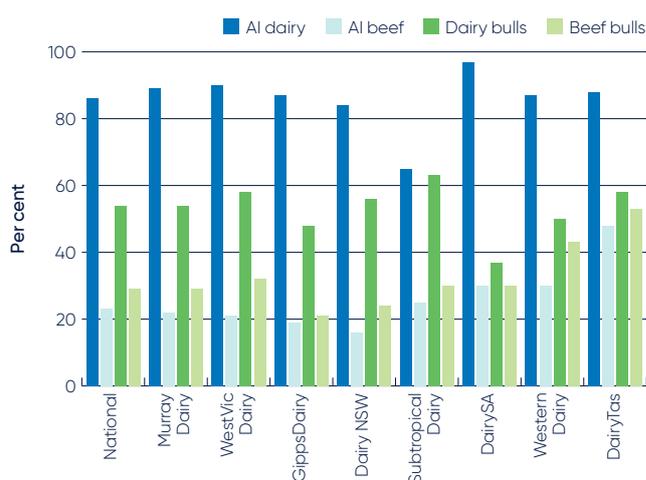


Figure 8 Breed of sire



Age of removal from dam

Nationally, 68% of calves are removed from their dams within 24 hours and 90% of calves are removed within 48 hours. Queensland is the notable exception to the national figures, where 40% of calves remain with their dams for longer than 48 hours (in fact those calves spend an average of 10 days with their dam prior to separation).

The impetus to remove calves due to a year-round calving pattern and to prevent disease transmission in Queensland is lower than elsewhere as the state is thought to have a lower prevalence of Johne's disease.

Colostrum management

All calves should be provided colostrum soon after birth, ideally within the first 12 hours of life. There is considerable variation between cows to the volume and quality (concentration of immunoglobulin) of colostrum produced, as well as the maternal instinct of the cow. Without intervention, many calves will not receive sufficient colostrum which impacts on their life-long health and production.

Most producers (74%) are ensuring that calves receive additional colostrum, though there is room for improvement in the management of colostrum in herds that calve year-round.

Euthanasia of calves

Industry policy 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, and euthanasia by blunt force trauma should not occur on Australian dairy farms except in emergency situations

The industry policy – that euthanasia of calves by blunt force trauma should not be used – was agreed in 2019. Ongoing efforts to improve euthanasia practices and upskill farmer and farm workers to ensure a quick and painless death when necessary include the Euthanase Livestock workshops which have been delivered in all dairy regions. However, there has only been a small increase in captive bolt use (11% in 2016 to 16% in 2019 of farms which euthanase calves), and no change in rates of blunt force trauma. This is a concern for the industry and will reassess efforts to stop this practice.

Figure 9 Age of calf removal by dairy region

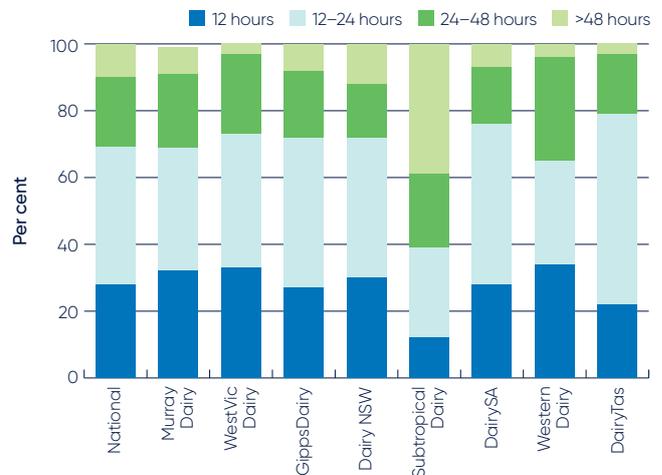


Figure 10 Colostrum management by calving pattern

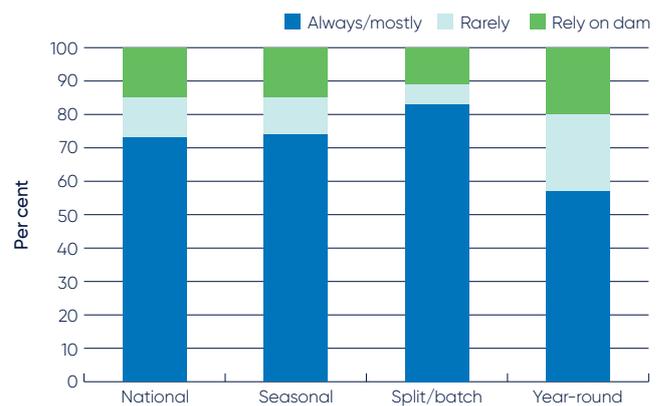
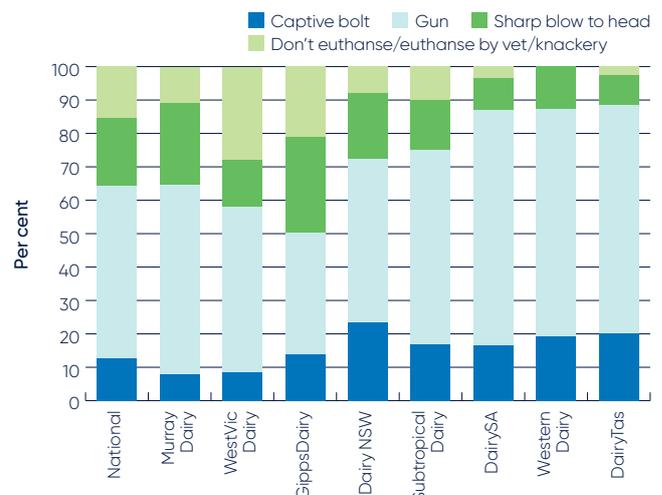


