

GREEN *to* GOLD

SPRING
2024



There's always room for improvement

 **LIC**[®]
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT

Cultivating Connections

Welcome to our spring edition of Green to Gold. Approaching a year in the role of Country Manager, I've had the pleasure of getting out and about travelling throughout the regions.

In the last few months, I've visited Tasmania twice, ventured across to Western Districts, journeyed down to Mt Gambier in SA, and made my way up to the Cobram/Numurkah/Kyabram areas in Northern Victoria. As well as meeting our farmers, these trips involved attending industry events like Agfest in Tasmania and Dairy South Australia's Innovation Day in Mt Gambier.

The most fulfilling and the best part of my job is visiting farmers. While each farmer I meet is essentially engaged in the same task – producing milk – there is incredible diversity in how this is accomplished. From the variety of breeds; rotary sheds to herringbone dairies; smaller family operations to larger corporate farms, like our story on page 12 – everyone is doing something slightly different, and these differences are what makes it interesting.

With calving well underway, and finished in some areas, we are looking ahead to spring joining. In this edition of Green to Gold, we are highlighting some of our premium bulls on offer and talking about bull power.

In a year where farmers may be tempted to reduce AI usage, as they seek cost savings, it is very important to think about the whole mating period and to not underestimate the cost and number of bulls needed for tailing off after AI.



To wrap up, a memorable moment for me this year was arriving early one morning, along with Mike Waite, our District Manager for the area, to discuss our bull catalogue with farmer Dave Dowdell in South Australia, only to be greeted with a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs. Thank you David, for setting such a high standard!

Hilary Lunn
Country Manager



I work in all locations and situations – sometimes it's my home office in Gippsland and sometimes it's on the side of the road in South Australia!

Win New LIC Gear!

We've given out thousands of hats over the years and now we want to see how creatively you, your family, staff, and even your pets wear our LIC gear.

To enter:

1. Like LIC on Facebook.
2. Post a photo in the comments below showing your LIC gear (hat or any other item) in action.

You'll be in the draw to WIN:

- A brand new LIC hoodie
- A LIC hat
- A LIC shed apron
- A \$100 Bunnings gift card

Competition ends 31 October 2024. T&Cs apply.



Scan the QR code to visit our Facebook page and join the fun!

Good luck!

Show us how you wear your LIC gear and enter to win!





Inheriting Excellence

The progeny of Royson MG Currency S3F

Currency is renowned for producing standout udders, fabulous conformation, and tremendous fat and protein solids in milk.

Recently, Royson MG Currency was awarded the Mahoe Trophy by Holstein Friesian New Zealand (HFNZ) for having the highest aggregate points for breeding worth, protein, fat, fertility, functional survival, and type traits.

This award affirms the successful career Currency had, and now his legacy lives on in his progeny.

Like all LIC bulls, Royson MG Currency started his artificial breeding career going through the Sire Proving Scheme (SPS).

SPS is designed to identify the best of the best sires based on their daughter's production and conformation records.

Chris Michels has participated in the SPS for many years on his family farm in Te Aroha, Waikato and has one of the first Currency daughters in his herd. "She's a cracker. My preference is a more compact Friesian, so I particularly like her as she gives you a good, compact frame with loads of capacity."

Michael Burmeister has participated in the Sire Proving Scheme with his 1000 cow herd for 28 years and has eight daughters from Currency. "One in particular stands out for production, last season she milked well above the herd average and that says something for a young cow in her second lactation."

Currency has left an indelible mark with over 140,000 inseminations under his belt. He earned his spot in both the LIC Forward Pack and Daughter Proven teams showcasing his versatility and prowess.

Livestock Selection Manager Simon Worth says, "It comes as no surprise that Currency has proven to be a fabulous bull - take a look into the cow family he comes from, it is truly superb. Currency's creation was a true team effort, with his dam resulting from the Discovery Project (a joint venture programme with Holstein Friesian New Zealand (HFNZ)). Currency's contribution to this industry is truly significant."

Keeping it in the family - Currency's Great Grandam, Royson Oman Cybil cemented the superiority of this cow family as she was awarded the Valden Cow of the Year award at the recent HFNZ Conference.

Breeders Eddie and Kath Lambert say, "We feel incredibly honoured and humbled to be awarded not only the Mahoe Trophy for our bull Currency, but also the Valden Cow of the Year award for his Great Grandam Cybil. To be recognised as being a top Holstein Friesian breeder is truly a dream come true."



