SPRING 2026

Green to Gold

LIC®
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT

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25 YEARS IN AUSTRALIA

Turning potential into performance

With spring calving underway, it's a great time to see calves on the ground from last year's breeding decisions, alongside cows in the dairy for the first time that reflect the breeding choices made even earlier. It's a timely reminder of the long-term impact of breeding decisions and the value of getting them right.

Hilary Lunn
Country Manager Australia

That focus on long-term gain is a theme that runs throughout this edition of Green to Gold, highlighting the innovation, resilience, and progress being demonstrated across our industry. Despite ongoing challenges, it's encouraging to see the continued emphasis on breeding more balanced, efficient and profitable cows through genetics and sustainable improvement – all of which underpin long-term success for our farmers.

Across this edition, you'll find a range of insights, learnings, and opportunities that highlight how farmers are delivering stronger results. From on-farm successes to new opportunities, a clear theme emerges: turning potential into performance and green into gold.

As LIC Australia celebrates 25 years of officially operating here, we're also recognising a very special milestone for one of our own. Office Manager, Liz McVey, reaches an incredible 20 years with the business this year.

Liz is truly the glue that holds everything together – keeping us organised, supporting us every step of the way, and making a difference day after day. Liz, thank you for your unwavering dedication, positivity and the passion you bring to our business. We are incredibly grateful to have you as part of the team.

Where did 20 years go?

Wow... 20 years! Honestly, I'm still trying to figure out where all that time went. It feels like I just started and, somehow, here we are two decades later.

After starting as the administration assistant with just a day and a half of training and a simple 'Just email me if you get stuck' from the office manager in Melbourne, it certainly has been an adventure. There have been plenty of challenges, changes, a few curveballs, and more than a few "well, that was interesting" moments along the way!

I've been incredibly lucky to work with such amazing people over the years. Even better, many of those work connections have turned into real friendships, with some lasting well beyond our time together at LIC.

I've always tried to be someone who supports the team and helps wherever I can – whether that's here in Australia or across the ditch in New Zealand.

Thank you to everyone who's been part of the journey, past and present. You've made the last 20 years not just manageable, but genuinely enjoyable.

And don't worry... I'm not going anywhere just yet!

Cover photo of Nick Lowe & Annie Burford courtesy of Burra Foods.

Our People Our Insights

Meet some of the people behind LIC, both in New Zealand and across the globe. Learn about their roles and gain insights from the knowledge and experience they bring to helping farmers succeed.

Scan me

LIC®
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT

More Milk, More Profit

Boost your milk yield and financial returns with our SGL sires.

By using SGL Compact® sires you can reduce gestation length by up to 12 days.

A cost-effective and convenient alternative to traditional natural mating bulls.

Here's what mating your return cows with SGL sires could mean for your farm:

"We have shortened our calving period to 5 weeks for the main herd with average calving reduced by 10 days.

Also, made a significant saving in labour, AI time and general mucking around"

Ben Bennett - Pomborneit, VICTORIA

"I have reduced my calving spread from 11 weeks to 8 weeks and by doing this I have gained an extra 3 weeks of milk in the vat from these later calving cows"

Chris Bagot - Gippsland, VICTORIA

"I used SGL Compact to get more days in milk and to increase my profit by having more cows in the vat earlier.

Also to take pressure off staff by shortening up my calving period"

Jon Ryan - Gippsland, VICTORIA

NOTE: SGL Compact® Offspring must not be bred. See: licnz.com.au/about/terms-conditions

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LIC®
LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT

Genetic gain

Why bull team movement signals progress

Izzy Willison
Head of Genetics

In the past, a bull could remain in a team for several years with little change, but today, that's no longer the case.

Bulls move in and out of our teams more frequently than they used to, sometimes raising questions about the overall strength of the team.

In reality, it reflects the faster pace of genetic progress and more precise selection tools now available to identify the animals with the greatest potential.

The speed of genetic gain

The rate of genetic progress in the New Zealand dairy sector has accelerated significantly over the past decade. Advances in genomic testing, data collection and genetic evaluation systems mean we can identify an animal's genetic merit earlier and with greater accuracy than ever before.

