



# HOTLINE

Newsletter of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria

March 2010

## President's Report



The Extraordinary General Meeting, held on 24 February, was very well attended with many UDV members coming along to have their say. The proposed constitutional changes were not passed at the meeting, with 56 percent of votes opposing the changes and 44 percent in favour (75 percent required for the vote to pass). The VFF has committed to taking on board the concerns presented during the debate at the EGM, and working with members to present a revised model at the VFF AGM in June.

The UDV is entering a new era, change is occurring and things will be different. All representative organisations are reviewing the way they do business. To keep up with this change, the UDV needs to have a fresh approach. We need to have a new group of people involved to take the UDV into the future and make it happen.

The challenge for the UDV is to embrace those who are not involved and encourage their participation. We need to explain why the responsibility for the future of the industry is in the hands of the current crop of farmers.

The 2010 Annual UDV Conference will be held at Moama between 26 - 27 May. The theme for this year's Conference will be the future of rural lobbying and advocacy groups, with a number of state, national and international speakers being finalised. We want to ascertain what farmers

want from their UDV and VFF membership and we want farmers to help develop a strong vision for Victorian dairy representation.

To gain a broader view the Conference will be opened up to more than voting members. We will be inviting non-voting members as well as non-members to join us. It will be an opportunity for all to express their opinion and influence the direction.

Opening up the Conference to a greater audience will also provide an opportunity for farmers to better understand the role the various industry bodies play in the industry. It is important that farmers understand how their industry works beyond their farm-gate.

Another change will be the decision to effectively allow a direct vote by individual financial members as opposed to the delegate system. This change will require members to be responsible for their own registration. The information on registrations will be forwarded to you shortly.

The Annual Meeting on the first day of the Conference will consider, and vote on, a Notice of Motion to raise the levy. The decision to raise the levy is one the Central Council has not made lightly. As farmers we understand the current financial pressure on farm. However our income has dropped because of lower production levels and declining numbers. The VFF and the UDV are committed to achieving a balanced budget in 2010 and beyond. We cannot achieve these dual objectives and provide effective service to our members without the increase in levies. The Central Council is committed to presenting the business case for the rise to members at the 2010 conference.

I would encourage all farmers to make the most of the opportunity that the UDV is presenting at this year's Conference.



Chris Griffin  
President  
United Dairyfarmers of Victoria

### STOP PRESS:

As a result of UDV lobbying on dairy shed water licensing issues, the DSE has now extended the amnesty period until 26th March. The Water Minister's office and the DSE continue to work on our issues of concern, and we look forward to positive outcomes for dairy farmers soon.

### Prime Super can help you save for a rainy day.

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### NATIONAL FLEET PRICING PLUS \$500 GENUINE ACCESSORIES.\*



Items shown in tray not included. \*\$500 includes labour Offer ends 31 Dec 2010.

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# Launch of UDV/VFF Share Farming Toolkit

The UDV is pleased to announce that the development of a UDV/VFF Share Farming Toolkit for dairy farms is finally completed. This Toolkit is the result of more than 18 months' hard work by a dedicated group of UDV members – both farm owners and share farmers – and UDV and VFF staff. This important work has been generously funded by the Gardiner Foundation.

The Share Farming Toolkit is a valuable resource for farmers and farm owners who are considering entering a share farming arrangement. It contains a wealth of up-to-date information about share farming, and includes some best-practice guidelines for developing a share farming agreement.

The toolkit complements the national share farming information provided by The People In Dairy website, by including details of important Victorian legislation such as WorkCover and water issues.

The Toolkit also includes some contractual templates that can be used as a basis for developing a share farming agreement, tailored to suit the needs of different parties. The VFF Industrial Relations team will also be available to meet with farmers and assist them in the development of their agreement.

The Toolkit will be formally launched at the UDV Conference in May, however it will be available for purchase by UDV members at the end of March. If you are interested in accessing the Toolkit, please contact the VFF Industrial Relations team for more information on **1300 882 833**.

## Your Dairy Industry – Structure, Influence and Milk Pricing

### Workshops for dairy farmers

Over the next couple of months, free dairy farmer workshops will be run in each of the three Victorian dairying regions. These workshops will provide up-to-date information about dairy industry structure and the organisations and companies within it. They will also explore the dairy market, and a range of factors influencing milk price at all levels – including global, national, local, and on farm.

These workshops have been developed in response to UDV members' requests for more in-depth information about these topics, particularly at the UDV Conference in 2008. The UDV has worked in partnership with the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia to put these workshops together, with Gardiner Foundation generously funding the development and delivery. Experienced dairy industry consultants Daryl Poole (RM Consulting Group) and Cameron Smith (Farmanco) have been engaged to write the program content and deliver the workshops with additional support from Dairy Australia.

Dates and locations will be finalised soon, so check out the April Hotline for details of a workshop in your region.