HFNZ Mahoe Trophy 2024: Royson MG Currency S3F, Royson Farms Ltd, Eddie & Kath Lambert

About Royson MG Currency

- Born in 2018
- Sired by 113086 - Maire IG Gauntlet: LIC's Gauntlet was the previous winner of the Mahoe Trophy (2017). A2A2 carrier
- Current gBW 443/92 (July 2024)
- Currency lives on through his four sons including 121011 - Lombardi Maverick who is available in the catalogue this year

How much bull power do you need?

Artificial breeding is a busy time on farm and before you know it, it's coming to an end. As the seasons change, your mating plan may need to change too.

Estimating heifer replacement numbers

Although replacement numbers can vary seasonally and among herds, as a general guideline, for farms with an average 50% conception rate, it typically requires approximately five inseminations to breed each replacement heifer and have her complete a first lactation in the herd.

Consult your vet or advisor about the number that is best for you to use.



With the shift in seasons, you may need to adjust your mating plan

Before you decide to stop AI joining, consider these three quick questions

1. Am I likely to get enough replacement heifer calves next year?
2. Do I have enough service bulls on hand to meet demand and minimise my herd's final empty rate?
3. Do I have returns from timed AI to consider in my plan?

You can use the guidelines below to estimate your numbers using your herd information for the mating season to date.

If your expectations are not being met, you can adjust your plan by considering options such as extending AI joining to:

- generate more replacements
- reduce bull-power requirements
- cover returns to timed AI programmes, or
- compact next year's calving.

Calculation

Total replacement semen inseminations used divided by 5 = estimated expected heifers in the herd.

Note: The 5 inseminations figure allows for losses between the point of conception and the end of the first lactation as well as for some discretionary culling for reasons other than reproductive failure of cows that may be pregnant to AI.

Estimating bull power requirements

Follow the steps below to estimate the number of bulls required on your farm. Insert your own figures for herd size, inseminations and conception rate.

(If you are unsure of your herd's conception rate, check with your rural professional to determine the figure you should use. The New Zealand national average is approximately 52%.)

1. Calculate your expected number of pregnant cows:
 $\text{Total insem} \times \text{conception rate} = \text{estimated pregnancies.}$
2. Subtract the pregnant cows from the total herd size to get non-pregnant cows.

3. Divide the number of non-pregnant cows by 15 to get the estimated number of bulls required on farm to meet natural mating period requirements at the ratios explained in the assumptions below.

For example, a 1000 cow herd that has had 1200 matings:

- $1200 \times 50\% = 600$ estimated cows pregnant
- $1000 - 600 = 400$ estimated cows non-pregnant
- $400 / 15 = 27$ estimated bulls required on farm (without spares).

Assumptions

New Zealand bull power recommendations allow for:

- one healthy fertile two-year-old bull per 30 non-pregnant mixed age cows, and
- two teams of bulls, rotated every 24 to 48 hours. 1:15 available on farm for mixed age cows.

And remember, you'll need more bull power in the field if you have days with returns to synchrony treatments.

Joyce Voogt
LIC International
Technical Manager

For more information about your local recommendations on bull numbers and management talk to your vet. Contact your District Manager to explore AI options that can assist you in achieving your goals.

Service bulls are like elite athletes

Just like elite athletes, bulls need to be in top physical shape to perform at their best. Joining is not over at the end of AI on most farms. Ensure that your natural mating service bulls are also in peak physical condition before they head out into the field to maximise successful mating.

1. Have enough of the right players

To calculate the number of bulls required, firstly calculate the number of cows still left to get in calf after AI.

You'll need one 2-year-old bull in the paddock for every 30 of these non-pregnant cows with a minimum of two bulls. Double this number of bulls to get your two teams.

Remember you'll need extras to cover synchrony returns; or you could resume AI between days 18-24 post synchrony to cover returns.

If your numbers are inadequate consider extending AI for a week or two. Talk to your vet about options.

2. Picking the team

Source enough fit, well-conditioned bulls; and reject scruffy characters.

If in doubt get them health checked; you can't afford a dud.

Talk to your vet about required testing and vaccination regimes for your bulls.

3. Watch the players

Are they getting the job done?

Plenty can go wrong with bulls, so regular observation of them working is essential to identify problems early.

If he's not up to the job, we recommend removing and replacing him as soon as possible.

4. Rotation policy

Rotate your bull teams regularly (eg. every 48 hours) to help keep your bulls interested in the cows and to optimise their performance.

These resting players still need high quality feed; so make sure your bull paddock has adequate feed.

5. Save their feet

Lameness is serious and a waste of a good player! Prevention strategies are important.

Leave them in the paddock, don't let them onto the yard, avoid long walks on rough tracks, and don't hassle them with the dogs.