Through our GeneMark® Genomics service, more than two million animals have been genotyped. This information strengthens LIC's genomic predictions, providing greater confidence in an animal's potential. As more information becomes available, breeding values can change – some may increase and some may decrease. This is not a weakness in the system; it is the result of having more accurate information and continually improving our understanding of an animal's genetic ability.

The result is greater confidence that the genetics farmers invest in today will help deliver more fertile, efficient and longer-lasting cows that continue to add value to their herds over time.

More data means more clarity

New Zealand has one of the most comprehensive dairy genomic databases in the world. Milk production, fertility, health and conformation traits, longevity, calving difficulty, and efficiency data flow in from herds nationwide each season. Combined with genomic information, this creates a powerful picture of an animal's breeding worth.

Multiple genetic evaluations are released each year, with new data continually feeding into the New Zealand Animal Evaluation (NZAEL) model. This ongoing stream of information provides sharper insight into how bulls rank relative to their peers, and in a rapidly advancing genetic landscape, even very good bulls can quickly be surpassed.

This is why a team approach is important. Rather than relying on a single animal, farmers benefit from access to a group of high-performing genomic bulls selected to deliver balanced, efficient and profitable cows.

A stronger pool of genetics

Equally important is the size and quality of the candidate pool. Genomic testing has greatly expanded the number of young bulls that can be accurately assessed each year, increasing competition among top sires for a place in the team.

Twenty years ago, selection decisions were made with less information and a smaller candidate pool.

Today, stronger data and greater selection intensity mean bull teams are more refined, representing the very best genetics available to farmers.

Protecting farmer progress

More frequent movement within bull teams reflects the industry's focus on maximising herd improvement and accelerating efficiency gains.

If bulls remained in teams simply because they were 'good enough', genetic progress would slow. By actively reviewing and updating teams as new information emerges, we ensure farmers continue to access genetics that support ongoing improvement in fertility, efficiency, longevity and profitability.

Faster bull team movement is a sign of a high-performing, data-driven breeding programme. It signals that genetic gain is accelerating, selection pressure is strong, the benchmark for excellence keeps rising and farmers are receiving the best available genetics each season.

Dairy farmers operate in a competitive environment where efficiency, sustainability and productivity matter more than ever. Rapid genetic advancement helps build resilient, profitable herds that make the most of pasture-based systems. When bulls move out of a team today, it is rarely because they were not good enough. More often, new data has identified genetics with even greater potential, backed by stronger reliability and confidence for farmers.

From high performance to herd performance

Richard Hamilton's journey has taken him from the heights of elite sport to a life centred on purpose-driven leadership.

After representing Great Britain as an Olympic rower at the 1996 Olympic Games, Richard stepped away from high-performance sport and eventually found his way to Victoria's Mitta Valley, having first discovered a passion for dairying in New Zealand. While the setting has changed dramatically, the principles remained the same: discipline, resilience and a relentless work ethic.

That same mindset underpins the way he approaches farming – where performance, consistency, and continuous improvement are central to success.

Set on rolling, irrigated country in northeast Victoria, Mitta Agricultural Company has built a dairy operation that reflects this philosophy in action. Under Richard's leadership, the farm produces close to 2 kilograms of milksolids per cow per day, with a split-calving system built around a simple principle – profitability is driven by margin per cow, not production at any cost. That clarity has shaped decisions right across the farm, from infrastructure through to genetics and feeding.

The dairy itself reflects a deliberate return to simplicity. Installed in the mid-1980s, the old rotary remains largely unchanged. Rather than chasing the latest technology, the focus has been on reliability and functionality.

"Do the basics well and keep it simple" says Richard.

The setup is straightforward, with basic pulsators and minimal complexity, ensuring the system runs consistently with fewer breakdowns or disruptions. By keeping things simple, the team can focus on performance where it matters most – in the cows and in day-to-day management.

That clarity of purpose extends to the type of cow the system is built around. Rather than chasing extremes in size or production, the focus is on efficient, functional animals that suit the environment. Medium-framed cows, typically around 500 to 550 kilograms, perform best. They move easily through the rotary, hold condition well, and place less pressure on paddocks. Over time, the herd has shifted towards the use of KiwiCross® bulls, improving uniformity and delivering cows with strong rumen capacity, good temperament and high fertility. These are cows designed to last and perform consistently.

