



Realistic Rations - Readers' Note

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Realistic Rations

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Foreword



***John Craven, Program
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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.



***Kevin Sheridan,
Director-General,
NSW Agriculture***

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.



***Reg Smith, President,
NSW Dairy Farmers'
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



When we are feeding a dairy cow, we are trying to achieve an aim. We want the cow to produce a certain amount of milk, to get pregnant and keep healthy. If the cow is a heifer, we want her to grow and be a productive cow in her maturity.

The feeding system we use to achieve our aims should be based on both scientific and practical knowledge. We should have a good understanding of the relationship between the cow and her feed. We should understand what makes up a cow's diet and how it can be manipulated.

Realistic Rations is one of a series of DairyLink publications sponsored by the Dairy Research and Development Corporation. It is a practical step-by-step guide that will take the mystery out of ration formulation. It assumes that you have a good background in pasture establishment and management, grazing management and the conservation of forages; these subjects are covered by the companion volumes of DairyLink.

NSW Agriculture has worked closely with agribusiness, farmers and research officers to produce this publication.

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