6. Safety first

Make sure that your staff are trained to work with bulls.

If there are any bulls that are aggressive, replace them to reduce the risk of injury to staff and cows.

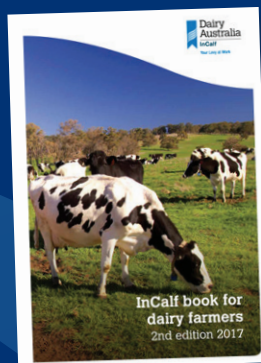
Make sure natural mating bulls are in peak condition to ensure a successful mating season.

7. After-match review

Use pregnancy testing information to assess how the natural mating period went: early-aged pregnancy testing generates in-calf rate graphs in your InCalf Detailed Fertility Focus Report that will show you how things went through the whole of mating.

Your vet can help you choose PD dates for your individual herd that will provide sufficient information to generate this version of the report.

Joyce Voogt
LIC International
Technical Manager



For additional support with bull management while they're already in the herd, refer to Dairy Australia's InCalf Book Section E Bull Management, page 113.

Download your free copy of the InCalf Book™ from www.dairyaustralia.com.au

A selection of our new bulls for 2024

Holstein Friesian



Ultraplus

RETAIL \$25.00 + GST
SEXED \$54.00 + GST

Daughter of 120073 ALLOY

**120073 MEANDER
TS ALLOY-ET S1F**

Holstein Friesian



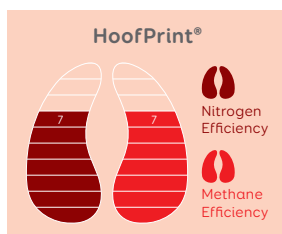
RETAIL \$25.00 + GST

**120070 MEANDER
TD AERO-ET S1F**

gBW **\$479/91%** REL

Breeding Details

NASIS	NZGALLOY
Breed	F16
Pedigree	SUPERVISOR x ILLUSTRIOUS



NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values		203 Daughters	
Milk Volume (litres)	506	Fertility %	3.6
Fat kg	67	Body Condition Score	0.15
Fat %	5.6	Functional Survival	3.0
Protein kg	37	Calving Difficulty (cow)	-0.2
Protein %	4.1	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	1.7
SCC	-0.02	Gestation Length (days)	-7.8
Liveweight	77	Beta-Casein	A1/A2

NZ Evaluation Data

Traits other than production

Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.29				
Shed Temperament	0.28				
Milking Speed	0.31				
Overall Opinion	0.46				
Conformation (125 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	0.55				
Capacity	-0.13				
Rump Angle	-0.32				
Rump Width	0.65				
Legs	-0.21				
Udder Support	0.21				
Front Udder	-0.05				
Rear Udder	0.41				
Front Teat Placement	-0.17				
Rear Teat Placement	-0.39				
Teat Length	0.08				
Udder Overall	0.21				
Dairy Conformation	-0.12				

26/07/2024

Australian Indices

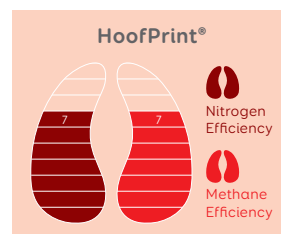
Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024

BPI/REL %	323/68	Survival	100
ASI	250	Daughter Fertility	116
HWI	367	Calving Ease	104
Milk	-493	Overall Type	80
Fat kg	42	Protein kg	18

gBW **\$422/87%** REL

Breeding Details

NASIS	NZGAERO
Breed	F15J1
Pedigree	DARKSTAR x HOTHOUSE



NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values		104 Daughters	
Milk Volume (litres)	655	Fertility %	3.9
Fat kg	47	Body Condition Score	0.04
Fat %	5.0	Functional Survival	5.5
Protein kg	39	Calving Difficulty (cow)	1.2
Protein %	4.1	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	3.3
SCC	-0.14	Gestation Length (days)	-4.9
Liveweight	56	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NZ Evaluation Data

Traits other than production

Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.34				
Shed Temperament	0.33				
Milking Speed	0.47				
Overall Opinion	0.49				
Conformation (93 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	0.64				
Capacity	0.10				
Rump Angle	-0.20				
Rump Width	0.02				
Legs	-0.31				
Udder Support	0.54				
Front Udder	0.57				
Rear Udder	0.20				
Front Teat Placement	0.31				
Rear Teat Placement	0.13				
Teat Length	-0.04				
Udder Overall	0.56				
Dairy Conformation	0.21				