Richard focuses on balanced cows that perform consistently and fit the farming system

Fertility is treated as a non-negotiable trait within the system. Breeding decisions are tightly controlled, with a strong focus on selecting from first-calving animals and removing those that fail to meet expectations. Animals are given an opportunity to prove themselves, but not repeatedly. This disciplined approach has lifted overall herd performance and ensured resources are directed toward the most productive animals.

A major driver behind this success is the emphasis placed on youngstock development. From birth, every calf is monitored closely, with weights recorded regularly and growth tracked against clear benchmarks. Heifers are only joined once they reach sufficient size, ensuring they enter the milking herd with the strength and capacity needed to perform. The results are visible in the animals themselves – strong, well-grown heifers with the rumen capacity to convert feed efficiently from an early age.

It's an area Richard believes many farmers still underestimate, despite its impact on long-term herd performance. "Too many people underestimate how important well-grown youngstock are," he says. "If you get the start right, everything else follows."

While the infrastructure may be simple, the data systems are anything but. The farm uses integrated platforms to track individual animal performance, paddock histories, and overall herd metrics. Every animal is recorded from birth, including weights, treatments, movements, and production data.

"We want to know everything – where a cow's been, what she's done, how she's performing."

This information feeds into daily decision-making, from identifying underperforming cows to refining feeding strategies.

A custom-built 'live matrix' tracks herd status in real time – milking cows, dry cows, treatments, and production – giving staff a clear snapshot of the operation every day.

Paddocks are also monitored, with grazing history, fertiliser use and associated costs recorded and analysed. This level of visibility allows for informed, timely decision-making and ensures issues can be identified and addressed quickly.

Feeding for margin, not volume

Rather than chasing total litres, the farm targets profitability per cow. "It's all about margin. Not how many litres you produce – but how much it costs to produce them," says Richard.

Feeding decisions are grounded in economics as much as nutrition. Feed is carefully balanced to deliver optimal energy intake, with cows consuming around 22kg of dry matter per day, targeting 200-240 megajoules of energy.

The ration includes silage, canola, almond hulls, DDG, and pasture, adjusted depending on seasonal conditions. Almond hulls have proven particularly valuable.

Key Information

	Units	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Dairy farm effective area	ha	240	240	240
Maximum cow numbers	Cows	810	772	750
Stocking rate (dairy cows)	Cow/ha	3.12	3.12	3.12
Cows at peak milk	Cow	800	750	730
Production total	kgMS	433,246	429,983	435,983
Production per ha	kgMS/ha	1,805	1,791	1,816
Production per cow	kgMS/cow	541	556	597
Average weight of cows	kg	540	550	550
Average somatic cell count	Cells/ml	197	210	188
6 week in-calf rate	%	62	59	64
Not-in-calf rate	%	15	16	12
Mating length	Days	60	60	60
Pasture & crop eaten (homegrown feed)	t DM/ha	60	60	60
Imported feed fed	t DM	3,000	3,500	3,500
Imported supplement per cow	t DM/cow	4-4.5	4-4.5	4-4.5
Nitrogen fertiliser applied per ha	kg N/ha	300	300	300

"They stabilise our fat test and help stretch the feed supply. It's like doubling your silage."

Staff are trained to understand feed cost versus output at an individual cow level – ensuring profitability remains central to decision-making.

Operating in Australia brings additional challenges, particularly extreme heat and variable rainfall. Summer temperatures regularly exceed 40 degrees celsius, placing pressure on both cows and pasture. The system has been designed with resilience in mind, reducing reliance on irrigation and maintaining flexibility in feed supply. Nutritional strategies play a key role in supporting the herd through these conditions, allowing production to remain steady even in demanding environments.

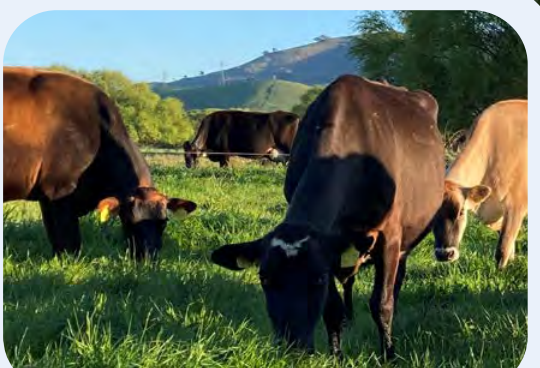
Reproduction is managed with similar precision. The farm operates a fully artificial insemination-based programme, with no bulls used on-farm. Heifers and cows undergo up to three rounds of AI before pregnancy testing, delivering strong in-calf rates and a tight calving pattern that maximises days in milk and simplifies seasonal management.