Figure 11 Euthanasia method





WHY CALVES ARE REMOVED FROM COWS

Dairy farmers have been encouraged to remove calves from cows for a few major reasons:

- Providing adequate colostrum (first milk) to calves as soon as possible after birth is essential to ensure sufficient passive transfer of immunity. Even calves left with their dam may not drink enough to ensure immuno-transfer, therefore farmers often provide additional colostrum.¹
- Breaking the transmission of Johne's Disease, which is a significant endemic notifiable disease in Australia, by removing the calves from the presence of adult cows' manure.²
- Early removal is thought to be less stressful for the cow than removal once a bond has formed.³

The practical aspects of an Australian extensive pasture-based system also cannot be ignored: larger herds may walk many kilometres daily from milking shed to fresh pasture. Physically moving hundreds of calves would be logistically difficult if not harmful. Australian calves are generally raised in sheds in group pens on bedding. Future surveys will investigate different Australian calf rearing systems to gather baseline data on practices that work in this context.

- 1 Vogels, Z., Chuck, G.M. and Morton J.M. 2013. Failure of transfer of passive immunity and agammaglobulinaemia in calves in south-west Victorian dairy herds: prevalence and risk factors. *The Australian Veterinary Journal* 91(4): 150-158
- 2 Doré, E. *et al.*, 2012. Risk factors associated with transmission of *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* to calves within dairy herd: a systematic review. *Journal of veterinary internal medicine* 26(1):32-45
- 3 Weary, D.M., and Chua, B. 2000. Effects of early separation on the dairy cow and calf 1. Separation at 6h, 1 day and 4 days after birth. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 69: 177-188

Minimum age transport for bobby calves

Industry policy Bobby calves transported for sale or slaughter must be at least five days old, fit and healthy and be adequately fed within six hours of pick up

As of January 2020, the *Land Transport Standards and Guidelines*, which includes standards for the transport of calves, are legislated in all dairy regions (except WA). Most farmers are meeting these expectations, though western Victoria is not, with 16% of farmers sending bobby calves underage. This is not acceptable, and further extension and communication will need to occur in this region to improve compliance with legislation.

Interestingly, 33% of farmers nationally are choosing to hold their calves for longer, instead transporting calves at one week or older.

Feeding prior to transport

The *Land Transport Standards and Guidelines* also require that calves transported between 5 and 30 days without their dams must spend no more than 30 hours time off feed. Therefore, dairy farmers are required to feed their calves within 6 hours of the calves leaving the farm. 99% of farms meet this requirement, with the majority of calves being fed within 1 or 2 hours of leaving the farm. There were no regional differences for this question.

Disbudding calves

Industry policy Calves should be disbudded under two months of age with pain relief

Horns on cattle are dangerous to both farm workers and other cows, causing serious bruising and wounds. While there are many methods of removing horns, best welfare outcomes occur when the calves are under two months of age, and hence the horn bud is yet to attach to the skull, and when pain relief is provided. The dairy industry policy that all disbudding should be done with the provision of pain relief goes beyond the requirements in the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle*, which only requires pain relief for animals dehorned above the age of 6 months.

Most dairy farmers (72%) disbud their calves at the correct age, and an increasing number are using polled genetics. In the last 2 years, there has been a large increase in the number and quality of polled or polled carrier bulls available in Australia. This has allowed more farmers to choose this trait, with 26% of farmers using some polled genetics in their herd with 4% of herds using polled genetics exclusively.

76% of the calves disbudded under the age of 2 months were provided pain relief, mostly in the form of a topical spray gel pain relief product. This product has only been available for use in calves since December 2016, and has been widely adopted by farmers and disbudding contractors.