26/07/2024

Australian Indices

Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024

BPI/REL %	245/64	Survival	99
ASI	185	Daughter Fertility	108
HWI	256	Calving Ease	103
Milk	-363	Overall Type	84
Fat kg	23	Protein kg	16

KiwiCross®

RETAIL
\$21.00
+15¢

519089 SCHRADERS
TRADER

KiwiCross®

RETAIL
\$25.00
+15¢

Daughter of 520068 MALAWI

520068 MORGANS
MALAWI

gBW

\$475/88%

REL

HoofPrint®

8

8

Nitrogen Efficiency

Methane Efficiency

Breeding Details

NASIS

NZGTRADER

Breed

F10J6

Pedigree

SILVER LINING x ATHLETE

gBW

\$454/89%

REL

HoofPrint®

7

7

Nitrogen Efficiency

Methane Efficiency

Breeding Details

NASIS

NZGMALAWI

Breed

F12J4

Pedigree

TRIUMPHANT x BULLION

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values		81 Daughters	
Milk Volume (litres)	1305	Fertility %	1.3
Fat kg	65	Body Condition Score	0.11
Fat %	4.8	Functional Survival	3.3
Protein kg	50	Calving Difficulty (cow)	-0.4
Protein %	3.8	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	0.5
SCC	0.51	Gestation Length (days)	-11.3
Liveweight	44	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS

Daughter Proven

NZ Breeding Values		147 Daughters	
Milk Volume (litres)	751	Fertility %	3.3
Fat kg	62	Body Condition Score	0.17
Fat %	5.2	Functional Survival	4.9
Protein kg	33	Calving Difficulty (cow)	-0.2
Protein %	3.9	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	1.8
SCC	0.28	Gestation Length (days)	-3.5
Liveweight	45	Beta-Casein	A2/A2

NZ Evaluation Data

Traits other than production

Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.08				
Shed Temperament	0.06				
Milking Speed	0.53				
Overall Opinion	0.26				

Conformation (72 daughters TOP tested)

Stature	0.55				
Capacity	1.12				
Rump Angle	0.21				
Rump Width	0.13				
Legs	-0.02				
Udder Support	0.17				
Front Udder	-0.14				
Rear Udder	0.13				
Front Teat Placement	0.01				
Rear Teat Placement	0.44				
Teat Length	0.27				
Udder Overall	0.05				
Dairy Conformation	1.09				

26/07/2024

NZ Evaluation Data

Traits other than production

Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.10				
Shed Temperament	0.09				
Milking Speed	0.17				
Overall Opinion	0.30				

Conformation (94 daughters TOP tested)

Stature	0.27				
Capacity	0.28				
Rump Angle	0.17				
Rump Width	-0.06				
Legs	-0.01				
Udder Support	0.57				
Front Udder	0.05				
Rear Udder	0.54				
Front Teat Placement	0.36				
Rear Teat Placement	0.91				
Teat Length	0.13				
Udder Overall	0.52				
Dairy Conformation	0.36				

26/07/2024

Australian Indices

Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024

BPI/REL %	178/62	Survival	95
ASI	221	Daughter Fertility	113
HWI	198	Calving Ease	0
Milk	-5	Overall Type	88
Fat kg	37	Protein kg	21

Australian Indices

Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024

BPI/REL %	215/49	Survival	97
ASI	188	Daughter Fertility	109
HWI	237	Calving Ease	0
Milk	-279	Overall Type	90
Fat kg	42	Protein kg	12


Jersey



RETAIL
\$21.00
+GST

322034 SCOTTSDALE KP
CALVARY-ET

Jersey

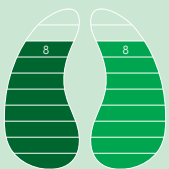


RETAIL
\$25.00
+GST

320029 ROCKLAND
LQ BERKLY

\$407/55%
gBW REL

HoofPrint®



Nitrogen
Efficiency
Methane
Efficiency

Breeding Details

NASIS

NZGCALVARY

Breed

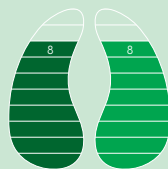
J16

Pedigree

POPEYE x FLOYD

\$532/91%
gBW REL

HoofPrint®



Nitrogen
Efficiency
Methane
Efficiency

Breeding Details

NASIS

NZGBERKLEY

Breed

J16

Pedigree

QUADRANT x LARSON

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS				Genomically Selected
NZ Breeding Values		0 Daughters		
Milk Volume (litres)	-239	Fertility %	7.4	
Fat kg	35	Body Condition Score	0.32	
Fat %	5.8	Functional Survival	3.8	
Protein kg	14	Calving Difficulty (cow)	-1.4	
Protein %	4.3	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	-2.3	
SCC	0.09	Gestation Length (days)	-3.0	
Liveweight	10	Beta-Casein	A2/A2	