Strong people and processes underpin the system. Clear procedures ensure consistency across the operation, while staff understand not only what to do, but why it matters.

Younger team members are building advanced skills, including artificial insemination, supporting both individual development and the long-term strength of the business.

Looking ahead, there is also an eye on diversification, with opportunities such as hazelnut production being explored. However, the core philosophy of the farm is unlikely to change. By focusing on efficient cows, prioritising fertility, investing in youngstock, using data to guide decisions, and managing for margin rather than volume, the system continues to evolve in a way that is both practical and sustainable.

For Richard, the link between elite sport and farming is clear. Success comes from mastering the basics, maintaining discipline, and adapting when needed. Whether on the water or on the farm, the principle remains the same: control what you can, stay consistent, and keep moving forward.



The ideal cow:

Efficient, fertile and functional

When asked why he chooses New Zealand Genetics for an Australian farming system, Richard's answer is straightforward.

"For us, it comes down to system fit rather than chasing individual traits. LIC genetics are designed for pasture-based systems, and that aligns closely with how we operate, where efficiency per hectare and per kilogram of feed is more important than absolute production per cow."

What Richard values most in KiwiCross® sired animals is their balance.

"We've found the crossbred cow to be a more balanced animal – strong fertility, tighter calving patterns, good body condition, and the ability to convert pasture into milksolids without needing to be heavily propped up by inputs. That reliability is where the value sits for us."

A key part of that confidence comes from the depth of research behind the breeding programme.

"LIC has invested heavily over a long period in data, genomic selection and whole-herd performance across large pasture-based systems. That scale and consistency of focus is hard to match, and it shows in the reliability of the animals coming through."

LIC's breeding approach places real emphasis on whole-system efficiency. Traits such as fertility, survival and feed conversion are not secondary considerations – they are central to the breeding objective.

Over time, that compounds into a herd that is easier to manage, more predictable, and ultimately more profitable in a pasture-based system."

Richard is quick to acknowledge that Australian genetics have an important role, particularly in higher-input and more intensive systems. However, for his operation, crossbred animals continue to deliver the combination of fertility, efficiency and durability he is looking for.

"It's less about one being universally better and more about which genetics are truly aligned with the system you're running. For us, the LIC approach fits that brief."

Richard's herd grazing in Victoria's Mitta Valley

From gap year to dairy career

At just 20 years old, Hannah Dunn is part of a new generation of young Australians choosing to build a future in dairy.

Now in her third season on-farm, her entry into the industry came through the AgCAREERSTART programme, initially as a gap-year opportunity straight out of school. What was meant to be a short-term role quickly became a genuine passion.

"I thought I'd only stay for one season," she says. "But I just love it – the fast pace, working with the animals and being part of something where there's always something happening."

Hannah has embraced every opportunity to develop her skills, recently completing an artificial insemination (AI) course through TAFE while continuing hands-on training on-farm. With support from her employer and service provider NorthEast Genetics, she is already contributing to the farm's mating programme and building confidence in a highly valuable skill.

"Richard is a great mentor. He teaches us, encourages us to keep learning and really supports us to take on new challenges. His passion for dairying rubs off on us," she says.

While she is still exploring where her career may lead, Hannah is certain about one thing – she wants to remain in the dairy industry and continue developing her skills. Her enthusiasm and willingness to learn reflect the important role young people like her play in the future of Australian dairying.

Hannah Dunn

122056 MAH Finn **Sage**-ET S1F

Holstein Friesian F16
LIC Fast Forward Team® graduate

gBW $452/92% REL

BREEDING DETAILS

NASIS	NZGSAGE
Breed	F16
Pedigree	FINN x TRIUMPHANT

Retail $25.00+GST
Sexed $54.00+GST

MIKE'S HEADLINER!