Figure 12 Minimum age of transport by dairy region

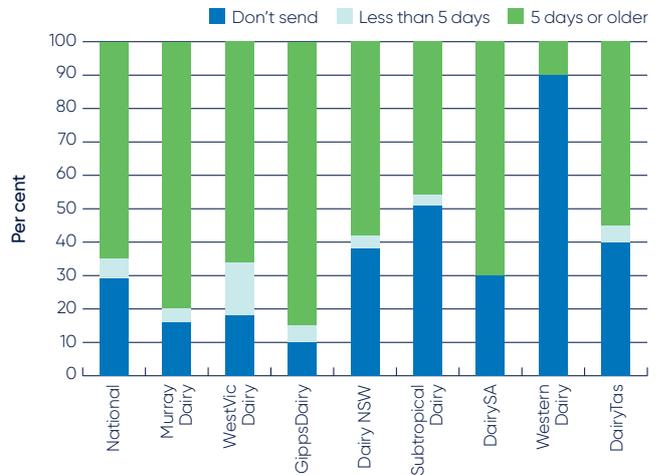


Figure 13 Time calves fed before transport

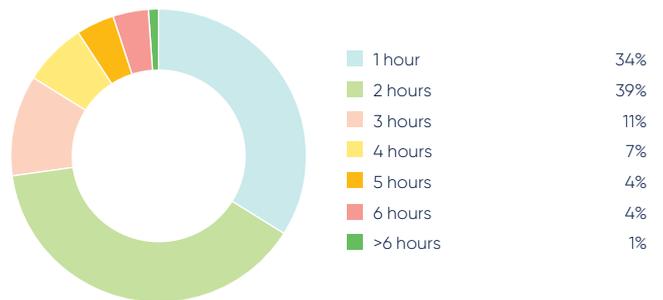


Figure 14 Horn removal method by year

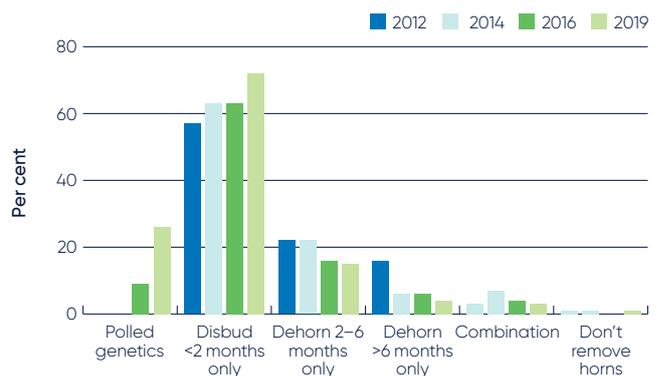


Figure 15 Pain relief provided for calves under 2 months



Lameness

Industry policy All farms implementing a lameness strategy

Most dairy farmers (96% nationally) have implemented strategies to prevent lameness in cows. As Australian dairy animals have access to pasture most of the year, they must often walk long distances on laneways to reach fresh pasture. Laneway maintenance, good stock handling which allows for cows to carefully place their feet (and avoiding stones or rough ground) and early identification of lame cows are very important in preventing serious problems.

Cooling cows in hot weather

Industry policy All farm have infrastructure to keep cows cool

96% of dairy farms have some cooling infrastructure on farm, with most farms using trees or shade structures in paddocks, with most also providing sprinklers and other active cooling at the dairy yard. Some farmers with

feedpads or barns also provide sprinklers and/or fans in those locations. Areas for improvement are in Subtropical Dairy, where few farms have active cooling infrastructure, though common evaporative cooling mechanisms are not as effective in humid weather.