NEW ZEALAND DETAILS				Daughter Proven
NZ Breeding Values		217 Daughters		
Milk Volume (litres)	-57	Fertility %	1.5	
Fat kg	58	Body Condition Score	-0.05	
Fat %	6.1	Functional Survival	3.1	
Protein kg	26	Calving Difficulty (cow)	-0.6	
Protein %	4.4	Calving Difficulty (heifer)	-2.4	
SCC	-0.13	Gestation Length (days)	0.3	
Liveweight	-16	Beta-Casein	A2/A2	

NZ Evaluation Data		Traits other than production			
Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.61				
Shed Temperament	0.62				
Milking Speed	0.22				
Overall Opinion	0.65				
Conformation (0 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	-0.25				
Capacity	1.04				
Rump Angle	0.07				
Rump Width	0.40				
Legs	0.10				
Udder Support	0.62				
Front Udder	0.44				
Rear Udder	0.82				
Front Teat Placement	0.21				
Rear Teat Placement	0.56				
Teat Length	0.13				
Udder Overall	0.70				
Dairy Conformation	0.96				

NZ Evaluation Data		Traits other than production			
Management	gBV	-0.5	0	0.5	1.0
Adaptability to Milking	0.53				
Shed Temperament	0.52				
Milking Speed	0.39				
Overall Opinion	0.69				
Conformation (135 daughters TOP tested)					
Stature	-0.16				
Capacity	0.30				
Rump Angle	-0.26				
Rump Width	-0.26				
Legs	-0.02				
Udder Support	0.62				
Front Udder	0.61				
Rear Udder	1.12				
Front Teat Placement	0.08				
Rear Teat Placement	0.00				
Teat Length	0.48				
Udder Overall	0.84				
Dairy Conformation	0.34				

Australian Indices		Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024	
BPI/REL %	123/48	Survival	100
ASI	140	Daughter Fertility	103
HWI	80	Liveweight	102
Milk	-249	Overall Type	89
Fat kg	27	Protein kg	9

Australian Indices		Source: DataGene 6 Aug 2024	
BPI/REL %	306/50	Survival	99
ASI	302	Daughter Fertility	101
HWI	182	Liveweight	105
Milk	-13	Overall Type	96
Fat kg	53	Protein kg	28

FAST FORWARD Team™

Accelerate your herd's genetic gain

AVAILABLE
THIS SPRING!

Enhanced genetic selection

Harnessing the power of some of our most elite genomic sires, the Fast Forward Team™ is aimed at accelerating genetic gain within your herd whilst simplifying your mating decisions. This new offering also allows for the inclusion of daughter-proven sires, ensuring a robust mating program that optimises both productivity and profitability.

With a group of bulls carefully selected by our Livestock Selection team based on key traits such as production, fertility, health traits and conformation, farmers have access to an exceptional group of bulls whose breeding values, even as a team, rival those of many individual elite daughter proven sires. This is demonstrated by the combined breeding worth of the Fast Forward Team of 83 gBW points higher than the top seven Holstein Friesian and KiwiCross® sires being marketed in Australia by LIC.

Driving greater efficiency and profitability

Through strong investment into research and development, our genomic sires consistently deliver higher rates of genetic gain. As a result, the gap between genomic and daughter proven sires is widening, and the variation within the genomic group is decreasing, therefore providing farmers with greater confidence.

New Zealand farmers have benefited from these gains, with the average gBW (genomic Breeding Worth) of replacement animals increasing by over 70% from 9 gBW per year between 2012 and 2016, to 16 gBW between 2017 and 2020.

This increase is particularly impactful, as every 10 gBW point increase per cow correlates with an additional 2.3 kg milksolids per cow annually.¹ This rapid improvement in genetic gain has a significant financial impact on farm and in the milk vat.

Optimising genetic diversity and performance

Another positive of The Fast Forward Team™ is the team effect, offering genetic diversity. This approach not only mitigates the impact of individual bull performance but also enhances the range of progeny characteristics, bolstering overall herd resilience and productivity.

For more information on the Fast Forward Team™ and how it can benefit your operation, scan the webinar QR code, visit our website or contact us today.