A popular choice since his early genomic days, Sage is again proving his value. Sired by Mill-Ridge TS Finn-ET S1F, Sage was bred for production and stands out for efficiency, combining a low 13kg liveweight BV with a strong 0.69 udder overall gBV. His dam, MAH ST Saffron S1F, is an exceptional production cow surpassing 700kg milksolids for two consecutive seasons. A third-generation contract dam, Saffron is sired by Stoupes BG Triumphant S1F and backed by a maternal line known for consistent udder strength.

DAUGHTER PROVEN

NEW ZEALAND BREEDING VALUES		301 Daughters		
PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY				
Milk Volume	-35 l	**Milkfat**	52 kg	**5.7 %**
Liveweight	13 kg	**Protein**	15 kg	**4.3 %**
OTHER				
SCC	0.33	**Cow CD/REL %**		1.0/94
Fertility %	3.5	**Heifer CD/REL %**		7.1/56
Body Condition Score	0.01	**Gestation Length (days)**		-3.1
Functional Survival %	3.3	**Beta-Casein**		A2/A2

NZ EVALUATION DATA	gBV	-0.50	0	0.5	1.0	Traits other than production
Adaptability to Milking	**0.30**					
Shed Temperament	**0.31**					
Milking Speed	**0.10**					
Overall Opinion	**0.39**					
CONFORMATION						108 daughters TOP tested
Stature	**0.28**					
Capacity	**0.11**					
Rump Angle	**-0.08**					
Rump Width	**-0.10**					
Legs	**0.06**					
Udder Support	**0.62**					
Front Udder	**0.59**					
Rear Udder	**0.34**					
Front Teat Placement	**0.46**					
Rear Teat Placement	**0.36**					
Teat Length	**0.40**					
Udder Overall	**0.69**					
Dairy Conformation	**0.22**					

24/07/2026

122058 Telesis Flex **Theodore** S1F

Holstein Friesian F16
LIC Fast Forward Team® graduate

gBW $368/90% REL

BREEDING DETAILS

NASIS	NZGTHEODORE
Breed	F16
Pedigree	FLEX x GRANDEUR

Retail $25.00+GST

ROWAN'S TOP BLOKE

A familiar name to many Australian farmers through the Fast Forward teams, Theodore continues to impress as a daughter-proven graduate. His daughters combine low SCC, strong fertility and easy-care management traits, delivering the balance needed for profitable pasture-based systems. He is an appealing option for seeking trouble-free, efficient cows.

DAUGHTER PROVEN

NEW ZEALAND BREEDING VALUES		165 Daughters		
PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY				
Milk Volume	625 l	**Milkfat**	46 kg	**5.0 %**
Liveweight	65 kg	**Protein**	21 kg	**3.9 %**
OTHER				
SCC	-0.42	**Cow CD/REL %**		-0.4/98
Fertility %	4.7	**Heifer CD/REL %**		8.8/82
Body Condition Score	0.21	**Gestation Length (days)**		-5.3
Functional Survival %	2.6	**Beta-Casein**		A2/A2

NZ EVALUATION DATA	gBV	-0.50	0	0.5	1.0	Traits other than production
Adaptability to Milking	**0.13**					
Shed Temperament	**0.14**					
Milking Speed	**0.03**					
Overall Opinion	**0.19**					
CONFORMATION						90 daughters TOP tested
Stature	**0.47**					
Capacity	**0.38**					
Rump Angle	**-0.03**					
Rump Width	**0.78**					
Legs	**-0.10**					
Udder Support	**0.47**					
Front Udder	**0.79**					
Rear Udder	**-0.12**					
Front Teat Placement	**0.18**					
Rear Teat Placement	**0.10**					
Teat Length	**-0.07**					
Udder Overall	**0.40**					
Dairy Conformation	**0.55**					

24/07/2026

522084 Roubroeks **Air-Rifle**-ET

KiwiCross® F8J8

gBW $367 / 89% REL

BREEDING DETAILS	
NASIS	NZGAIRRIFLE
Breed	F8J8
Pedigree	HONENUI x SPRINGFIELD

Retail $25.00+GST

Sexed $54.00+GST

LIZ'S PICK FOR PROGRESS

Roubroeks Air-Rifle-ET is a standout KiwiCross® sire, with daughters already making their mark in herds across New Zealand. Combining production, fertility and functional strength, he breeds reliable, efficient cows built to perform season after season. A proven performer in the LIC stable, Air-Rifle is set to deliver the grazing genetics farmers need to build profitable, resilient dairy businesses.