Figure 16 Percentage of farms with a lameness strategy

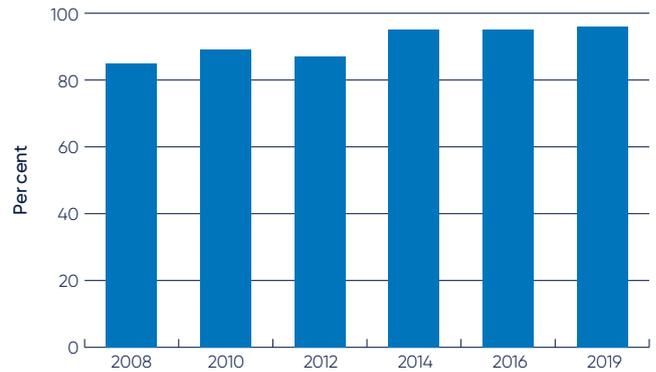


Figure 17 Lameness prevention activity by year

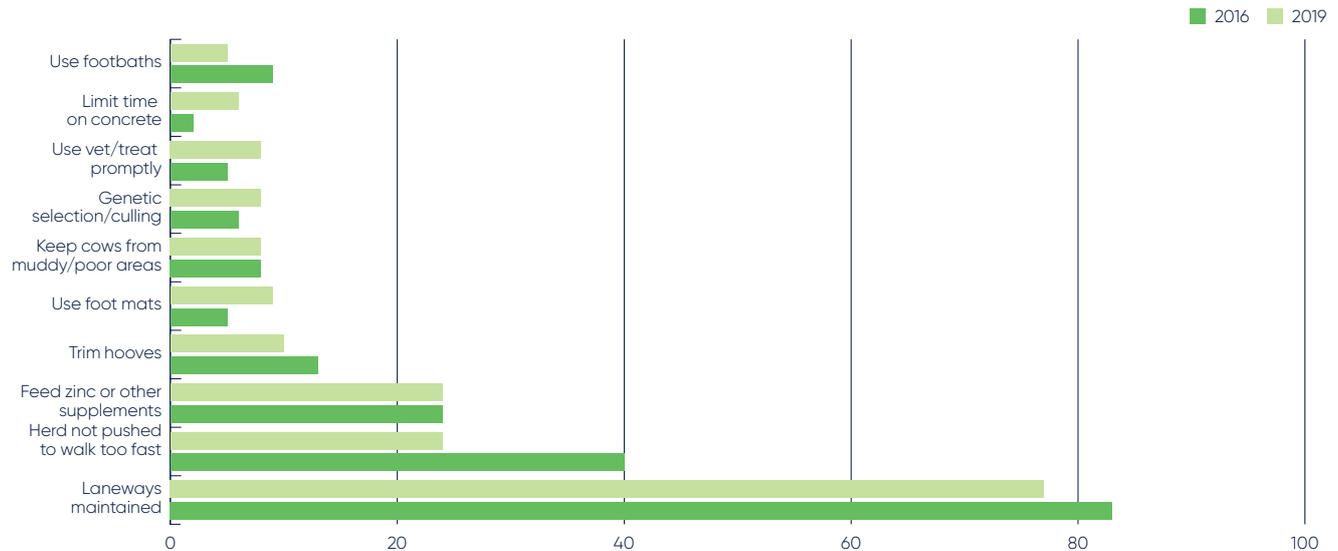
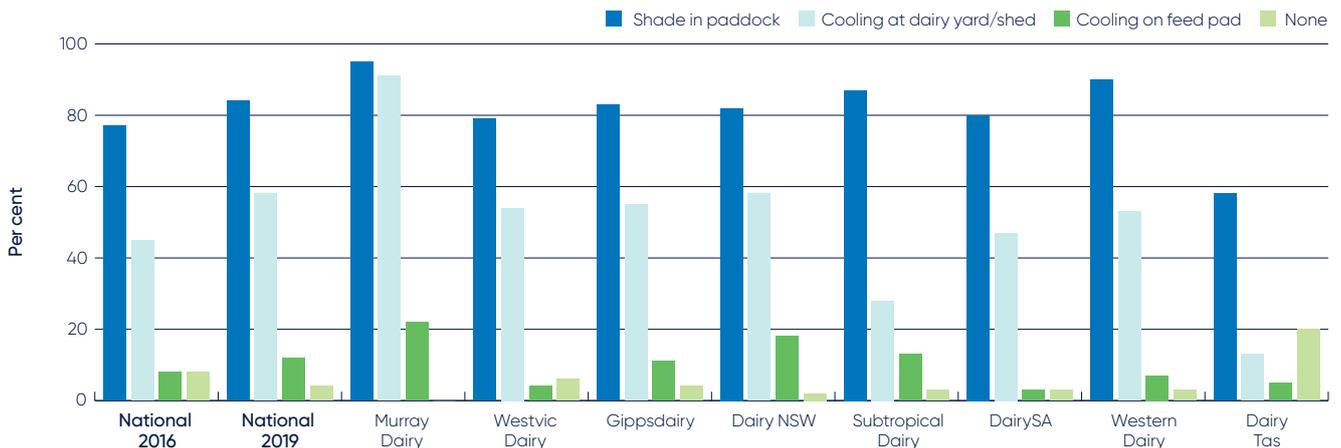


Figure 18 Cooling infrastructure on farm





Antibiotic usage

Industry policy The Australian dairy industry uses antibiotics under veterinary direction responsibly – as little as possible, as much as necessary – to protect the health and welfare of our animals

Dairy farmers are generally responsible users of antibiotics, with 95% of farmers using antibiotics to treat illness in animals, and 91% 'always' following the direction of the veterinarian (8% 'mostly' following the direction of the veterinarian).

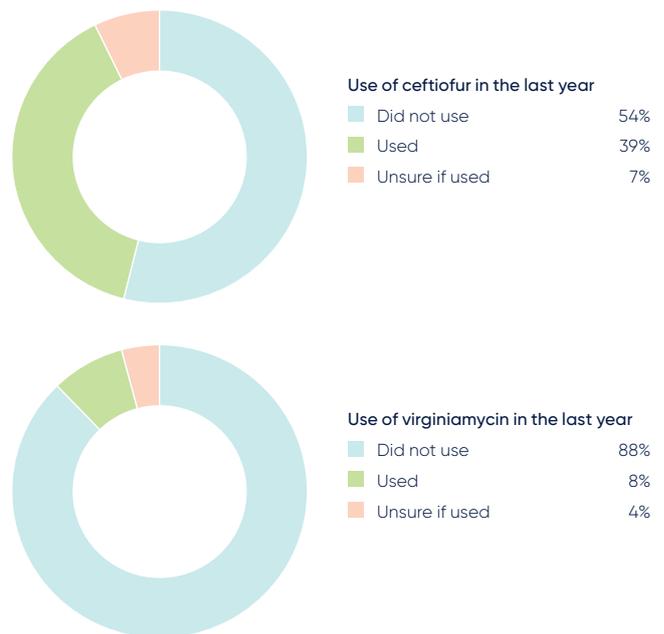
Some antimicrobials that are used in veterinary medicine are deemed critically important for humans. The two antimicrobials listed by the Australian Government as critically important for humans and also used for treating dairy cattle are ceftiofur and virginiamycin.¹ Ceftiofur is registered to treat respiratory infections, and virginiamycin is registered to prevent acidosis when transitioning cattle onto higher grain diets.

Farmers were asked if they had used either of these drugs on farm in the last 12 months. 39% reported using ceftiofur, and 8% used virginiamycin to treat illness. This is the first time this information has been collected, with extension efforts with vets and farmers will focused on the responsible use of these antimicrobials.