¹Source: Demystifying the black box' article, Dairy NZ (July 2014 Technical Series)

How the Fast Forward Team works

- A selection of LIC's elite genomic sires make up the Fast Forward Team
- A team of five to seven sires will be allocated
- The sires are hand-picked by LIC breeding managers to ensure high genetic merit, all-round performance and strong cow families
- An even spread of straws from bulls in the team will be supplied
- Minimum of 50 straws per order
- Available from spring 2024

Terms and conditions apply

\$23.00^{+GST} - Team price per straw

For more information talk to your District Manager.



**SCAN THE QR CODE
TO WATCH THE
WEBINAR**

Curious about how the Fast Forward Team™ can benefit your operation?

Scan the QR code to access our recorded webinar to learn how you can accelerate your herd's genetic gain when you incorporate the Fast Forward Team™ into your breeding program.

Discover how this team of elite young bulls has the potential to breed better cows faster and enhance your farm profits.

Mastering the Art of Artificial Insemination: NZ DIY Training Course

Excelling in artificial insemination (AI) is crucial for improving breeding efficiency. For those eager to refine their AI techniques, LIC offers a unique DIY course that combines essential knowledge with hands-on experience.

Course Structure and Objectives

The DIY course spans one intensive week, with a blend of theoretical instruction and hands-on practice, in real-world settings. Here's a breakdown of what participants can expect:

Day 1: The Art of Insemination

- Participants dive into the fundamentals of AI, learning techniques crucial for successful insemination. The emphasis is on precision and understanding the reproductive physiology of cows.

Days 2-5: Practical Application

- The heart of the course unfolds as trainees transition to live animals in a purpose-built training facility, where they undertake a challenging task: attempting a minimum of 100 inseminations. Each attempt is closely supervised and evaluated by experienced instructors to ensure mastery and accuracy.



Trainees learn the 'art of insemination' on LIC's lifelike artificial training cow, 'Henryetta'

Certification and Skill Development

Upon completion, participants receive a certificate, acknowledging their participation in the rigorous training program. Trainees are assessed on each attempt at insemination aiming for a qualifying pass percentage.

With a remarkable 99% pass rate after attempting 149 cows in just three days, Matt Cowie's exceptional achievement underscores the course's intensity and effectiveness. (Of course, his prior experience with cow insemination did give him a bit of an edge!)

Benefits and Practical Considerations for Participants

For Australians seeking to participate, the course offers a unique opportunity to refine their skills independently.

Previous participants have included individuals from breeding companies as well as farmers looking to perform DIY insemination on their own herd.

For those passionate about enhancing and mastering their skills in Artificial Insemination, structured training remains an invaluable investment.

Combining theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, equips participants with the skills necessary for success.

For those interested in DIY AI Training, please contact your District Manager for further information and details on the next available course.

Shared success - 2024's Australian trainees



Matt's Transformative Experience with LIC's AI Training in New Zealand



Matt Cowie

For over a decade, Matt and Tracy Cowie have been contract milkers at Oamaru Park Farm in Mt Gambier, overseeing the growth of the herd from 420 to 480 cows.

Reflecting on his recent participation in the LIC New Zealand AI training course, Matt enthusiastically shares insights into what he learned, and the skills gained.

For the past 14 years, Matt has been doing artificial insemination (AI) on his own herd, with the last 6 years focused on the tail end of AI. Despite being largely self-taught and receiving guidance from AI technicians, Matt decided it was time to undergo formal training. This led him to LIC's AI training course, and the experience proved to be both enlightening and rewarding.

Matt explains, "Finding highly skilled instructors can be challenging, so choosing LIC's AI training course offered a significant advantage, due to quality technicians and the exceptional program."

Matt describes the AI training in New Zealand as very well-organised. From the moment he arrived, everything was seamlessly arranged, including transport and accommodation.

The training facility itself was purpose-built, featuring an AI race and other specialised equipment, and the instructors were not only highly skilled but also personable and approachable.

The experience was further enriched by the presence of other Australian technicians and farmers, who, like Matt, were eager to refine their skills and learn new techniques.

One of the most significant takeaways for Matt was the confirmation that he was already on the right track with his techniques, along with a deeper understanding of best practices to minimise both physical strain on himself and impact on the animals.

The training emphasised the importance of a clear and calm approach, ensuring minimal stress for both the livestock and those involved in the process.

Matt found the course to be highly beneficial, particularly in refining his methods and learning about advanced techniques that he had not encountered before.

The camaraderie among the participants, who came from various parts of Australia, added an element of enjoyment to the training. They stayed in the same accommodation, dined together, and even participated in local activities like quiz nights, fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment.



Visiting mega cow 'Mabel' in Morrinsville

"The LIC AI training course taught me the proper techniques and has given me the confidence to manage AI for our entire herd."