DAUGHTER PROVEN

NEW ZEALAND BREEDING VALUES		123 Daughters		
PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY				
Milk Volume	-230 l	**Milkfat**	30 kg	**5.5 %**
Liveweight	47 kg	**Protein**	26 kg	**4.7 %**
OTHER				
SCC	0.21	**Cow CD/REL %**		0.1/90
Fertility %	7.2	**Heifer CD/REL %**		-3.9/63
Body Condition Score	0.13	**Gestation Length (days)**		4.0
Functional Survival %	3.1	**Beta-Casein**		A2/A2

NZ EVALUATION DATA		Traits other than production
	gBV	**-0.50 0 0.5 1.0**
Adaptability to Milking	**0.31**	
Shed Temperament	**0.31**	
Milking Speed	**0.15**	
Overall Opinion	**0.34**	
CONFORMATION		98 daughters TOP tested
Stature	**0.37**	
Capacity	**0.43**	
Rump Angle	**0.35**	
Rump Width	**0.41**	
Legs	**-0.18**	
Udder Support	**0.70**	
Front Udder	**0.68**	
Rear Udder	**0.62**	
Front Teat Placement	**0.55**	
Rear Teat Placement	**0.52**	
Teat Length	**-0.35**	
Udder Overall	**0.86**	
Dairy Conformation	**0.56**	

24/07/2026

522030 Sansons **Greenstone**

KiwiCross® F10J6

gBW $346 / 90% REL

BREEDING DETAILS	
NASIS	NZGGREENSTNE
Breed	F10J6
Pedigree	MULTIPLIER x BLACKHAWK

Retail $25.00+GST

HILARY'S STANDOUT SIRE

Greenstone represents many of the qualities farmers consistently value in their cows: capacity, sound udders and strong fertility. He is shaping up as a sire capable of building long-term herd structure through daughters that get in calf readily, remain sound and deliver lasting value. For farmers focused on durability and function, Greenstone brings plenty to like.

DAUGHTER PROVEN

NEW ZEALAND BREEDING VALUES		127 Daughters		
PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY				
Milk Volume	-168 l	**Milkfat**	25 kg	**5.3 %**
Liveweight	16 kg	**Protein**	12 kg	**4.4 %**
OTHER				
SCC	-0.27	**Cow CD/REL %**		-1.6/67
Fertility %	8.1	**Heifer CD/REL %**		-3.7/33
Body Condition Score	0.10	**Gestation Length (days)**		-4.6
Functional Survival %	1.8	**Beta-Casein**		A2/A2

NZ EVALUATION DATA		Traits other than production
	gBV	**-0.50 0 0.5 1.0**
Adaptability to Milking	**0.13**	
Shed Temperament	**0.15**	
Milking Speed	**-0.22**	
Overall Opinion	**0.16**	
CONFORMATION		106 daughters TOP tested
Stature	**-0.01**	
Capacity	**0.91**	
Rump Angle	**0.06**	
Rump Width	**0.02**	
Legs	**0.00**	
Udder Support	**0.83**	
Front Udder	**0.72**	
Rear Udder	**0.90**	
Front Teat Placement	**0.20**	
Rear Teat Placement	**0.25**	
Teat Length	**0.46**	
Udder Overall	**0.92**	
Dairy Conformation	**0.85**	

24/07/2026

320029 Rockland LQ **Berkly**

Jersey J16

gBW $498/98% REL

BREEDING DETAILS

NASIS	NZGBERKLY
Breed	J16
Pedigree	QUADRANT x LARSON

Retail $25.00+GST

Sexed $54.00+GST

COLLEEN'S GO-TO GENE MACHINE

Awarded LIC International Sire of the Year for Jersey, Berkly continues to justify that recognition through daughters demonstrating impressive consistency across multiple lactations. Combining production with the size and strength farmers demand, supported by sound udders and strong fertility, Berkly is a proven and dependable Jersey option.