One of the major uses of antibiotics on dairy farms is for drying off cattle at the end of lactation. Long-acting antibiotics are used to treat low-level mammary infections during lactation and provides protection against new infections which may occur in the 6–8 week dry period. Not all animals form a protective keratin plug at the end of each teat, so teat sealants may be used to physically block bacteria infiltration into the udder. Selective dry cow treatment is where only animals with a clinical or subclinical udder infection are treated with long-lasting antibiotics.

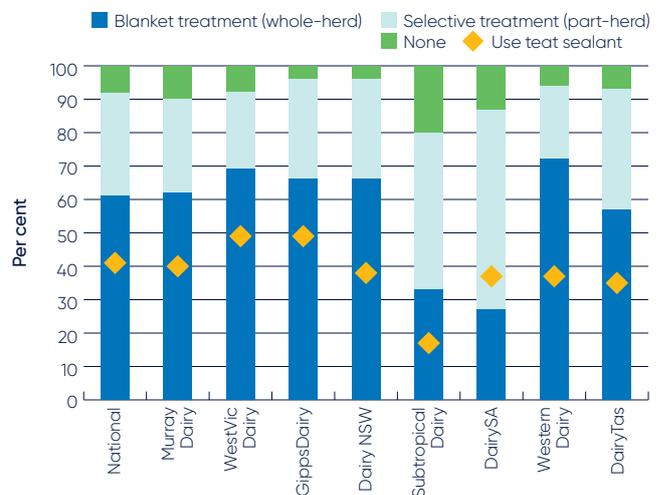
Blanket dry cow treatment is where all cows are treated, which has the advantage of preventing against infections which may occur in the dry period. Whilst the antibiotics used in dry cow treatment are not commonly used in human medicine and there is not currently any evidence of antimicrobial resistance, there are changing attitudes to using antibiotics prophylactically.

Figure 19 Use of critically important antibiotics



Note: these results were taken from the 2020 National Dairy Farmer Survey

Figure 20 Drying off strategy



¹ amr.gov.au/file/826/download?token=FIJC7q65

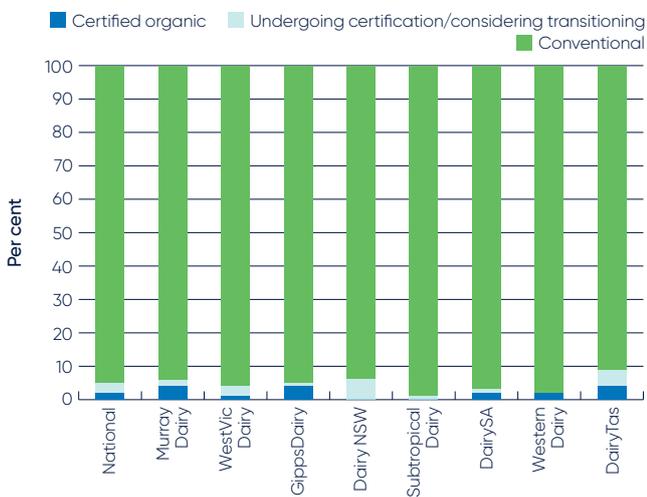
Organic systems

Some dairy farmers may choose to become certified organic, which may allow for them to receive a premium price for the milk for their preferred management style. 2% of dairy farm businesses nationally are currently certified organic, and an additional 3% are either undergoing the certification process or considering transitioning.

This was the first time farmers were asked about their organic status and this is now be monitored over time.

This was the first time farmers were asked on their organic status, so no comparison is available.

Figure 21 Organic certification



Note: these results were taken from the 2020 National Dairy Farmer Survey





APPENDIX

Survey methodology

Since the last survey in 2016, the number of dairy farms has reduced from an estimated 6,408 to approximately 5,500. As a result, survey quotas were reduced from 600 to 500 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) with dairy farmers selected randomly from Dairy Australia's levy payer database.

Both the interviewing and randomising process was computer driven by a specially designed SPSS software package, SurveyCraft. Quotas were set in each dairy region to ensure statistically robust samples were achieved. Data was then weighted at computer stage to represent the true geographic spread of dairy farmers and consequently, national results are not disproportionately influenced by regions with smaller concentrations of dairy farmers. The final sample by region is listed in the table opposite along with weighting factors used.

Location	Sample achieved	Weighting factor
Murray Dairy	100	1,332
WestVic Dairy	90	1,220
GippsDairy	100	1,301
Dairy NSW	50	419
Subtropical Dairy	60	505
Dairy SA	30	244
Western Dairy	30	149
Dairy Tas	40	343
Total	500	5,513

A structured questionnaire formed the basis of the CATI interviews. All interviews were conducted by Market Metrics in accordance with ISO 20252 standards. Interviewing was conducted during November 2019. Interviewers worked from a fully supervised telephone bank in Melbourne. All interviewers were thoroughly briefed by a senior representative of Down To Earth Research (DTER) prior to fieldwork commencing.

The average interview length was approximately 25 minutes and the survey response rate is 70% (interviews versus refusals) up from 64% in 2016, providing a high level of confidence in sampling.

Confidence limits

The total sample for the survey is 500. On typical measurements involving the whole sample, the standard error at the 95% confidence level is approximately $\pm 3.8\%$, a reasonably high level of accuracy.