### Welcome John Borromeo

The UDV welcomes its new Manager, John Borromeo, who started work in the UDV office late in February. John comes from a policy development background and is looking forward to working with dairy stakeholders, learning about the dairy industry, and applying his policy and managerial skills in a refreshing new environment.

### UDV Annual Meeting and Conference 2010

**Dates:** Wednesday 26th and Thursday 27th May

**Location:** Moama Bowling Club, Moama

**Theme:** The future of rural lobbying and advocacy groups

All dairy farmers are welcome, including non-members. We recommend you book accommodation in Moama as soon as possible. For more information please contact Georgina Livery on **1300 882 833** or [glivery@vff.org.au](mailto:glivery@vff.org.au).



# MooTube?

## ... How social media can work for farmers

Nick Renyard  
UDV Central Councillor DC9

### What is social media?

Social media (also known as social networking) can be described as content that is created and disseminated through networks to groups and individuals using internet and web-based technologies.

Various software tools allow users to generate content, and internet and web-based tools allow users to share that content and engage in peer-to-peer conversations and discussions with other users all over the world. Content can include images, video, audio, text, and multimedia which is published and shared in a social environment – rather than an industrial or formal environment like our more traditional media channels.

The use of social media is a rapidly growing phenomenon, with nearly nine million Australians visiting a social network website in June 2009 – a 29 percent increase on the previous year.

There are hundreds of social media sites out there. Many are general in nature, but some are targeted toward specific groups of users, such as forums for sports fans, new mothers, organic gardening, the arts, and many more.

Some of the most popular social network and media sites you may have heard of include:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Flickr
- MySpace

A recent addition to this list is [udderlyfantastic.com.au](http://udderlyfantastic.com.au) which is a site specifically for people in the dairy industry (see below). UDV/VFF members can also access a range of VFF policy information and stay connected with VFF updates via the VFF website [www.vff.org.au](http://www.vff.org.au) and Facebook, Twitter and Youtube accounts.

### How can it work for us?

Social media is gaining an increasing share of the total media space, and is used by many to discuss, comment on or promote news and mainstream media issues.

Anti-agriculture groups are already involved in the social media revolution. Any contentious issue is likely to be discussed via blogs (or web logs), Facebook groups and pages, or through the numerous YouTube videos created and published. If our opponents are using these methods to promote their cause, then we need to front up to present the facts and our views. While we may not always win the debate, we can at least have a presence – and a fighting chance.

A prime example of how social media can work for the benefit of animal agriculture is the “Yellow Fail” campaign, which was recently played out on YouTube and Facebook. At the time of writing this Facebook group has nearly 3,000 fans – which is not bad considering the group was only launched two weeks prior.

Wine maker Yellow Tail recently announced that they were donating \$100,000 to the Humane Society of the US (HSUS). HSUS is an animal rights organisation that lobbies and litigates on a range of animal issues, including agriculture, and is seen by many US farmers and ranchers as an opponent of their way of life.

So, when Yellow Tail made the donation to HSUS, farmers and ranchers fought back and organised a boycott of Yellow Tail products, using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. One YouTube video features a South Dakota rancher explaining why he won't support a company that is funding a group like HSUS, and then emptying a bottle of Yellow Tail wine out on the ground in front of his cattle.

One user set up a Facebook page called “Yellow Fail”, where thousands of users have pledged their support by becoming a “fan” of the page, joined the boycott, and contributed to discussion on the issue – and in fact, the “Yellow Fail” campaign's Facebook page actually got more fans than the official Yellow Tail wines page!

Such groundswell of criticism from all over the world has pressured Yellow Tail to respond. They released a statement saying that they have directed the HSUS to only use their money for animal rescue – not for agricultural lobbying or litigation. This however has not satisfied animal agriculture proponents, who feel that this just frees up other monies for HSUS to use in promoting their agenda against farming, ranching, hunting and fishing. The debate continues.

### Diary Dates

#### 10 March

“Understanding Biotechnology” workshop for women farmers. Discussion on the future of Australia's farming, including presentations from biotechnology experts and hands-on activities. Quest Shepparton, 177-183 Welsford St Shepparton, 11:00am – 12:30pm (lunch provided). Contact Melanie Carew – Molecular Plant breeding CRC on **9479 1698**.

#### 12 March

UDV DC6 and YDDP joint event at Leongatha RSL, corner of Smith St and Michael Place, 7pm. Come along and enjoy a 2-course dinner, meet other dairy farmers, and find out a bit more about the work done by YDDP and UDV. RSVP to GippsDairy on **5624 3900**.

#### 19 March

UDV DC7 and YDDP joint event at “59 On Queen” (used to be Markquay), Queen St Warragul, 7pm, followed by Ten Pin Bowling. Come along and enjoy a shared dinner for just \$10, meet other dairy farmers, and find out a bit more about the work done by YDDP and UDV. RSVP to GippsDairy on **5624 3900**, by 17th March.