DAUGHTER PROVEN

NEW ZEALAND BREEDING VALUES		1583 Daughters	
PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY			
Milk Volume	-391 l	**Milkfat**	45 kg / **6.0 %**
Liveweight	-26 kg	**Protein**	10 kg / **4.5 %**
OTHER			
SCC	-0.11	**Cow CD/REL %**	-2.1/98
Fertility %	5.7	**Heifer CD/REL %**	-8.9/90
Body Condition Score	-0.04	**Gestation Length (days)**	2.9
Functional Survival %	3.8	**Beta-Casein**	A2/A2

NZ EVALUATION DATA	gBV	-0.50	0	0.5	1.0
		Traits other than production			
Adaptability to Milking	**0.32**				
Shed Temperament	**0.32**				
Milking Speed	**0.34**				
Overall Opinion	**0.47**				
CONFORMATION		280 daughters TOP tested			
Stature	**-0.31**				
Capacity	**0.14**				
Rump Angle	**-0.31**				
Rump Width	**-0.43**				
Legs	**-0.03**				
Udder Support	**0.53**				
Front Udder	**0.58**				
Rear Udder	**1.03**				
Front Teat Placement	**-0.05**				
Rear Teat Placement	**-0.17**				
Teat Length	**0.71**				
Udder Overall	**0.73**				
Dairy Conformation	**0.30**				

24/07/2026

722144 Kakahu **Project** 20085

Beef

Individually $14.00+GST

100+ Straws $12.00+GST each

BREEDING DETAILS

Breeder	Kakahu
Breed	Angus

DPT DAIRY PROGENY TESTED

KAKAHU CHAROLAIS

CASEY'S HERD HERO

Project's results from the Dairy Beef Progeny Test are in and they are outstanding. Of beef sires (representing multiple breeds) evaluated in his year, Project ranked first for shortest gestation length (276.6 days) and first for low birth Weight (34.3 kg). Proving to be a true curve-bender, he ranked fourth for 200 Day Weight and seventh for 400 Day Weight. These figures are backed by all-round impressive BREEDPLAN EBVs from calving through to growth and carcase. Project is a true Dairy-Beef specialist.

WITHIN-BREED EVALUATION	EBV	99th	75th	50th	25th	1st	% rank
Dairy Significance							
Calving Ease	**7.0**	Hard				Easy	**15**
Gestation Length	**-10.6**	Long				Short	**1**
Birth Weight	**1.8**	Heavy				Light	**14**
Beef Significance							
600 Day Weight	**140**	Light				Heavy	**16**
Carcase Weight	**82**	Light				Heavy	**17**
Eye Muscle Area	**9.9**	Less				More	**19**
Intramuscular Fat	**1.5**	Less				More	**74**

PROVEN PROGENY AVERAGES			
Data Source	**Gestation Length**	**Birth Weight**	**Calving Assistance**
MINDA®	276.6 days		0.76%
DBPT	277.3 days	34.3 kg	

100% Polled

Not a Red Carrier

Data Source: 06/2026 TACE

Tracking reproductive gains

Farmers around the world remain firmly focused on improving reproductive performance within their herd, and with good reason.

Reproductive success is the cornerstone of herd improvement. It gives farmers greater choice: more high genetic merit replacement calves, more flexibility in generating non-replacement calves, and more discretionary culling opportunities for cows. It lifts overall herd quality and performance, maximises returns from elite straws, and for some, even creates the option to eliminate stock bulls altogether.

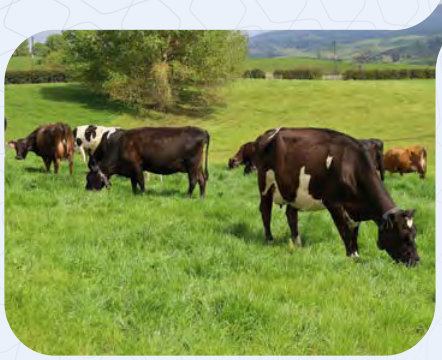
As joining approaches, focus on-farm shifts to maximising submission and conception rates through the AI mating period. Well-managed joining sets the foundation for herd performance and reproductive success.

Preparation for this key period covers heat detection optimisation, scheduling synchrony programmes, finalising semen supply and technician logistics, and implementing the animal health plans. Mating length and stock bull planning should also be clearly defined.

Consider scheduling early-age pregnancy diagnosis (EAPD) visits to capture valuable insights sooner. As joining progresses, pregnancy testing results provide a clear picture of how the season is tracking, enabling timely, informed adjustments where needed.