The standard error for the total sample as well as sub-samples is listed in the table below.

Sample base	Standard error %
500	± 3.8
400	± 4.3
300	± 5.1
200	± 6.2
100	± 8.9
50	± 12.6
30	± 16.6

Definitions

Herd size	Small	Less than 150 cows calved down this financial year	21%
	Medium	Between 150 and 300 cows calved down this financial year	41%
	Large	Between 300 and 500 cows calved down this financial year	24%
	XLarge	Between 500 and 700 cows calved down this financial year	7%
	XXLarge	More than 700 cows calved down this financial year	7%
Calving system	Seasonal	Herds where cows calve in one distinct group, spread over five months or less	38%
	Split	Herds where cows calve in two or three distinct groups or batches	39%
	Year-round	Herds where cows calve over ten months or more	23%

RDP	Location	Dairy businesses as of 2019
Murray Dairy	Northern Victoria and southern NSW bordering the Murray River	1332
GippsDairy	Gippsland, including the Yarra Valley	1301
WestVic Dairy	Western Victoria, including Ballarat and the Bellarine Peninsula	1220
Subtropical Dairy	Queensland and northern New South Wales	505
Dairy NSW	New South Wales	419
DairyTas	Tasmania, including King Island	343
DairySA	South Australia	244
Western Dairy	Western Australia	149

ADF Animal Health and Welfare Policies – 2019

1 General

1.1 The Australian Dairy Industry commits to striving for the health, welfare and best care for all our animals throughout their lives

2 Standards and guidelines

2.1 The Australian Dairy Industry commits to adhering to the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle

2.2 The Australian Dairy Industry commits to adhering to the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock

3 Calving induction

3.1 The Australian Dairy Industry does not support routine calving induction and agrees to complete phase out of routine calving induction by January 1 2022

4 Tail docking

4.1 The Australian Dairy Industry does not support the use of tail docking, and it should only be performed on veterinary advice to treat injury or disease.

5 Calves

5.1 Bobby calves transported for sale or slaughter must be at least five days old, fit and healthy and be adequately fed within six hours of pick up.

5.2 Calves aged 5 to 30 days old, transported without mothers, must have no more than 30 hours time-off-feed

5.3 Calves should be disbudded under two months of age with pain relief

6 Biosecurity

6.1 The Australian Dairy Industry expects farmers to comply with EADRA and industry requirements by implementing an on-farm biosecurity plan

6.2 The Australian Dairy Industry supports government and industry in surveillance and preparedness for incursions of emerging animal diseases (including Foot and Mouth Disease) and maintenance of EADRA

7 Live export

7.1 The Australian Dairy Industry supports the ongoing export of breeding cattle in accordance with Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL).

7.2 The Australian Dairy Industry agrees to the introduction of a statutory levy on the exporters of dairy cattle to fund LiveCorp activities, with any funds raised to be spent in consultation with the dairy industry, in order to facilitate improvements in the dairy cattle export trade

8 Antimicrobial stewardship

8.1 The Australian Dairy Industry commits to using antibiotics responsibly – as little as possible, as much as necessary – to protect the health and welfare of our animals

9 Animal Health Australia

9.1 The Australian Dairy Farmers as an industry member of Animal Health Australia actively engages with all Animal Health Australia members on national animal health, welfare and biosecurity matters relevant to the dairy industry

10 Euthanasia

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

	2016	National 2019	Murray Dairy	WestVic Dairy	Gipps Dairy	Dairy NSW	Subtropical Dairy	Dairy SA	Western Dairy	Dairy Tas
Calving system										
Seasonal calving herd	33%	38%	27%	54%	53%	6%	3%	23%	17%	70%
Split or batch calving herd	44%	39%	58%	39%	41%	20%	3%	50%	43%	23%
Year-round calving herd	23%	23%	15%	7%	6%	74%	93%	27%	40%	8%
Breed										
Holstein Friesian	75%	70%	78%	71%	68%	82%	50%	73%	93%	43%
Jersey	17%	16%	8%	26%	14%	8%	37%	17%	0%	13%
Cross bred	11%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2 way cross bred	n/a	13%	5%	10%	23%	6%	13%	10%	0%	38%
3 way cross bred	n/a	7%	7%	4%	12%	2%	2%	0%	3%	13%
Other	10%	9%	6%	10%	6%	10%	28%	10%	3%	3%
Artificial insemination										
Total: use AI	86%	87%	89%	90%	87%	84%	65%	97%	90%	90%
AI only	18%	34%	32%	33%	44%	36%	23%	50%	33%	15%
AI and some herd bulls	68%	52%	57%	57%	43%	48%	42%	47%	57%	75%
Herd bulls only	14%	13%	11%	10%	13%	16%	35%	3%	10%	10%
Use AI dairy	n/a	86%	89%	90%	87%	84%	65%	97%	87%	88%
Use AI beef	n/a	23%	22%	21%	19%	16%	25%	30%	30%	48%
Use dairy bulls	n/a	54%	54%	58%	48%	56%	63%	37%	50%	58%
Use beef bulls	n/a	29%	29%	32%	21%	24%	30%	30%	43%	53%
Standards and guidelines possession										
Yes	47%	77%	79%	80%	66%	72%	75%	90%	73%	95%
No	36%	13%	10%	11%	22%	20%	12%	3%	17%	0%
Don't know	18%	10%	11%	9%	12%	8%	13%	7%	10%	5%
Written biosecurity plan										
Yes	n/a	58%	54%	57%	49%	60%	88%	50%	87%	55%
No	n/a	37%	37%	39%	48%	36%	10%	37%	13%	43%
Don't know	n/a	5%	9%	4%	3%	4%	2%	13%	0%	3%
Biosecurity measures										
Ensure stock are inspected prior to purchase/introduction	92%	96%	100%	94%	95%	94%	96%	100%	94%	92%
Take steps to monitor health status of introduced animals	84%	87%	88%	86%	83%	100%	92%	92%	88%	88%
Check the health status of property from which cattle were purchased	75%	71%	71%	69%	62%	83%	100%	92%	82%	68%
Find out the Dairy Score for BJD Assurance prior to introducing stock	48%	47%	57%	43%	27%	78%	71%	100%	65%	28%
Routinely test or screen introduced stock for common diseases	33%	40%	39%	43%	28%	67%	42%	50%	59%	40%
Tail docking										
Routinely dock tails	9%	4%	3%	6%	8%	0%	0%	0%	3%	8%