This is a powerful example of how social media can be used by farmers to share their views, promote their interests, and link in with other people and organisations around the globe. We farmers need to start taking advantage of the vast opportunities social media provides, to help us better communicate the issues we face to a wider audience, and drum up support for our great dairy industry.

### That's udderly fantastic!

There are of course other more light-hearted advantages of using social media, the main one being meeting and communicating with other like-minded people who share your interests. An excellent example of this is the new Udderly Fantastic website, which now has over 500 members from within the Australian dairy industry. Udderly Fantastic is a great way to connect with people from the dairy industry and share in the latest news, ideas, and stories. To join in, visit [www.udderlyfantastic.com.au](http://www.udderlyfantastic.com.au) and follow the prompts.

#### Editor's note:

This example is being used simply for illustrative purposes and does not imply that the UDV/VFF condones or opposes this campaign.

# Situation and Outlook – February 2010 Update

Lower input costs – especially for grain, which is at a three-year low – are offering a more positive outlook for dairying, according to Dairy Australia's industry barometer, the Situation and Outlook 2010 February Update.

Joanne Bills, Dairy Australia's Manager Strategy and Knowledge, said step ups in this season's milk price in southern regions have eased some burden on dairy farmers.

"Milk prices are improving for farmers in southern regions, input costs – especially for feed – are lower than this time last year, and water allocations on some irrigated systems are at four-year highs. With domestic dairy consumption robust, there is some cause for cautious optimism for the industry in 2010," she said.

"Farmers supplying the domestic market under contract will watch these developments with interest as many will be renegotiating contracts in the coming months."

However, she added: "Increased financing costs, reflecting short-term debt incurred last year, plus the pressure of rising interest rates will maintain pressure on profit margins and the ability and willingness of farmers to respond to improved operating conditions by increasing production."

Ian Halliday, new Managing Director at Dairy Australia, is optimistic that the outlook for the international market is reasonable. "Spot prices have increased significantly in US\$ terms over the past 12 months and the global supply of milk available for export finished lower than expected in 2009," he said.

"With our international dairy market now operating without EU or US export subsidies, dairying in Australia has been given a boost."

However, while commodity prices have recovered strongly in 2009 in US dollar terms, returns to the Australian industry have been limited by a surging Australian dollar. And with the four major Australian banks forecasting the Australian dollar will remain between 90- 100 USc throughout 2010, export returns will continue to be affected.

"Although the international outlook is reasonably positive, higher commodity prices are testing demand in many key markets. There is a strong reliance on sustained economic recovery, especially in Japan, Europe and Russia and these fragile economies offer a mixed picture for the overall global outlook," Mr Halliday said.

*\*The latest Situation and Outlook 2010 February Update can be downloaded from the Dairy Australia website [www.dairyaustralia.com.au/situation-and-outlook](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/situation-and-outlook)*



## Young Dairy Development Program

### Congratulations Sarah Parker

One of the objectives of the Young Dairy Development Program (YDDP) is to develop the leadership abilities of young dairy farmers and service providers. Accordingly, we seek to improve young people's understanding of and access to leadership opportunities within the dairy industry.

Succession planning for the dairy industry is a major priority for farming, dairy industry supply chain and industry support organisations. YDDP often seeks to highlight people who have developed their career paths through the dairy industry.

To this end, the YDDP would like to congratulate one of the dairy industry's most talented young

professionals, Sarah Parker, who has recently been appointed as Acting CEO of Murray Dairy. YDDP congratulates Sarah on her appointment and thanks her for her commitment to YDDP over the last three years, initially as a member, and ultimately her appointment as Northern Regional Coordinator. A new career path has been established!

At the time of writing transition arrangements are yet to be finalised. Sarah will remain our contact person in the north until this process is completed.

### YDDP Social Networking

Many people have recently been involved with Dairy Australia's social network website Udderly Fantastic, which seeks to celebrate all of the great aspects of the dairy industry. YDDP, having a youthful membership, has two such websites which you may like to check out.

Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), log in and search for YDDP. Join in the discussion and meet some like minded young people.

### Gippsland

Congratulations to Michael Pridmore from Warragul who attended the Australian Dairy Conference at Wollongong on Feb 23 - 24. Michael was granted one of eight free registrations provided by the Conference Committee for young people across Australia, with travel and accommodation expenses covered by Dairy Australia.

Upcoming event: On Friday 12th March, a joint BBQ and is being held for YDDP and UDV members in Leongatha. Come along and hear a special guest speaker, and find out what both organisations can do for you! RSVP to GippsDairy on **5624 3900**.

### Contact details of YDDP Coordinators:

Northern	Sarah Parker 5833 5928, 0418 883 250
Gippsland	Kylie Barry 5624 3904, 0428 889 337
South West	Liza Fahey 5592 2477, 0408 141 820
State Coordinator	Bill Dullard 0402 059 116

See the website for event information:  
[www.yddp.org.au](http://www.yddp.org.au)

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