Overall, Matt's experience in New Zealand was invaluable, equipping him with the skills and confidence to enhance his AI practices.

Matt's advice for other farmers considering the course, "Gain some basic experience beforehand and to approach the training with an open and positive attitude."

When training ends, the pub quiz begins!



Detail and Dedication Wins Top Award



Dalmore Dairy - Nick Robinson and manager Mahesh Gampala. Picture supplied by Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture

Dalmore Dairy, located in Dairy Plains, Tasmania, was honoured with the 2024 Dairy Business of the Year Award (DBOY) this year, marking a significant accomplishment and recognising the hard work and dedication of farm manager Mahesh Gampala and his team. The competition covered the 2022-23 season, where the farm had a 12.5% return on assets.

Mahesh reveals, "Becoming a finalist has helped me see that I'm doing really well."

He emphasises the benefits of participating in the competition, saying that it keeps him informed about the farm's progress. It also allows him to observe the strategies of other top-performing farms, identifying areas of excellence from which to learn.

Dalmore Dairy is owned by the BWB Investment Group, which acquired the farm in 2017, expanding its portfolio to include a total of seven dairy farms. Each farm is operated with its own team and manager who collaborates closely with the BWB Group and other stakeholders regarding budgets and planning.

Mahesh, employed as the farm manager, oversees four full-time staff members: Nick Robinson, Christina Alderson, Jim Payne and Jack Herring.

Mahesh has been a resident of Australia for seven years. His journey into dairy farming began with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science from India, followed by a Master's degree from the University of Tasmania. Five years ago he started working as assistant manager at Dalmore while he continued his studies, advancing to the position of farm manager two seasons ago.

Reflecting on his journey, Mahesh credits his success to the support and mentoring he's received, highlighting the nurturing environment provided by BWB. "They don't just leave you to fend for yourself," he notes. "They allow you to make decisions while ensuring you have the support you need to succeed."

Currently milking 900 cows, split over two herds, Mahesh found it was a mixed bag of breeds when he first took over management. Now, they are predominantly New Zealand crossbred cows.

Mahesh has very few issues with mastitis and is currently bringing heifers into the dairy with minimal kicking issues; they are settled and exhibit good temperament. He has achieved great results in production over the last 2-3 years. The joining period spans 9 weeks in total, beginning with AI for 4-5 weeks followed by the introduction of herd bulls. Last season, the 6-week in-calf rate was 85%, contributing to an overall in-calf rate of 94%.

The herds are spring calving, with BWB Group's breeding goal aimed at producing a 480 kg cow capable of yielding her body weight in milksolids. This aligns with Mahesh's philosophy to be both environmentally and financially sustainable.



Picture supplied by DairyTas - Nathan Bakker

Last season, the cows achieved 478 kg MS/cow, while the previous year they produced 474 kg MS/cow. They adopt a low-input system, with the herd consuming around 1.2 tonnes of grain annually.

The 50-bale rotary dairy is connected to a herd management system featuring automatic cup removers, automatic teat spray and auto-drafting gates, minimising labour and maximising productivity. The farm also features a calving shed and feed pad capable of accommodating up to 450 cows at one time. Shielding the cows from the elements reduces labour needs during calving and simplifies monitoring efforts. This has already shown a decrease in calf mortality attributed to the cleaner environment.

With the assistance of his LIC District Manager, Rowan Priest, Mahesh selects his bulls with emphasis placed on BW because the index places importance on his desired traits. He also considers temperament, fertility, and somatic cell count (SCC). Mahesh values Rowan's expertise and guidance, particularly in choosing bulls for the yearlings and ensuring easy calving options. Knowing that his heifers represent his best genetics, he aims to match them with top-quality genetics while avoiding any calving complications.

Monthly team meetings are held to address any issues and discuss plans for the coming month, as well as collect feedback from the team. As part of ongoing support, he encourages each member to pursue industry training in their areas of interest to advance their careers.



"I believe people are the key to any successful business" Mahesh adds "I like to involve everyone in the business and ask them about their future plans."

Mahesh has a keen and detailed focus on pasture management, something the DBOY judges recognised. Every week, he conducts a pasture walk, recording grass cover data into an app on his phone, an easy and efficient way to optimise feed management of the perennial ryegrass/ clover pastures. He also tests the soil annually and monitors soil compaction. Twice a year, feed quality tests are conducted on grass samples collected throughout the farm, highlighting any potential issues.

"Walking the farm is key to seeing what's going on in each paddock and the farm as a whole. I get to see what's happening with the grass," says Mahesh.

Staff are also trained to use a plate meter for measuring residues in the paddock, with target post-grazing residual set at 1550-1600 kilograms of dry matter per hectare.