	2016	National 2019	Murray Dairy	WestVic Dairy	Gipps Dairy	Dairy NSW	Subtropical Dairy	Dairy SA	Western Dairy	Dairy Tas
Routine calving induction										
Use induction every year	7%	5%	2%	7%	10%	0%	2%	0%	0%	10%
Use induction, but not every year	3%	4%	2%	8%	5%	4%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Total: use induction	10%	9%	4%	14%	15%	4%	2%	0%	0%	20%
Do not use induction	90%	91%	96%	86%	85%	96%	98%	100%	100%	80%
Calf management										
Calf pathways										
Kept/raised on farm as replacements	39%	37%	36%	32%	34%	50%	44%	40%	41%	34%
Kept and raised on farm as dairy beef	8%	8%	7%	7%	8%	9%	13%	14%	24%	6%
Sent/sold to other farm to be reared as replacement stock/dairy beef	8%	8%	7%	8%	5%	8%	8%	9%	18%	15%
Sent to abattoir, calf scales or sale yards as bobby calves	36%	38%	42%	43%	44%	32%	21%	24%	9%	29%
Stillborn, died or euthanased on farm due to illness or other issues	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	7%	10%	5%	10%
Euthanased at birth	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	8%	2%	0%	2%
Age of calf removal										
All removed within 12 hours	n/a	28%	31%	32%	27%	30%	12%	27%	33%	23%
All removed within 12 to 24 hours	n/a	40%	36%	39%	44%	42%	27%	47%	30%	58%
All removed within 24 to 48 hours	n/a	21%	22%	24%	20%	16%	22%	17%	30%	18%
Calves removed greater than 48 hours	n/a	10%	8%	3%	8%	12%	40%	7%	3%	3%
Average age (days) calves removed (if removed at greater than 48 hours)	n/a	7	4	5	8	6	10	3	4	3
Colostrum management										
Always/mostly	81%	74%	82%	78%	77%	58%	33%	73%	83%	88%
Rarely	7%	12%	6%	8%	12%	20%	33%	17%	10%	5%
Rely on dam	13%	15%	12%	15%	11%	22%	33%	10%	6%	8%
Bobby calves sent to slaughter										
Don't send bobby calves	n/a	29%	16%	18%	10%	38%	55%	30%	90%	40%
Send bobby calves	n/a	71%	84%	82%	90%	62%	45%	70%	10%	60%
Age of bobby calf transport										
Less than 5 days	22%	9%	5%	20%	6%	6%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Total: 5 days or older	77%	91%	95%	80%	94%	94%	93%	100%	100%	92%
Feeding prior to transport										
1 hour	33%	34%	44%	26%	30%	38%	38%	36%	60%	32%
2 hours	33%	39%	41%	36%	38%	46%	34%	18%	20%	52%
3 hours	11%	11%	8%	8%	16%	11%	19%	9%	0%	4%
4 hours	9%	7%	4%	15%	6%	0%	3%	9%	0%	4%
5 hours	4%	4%	1%	11%	3%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
6 hours	6%	4%	2%	4%	6%	3%	3%	14%	20%	4%
Total: 6 hours or less	96%	99%	100%	100%	99%	97%	97%	100%	100%	96%
Longer than 6 hours	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	3%	0%	0%	4%

