



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Growing heifers - Readers' Note

This document is part of a larger publication. The remaining parts and full version of the publication can be found at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/dairy-cattle/herd/manuals/growing-heifers>

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Growing Heifers

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DAIRY RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT
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NSW Agriculture

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Foreword

Dairying is one of the most progressive rural industries in NSW. This is evidenced by substantial changes in herd sizes and increases in production by cows and from farms.

An outcome of these increases is that management has become more complex, requiring greater knowledge and technical skills.

As farmers become more competitive through increases in both production and productivity, they will require even better technical information and management skills. Most important, they will need to know how to use the information in improving whole-farm performance and profits. This statement is supported by results of various Dairy Research and Development Corporation workshops and NSW Dairy Farmers' Association surveys, which have clearly indicated that farmers require technical packages that are current and relevant.

DairyLink is a series of integrated information packages that look at aspects of pasture, herd and feed management, and suggest practical ways of getting the best from your cows and pastures. The DairyLink series is a result of collaboration between NSW Agriculture officers, agribusiness and farmers.

The packages will be the basis of workshops and meetings for NSW dairy farmers.

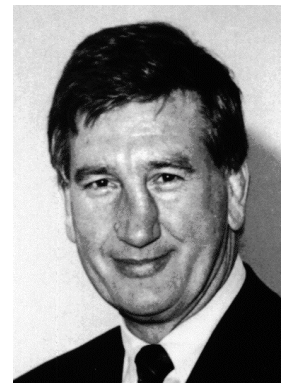
DairyLink has much to offer the NSW dairy industry in helping improve farm productivity and profitability. We encourage farmers to attend and participate in the DairyLink workshops and meetings.



*John Craven, Program
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Association*

Preface



DairyLink is an innovative concept that introduces you to some important technical areas to help improve farm productivity and profits.

The modules in the series are of value to farmers, students, consultants and extension service providers.

DairyLink consists of the following information packages:

Establishing Pastures

Managing Pastures

Growing Heifers

Realistic Rations

Conserving Feed

The modules have been developed as technical manuals and farmer-friendly booklets, and are linked to the Total Dairy Home Study course.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the various technical teams for doing an excellent job. I also appreciate the funding and support provided by DRDC.

Alex Ashwood
DairyLink Series Coordinator

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Introduction



Many aspects of calf rearing and heifer management have changed on dairy farms in the last 5 years.

As production levels have risen, so has the need for well-grown high genetic quality heifers to be calved at 2 years of age. Well grown heifers will increase farm profitability, with higher milk production, better reproductive performance and extended productive life in milking herds.

The purpose of this manual is to describe the steps required for successful management to achieve those targets.

Calves must obtain the best possible start in life. Best management practices for colostrum feeding, nutrition, housing and husbandry are outlined here. The requirements for continued growth in the important post-weaning period are covered, with recommended target weights for mating and pre-calving.

Information on contract calf rearing and heifer growing and backgrounding is provided, as it is recognised that specialists in these fields are providing valuable services to the dairy industry.

There is still much to learn about correct nutrition, management and particularly welfare of the modern dairy heifer.

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