Mahesh emphasises his focus on sustainable practices, such as using recycled water to wash the yard, significantly reducing water consumption.

The farm has four centre pivot irrigators equipped with satellite GPS, managed via a phone app to adjust application rates and stop-start the machines. Additionally, there is a solid-set irrigation system that operates on solar power.

With a grazing area of 270ha, last season they experienced very dry conditions, putting pressure on their bore water systems. Subsequently, they have installed additional irrigation, now covering 210ha of land. Adding to this investment, Mahesh mentions underground drainage has been installed over recent years and

they are currently exploring options for virtual fencing technology and collars across the herd.

Due to the farm's tendency to become quite wet during winter months, Mahesh adds that the herd is agisted off-farm while the cows are dried off.

As he looks to the future, Mahesh says that there are a lot of positive aspects being a part of the dairy industry and it is not only a profession but a passion for him.



Mahesh Gampala receiving his Dairy Business of the Year Award. Picture supplied by DairyTas Dairy Australia

"I really enjoy the lifestyle of being a dairy farmer, I like the routine of it and I love the community. I'm surrounded by really good people."

"With rising production costs and fluctuating milk prices, it has become more important than ever to maximise milk production. It is crucial to use sustainable farming practices to ensure longevity and resilience of our farms for future generations."

Mahesh and his team's dedication to incorporating further advancements in dairy farming practices will ensure Dalmore Dairy remains a beacon of excellence in Tasmania's agricultural landscape.

Out and About: With LIC Australia



Gippsland District Manager, Cathy Cole with Jason and Deena Tharle at GippsDairst Muster



Hilary Lunn with Tasmanian farmer Tim Harris



Listening intently to Mark Miers - Clovelly Farms, Tasmania



South Australia Dairy Innovation Day dinner. L to R Sean Durcan, Matt Proctor, Mike Waite & Grant Archer



South Australia Dairy Innovation Day dinner - Hilary with Dairy SA's Abbie Taylor



Tim Harris' KiwiCross® sired calves at Edith Creek - eager for their close-up



Did the straws get mixed up? A curious lamb cozies up with the calves in Ben and Michelle Walker's calf shed



Hilary and Rowan enjoying the sunshine on a stunning Tasmanian day



Tasmanian District Manager, Rowan Priest and Jeffery Gijsbers checking out the heifers



LIC District Managers Rowan, Cathy and Mike ready to connect with farmers at Agfest in Tasmania



Mike Waite, Ben, Michelle & Murphy Walker check out their calf shed in Mt Shank SA



A frosty morning and crisp horizon in Tasmania

Cracking The Code - Genetic Improvement Events: A Decoding Success!



Simon Worth | Livestock Selection Manager LIC

Our recent farmer evenings delved into the future of Herd Improvement, harnessing the power of genomic technology to propel your herd towards achieving its highest genetic potential.

Topics Covered:

- The power of Genomics
- Reflecting on our progress and planning future strides
- Fast Forward Team™ genomic pack insights
- 2024 Sire Catalogue

If you missed the 'Cracking The Code' presentations led by Simon Worth, Livestock Selection Manager – don't worry! Simply email us at admin@licaus.com.au, and we'll send you a link to watch the full event video.

An engaging and insightful night enjoyed by all.



Simon Worth engaging with a crowd of attentive farmers in Leongatha, Gippsland



A resounding success! - 'Cracking the Code' event held at Colac, Victoria



Simon Worth's barnyard brilliance on the Wyss farm in Boorcan, Victoria: Cracking the code on herd improvement, one hay-bale brainstorm at a time!



Western Districts District Manager Mike Waite and Simon Worth take a break at event in Colac, Victoria



Congratulations to Gippsland farmer Tim Barker on winning the prize pack at the Leongatha 'Cracking the Code' presentation!



Simon Worth takes a well-deserved break with the LIC Australian team in Colac

Q.

How do I identify
more cows on heat
this season?

A.



ON APPLICATION

1 MOUNTING

3-5
MOUNTINGS

OVER 5
MOUNTINGS

Indicative results dependent on the amount of bulling activity that has occurred.

Use LIC Scratch Patch heat detectors to help choose the best time to inseminate your cows. These cost-effective heat detection aids are self-adhesive and come in five highly visible colours.

The friction base technology helps indicate the level of mating activity and minimise false positives, leading to improved AI results. This gives you more cows in-calf, extra milk in the vat and higher profitability on farm.

Contact your District Manager for a free sample pack.

1800 454 694 | admin@licaus.com.au

PACK OF 50