	2016	National 2019	Murray Dairy	WestVic Dairy	Gipps Dairy	Dairy NSW	Subtropical Dairy	Dairy SA	Western Dairy	Dairy Tas
Age of disbudding										
Rely on polled genetics	1%	4%	4%	0%	3%	4%	5%	23%	10%	3%
Use polled genetics + other disbudding	10%	26%	35%	20%	20%	32%	15%	43%	43%	28%
Disbud all calves <2 months of age	63%	72%	75%	79%	77%	60%	42%	57%	70%	93%
Dehorn all calves at 2–6 months of age	16%	15%	17%	11%	15%	20%	35%	10%	7%	0%
Dehorn all heifers or cows > 6 months	6%	4%	3%	0%	2%	10%	12%	7%	7%	0%
Both disbud and dehorn	4%	3%	1%	6%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	5%
Don't remove horns	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Method of disbudding										
Hot iron	n/a	95%	99%	95%	99%	90%	73%	100%	86%	97%
Other	n/a	5%	1%	5%	1%	10%	27%	0%	14%	3%
Provision of pain relief for disbudding – for calves disbudded under 2 months *2016 data question variation										
No pain relief	72%*	24%	36%	25%	15%	23%	35%	11%	0%	18%
Provide pain relief	28%*	76%	64%	75%	85%	77%	65%	89%	100%	82%
Type of pain relief *may be used in combination										
Topical spray e.g. Trisofen	n/a	46%	34%	46%	59%	42%	35%	39%	59%	51%
Sedation	5%	21%	24%	16%	29%	19%	12%	17%	18%	10%
Local anaesthetic	11%	30%	29%	32%	37%	23%	19%	28%	27%	26%
Anti-inflammatories	10%	19%	11%	22%	28%	6%	4%	39%	9%	15%
Other	8%	10%	9%	11%	12%	3%	15%	11%	0%	8%
Lameness management										
Have lameness prevention strategy	95%	96%	98%	98%	95%	98%	83%	97%	100%	100%
Laneways maintained	77%	83%	89%	86%	81%	86%	57%	83%	90%	88%
Herd not pushed to walk too fast	24%	40%	49%	38%	38%	40%	23%	40%	40%	53%
Feed zinc or other supplements	24%	24%	34%	20%	21%	18%	15%	27%	27%	33%
Trim hooves	10%	13%	20%	11%	5%	22%	18%	7%	30%	5%
Use foot mats	5%	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	2%	7%	20%	5%
Keep cows from muddy/poor areas	8%	8%	13%	4%	6%	10%	8%	0%	10%	8%
Genetic selection/culling	6%	8%	7%	7%	11%	8%	5%	13%	7%	0%
Use vet/treat promptly	5%	8%	3%	12%	8%	6%	10%	3%	17%	8%
Cows not on concrete for too long	2%	6%	3%	7%	10%	4%	8%	3%	3%	0%
Use footbaths	9%	5%	12%	2%	2%	6%	2%	3%	10%	3%
Use lameness scoring	1%	1%	0%	6%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	2016	National 2019	Murray Dairy	WestVic Dairy	Gipps Dairy	Dairy NSW	Subtropical Dairy	Dairy SA	Western Dairy	Dairy Tas
Cooling infrastructure										
Trees in paddocks and along laneways	76%	81%	89%	79%	81%	82%	83%	80%	87%	58%
Portable shade shelters in paddocks	2%	6%	12%	2%	5%	2%	3%	3%	7%	5%
Total: shade in paddock	77%	84%	95%	79%	83%	82%	87%	80%	90%	58%
Sprinklers in dairy yard	43%	54%	86%	49%	51%	56%	22%	47%	47%	10%
Shade structures over the dairy yard	4%	9%	19%	3%	6%	14%	7%	0%	7%	0%
Fans in milking shed	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%
Hose concrete/ yard	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Total: cooling at dairy yard/dairy shed	45%	58%	91%	54%	55%	58%	28%	47%	53%	13%
Sprinklers in the shade shed/feed pad	4%	8%	14%	2%	10%	16%	3%	0%	3%	5%
Shade structures on feed pad	4%	5%	9%	2%	1%	6%	10%	3%	7%	0%
Total: cooling on feed pad	8%	12%	22%	4%	11%	18%	13%	3%	7%	5%
None	8%	4%	0%	6%	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%	20%
Antimicrobial usage										
Blanket dry cow treatment (i.e whole herd)	n/a	61%	62%	70%	66%	66%	33%	27%	73%	58%
Selective dry cow treatment (i.e. part-herd)	n/a	31%	28%	23%	30%	30%	47%	60%	23%	38%
None	n/a	8%	10%	8%	4%	4%	20%	13%	7%	8%
Use teat sealant	n/a	41%	40%	49%	49%	38%	17%	37%	37%	35%
Do not use antibiotics	n/a	5%	5%	4%	3%	8%	8%	3%	2%	5%
Used ceftiofur in past 12 months	n/a	39%	48%	36%	37%	32%	43%	40%	53%	23%
Unsure if used ceftiofur	n/a	7%	3%	4%	10%	7%	6%	2%	10%	19%
Used virginiamycin in past 12 months	n/a	8%	4%	8%	10%	10%	3%	5%	30%	7%
Unsure if used virginiamycin	n/a	4%	2%	5%	5%	3%	3%	2%	8%	8%
Organic certification										
Certified organic	n/a	2%	4%	1%	4%	0%	0%	2%	2%	4%
Undergoing certification or thinking about transitioning	n/a	3%	2%	3%	1%	6%	1%	1%	0%	5%
Conventional	n/a	95%	94%	96%	95%	94%	99%	97%	98%	91%

Contact

This document provides an overview of the key results of the survey. More detailed results may be available on request. Please contact Louise Sundermann, Policy Lead for Animal Health and Welfare at louise.sundermann@dairyaustralia.com.au

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