Dairy Farms and GHG emissions
Smart business, less emissions

This fact sheet is part of the Profitable Dairying series - Good business management reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

The Australian dairy industry has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions intensity (emissions per L milk produced) by 30% by 2020.

Good business management to use resources efficiently can reduce the methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions per L milk produced.

Using resources efficiently

The cornerstone of the Profitable Dairying extension message is that “Good business management reduces greenhouse gas emissions.”

In practice this means:
- Identify and cull less productive animals.
- High quality feed is always best.
- Get your nitrogen fertiliser strategy right.
- In calf, on time, every time.
- Keep cows comfortable.
- Smarter energy use.

The Profitable Dairying series of fact sheets and YouTube clips provides information for farmers about how to tackle the challenge of greenhouse gases emissions management in a practical way, and while improving profitability of the business.

“It is part of the challenge of farming - constantly looking for smarter, more efficient ways to do things. I’m always asking myself ‘Is there a better way I can do this?’ You can get a lot of ideas from others, but in the end it has to be practical for your farm and how your business is structured.”

Wayne Clarke, Casino NSW in discussion with Bill Fulkerson, Norco Field Officer.
Identify and cull less productive animals
Your most productive cows make the most money and produce the least greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions.

“Our breeding program aims to achieve a cow with large capacity to convert intake into milk.”
Gino Pacitti, Hindmarsh Tiers, SA

High quality feed is always best.
Feed a high quality diet to increase milk production and reduce GHG emissions intensity.

“We’ve put a lot of effort into refining the system so that the cows are on good feed all year round. The 4-way forage mix and fodder beet have a really good fit in autumn.”
Victor Rodwell, Boyanup, WA

For more information, see Fert$mart

Get your nitrogen fertiliser strategy right.
Apply nitrogen at the right time, in the right place, with the right product and at the right rate to improve on farm nitrogen use efficiency and reduce GHG emissions.

“Using N efficiently helps to get the best production from our ryegrass/kikuyu pastures.”
Pat Neal, Oxley Island, NSW

For more information, see Nitrogen Use on Dairy Farms

In calf, on time, every time.
This makes your herd more profitable and reduces GHG emissions intensity

“Getting cows in calf is like a jigsaw puzzle. Each part needs to be ready to play its role.”
Brian and Michele Lawrence, Meander, Tas.

For more information, see Dairy Australia In Calf

Keep cows comfortable
During extreme weather events this will reduce stress and associated losses in milk production. Trees & shrubs can provide shade and shelter, enhancing milk production as well as storing carbon, which may generate carbon credits.

“Our herd is healthier and more productive because the cows are protected from the cold winter winds and they have good shade in summer.”
Graeme Nicoll, Fish Creek, Gippsland

For more information, see Dairy Australia Cool Cows

Smarter energy use
Monitor electricity consumption and equipment performance.

“We’ve just installed robots and in the planning process with our technician we considered energy efficiency as much as possible.”
Wayne Clarke, Casino, NSW

For more information, see Smarter Energy Use on Australian Dairy Farms