Early-age pregnancy testing (EAPD) offers a powerful tool for both planning and review. When carried out consistently year on year, it enables farmers to sit down with their professional advisers and clearly track progress within their own herd. Trends become easier to identify, successful strategies can be validated and carried forward, and any gaps can be prioritised for the season ahead.

New Zealand has been tracking national herd reproductive performance annually, with results now reported for the 2025/26 season.



Data from LIC shows continued strong reproductive performance for the New Zealand spring calving season, with gains in key metrics compared with the previous year.

The New Zealand six-week in-calf rate (6wkICR) lifted slightly to a new record of 70.4%, up from 70.2% the season before, while the proportion of cows not recorded as in-calf remained relatively stable at 14.7%.

LIC Chief Executive David Chin said maintaining performance at this level is a positive result for the industry and reflects the consistency farmers are achieving on farm.

"After the gains we've seen over recent seasons, seeing another lift is a fantastic result for New Zealand dairy farmers. Achieving a record six-week in-calf rate of 70.4% reflects the continued focus farmers are placing on reproduction performance and making good decisions on farm."

The New Zealand industry's top-performing 25% of herds achieved a six-week in-calf rate of 78.2%.

"Those top-performing herds are getting more cows submitted, achieving higher conception rates and ending the season with fewer empty cows. The difference isn't one thing done exceptionally well – it's consistently getting the basics right, from nutrition and cow recovery through to heat detection and mating management," continues Chin.

Chin says reproduction outcomes are influenced by a range of factors, including seasonal and weather conditions, which can affect pasture quality and how cows recover heading into mating.

"Whether farmers are using conventional dairy, sexed semen, beef or SGL products, preparation before mating remains one of the biggest influences on getting cows back in calf."

"At the end of the day, good reproductive performance comes back to healthy, well-managed cows, and this year's results show farmers are continuing to do that well."

The continued emphasis on female fertility within the LIC breeding programme is helping support these phenotypic gains, with steady progress also evident in the female fertility breeding values (BV) of the cow population.

For those focused on locking in current reproductive success or looking to lift their herd performance higher, the team at LIC Australia is ready to support you with an excellent range of heat detection aids and bringing you the very best of LIC genetics to our Australian customers.

Talk to your LIC District Manager to find out more.

* The results are based on New Zealand data from 4,776 herds and more than 2.6 million cows, continuing to provide a representation of national performance.

Engineering a new path in dairy

Nick Lowe and Annie Burford didn't grow up in dairy farming. Their move into the industry came from a mix of opportunity, curiosity and a willingness to have a go.

Photo courtesy of Burra Foods

With engineering backgrounds and no inherited farming blueprint to follow, the couple have built their Gippsland dairy business by asking plenty of questions, learning from experienced people, and being clear about the sort of system they wanted to run.

A different beginning

Nick's path into farming was far from traditional. After school, he and Annie travelled overseas, where small European dairy herds first caught his attention.

"I remember walking past these little dairy herds – 15 or 20 cows – with the bells on them, heading in and out of the barns. I loved it," Nick recalls. "I didn't know anything about farming, but something about it clicked."

Back in Australia, Nick built a career as a process engineer in wastewater treatment. The work was challenging, but over time he found himself looking for something more hands-on.

"I just wasn't fulfilled," he says. "I wanted something where I had ownership – where I could actually build something and see the results of it."

The shift to farming

The opportunity came when Annie's family bought a farm in the hills near Meeniyan, in Gippsland.

At the time, the property was running beef cattle and still had significant dairy infrastructure sitting idle.

"There was a shed there with a huge amount of investment in it, just sitting unused," Nick says. "From an engineering perspective, it didn't make sense."

Before committing, Nick set out to learn the basics properly. He started milking one day a week for a local farmer, making it clear he was there for the experience rather than the pay.

"I was very honest about it – I wasn't there for the money. I was there to learn."

That year proved invaluable. The farmer became an important mentor, and inspired by everything they had learned, Nick and Annie made the decision to pursue dairy farming. They leased Annie's family farm, transformed it back into a dairy operation, upgraded the infrastructure and began building their herd from scratch.

Building the herd

A key moment came with the purchase of their foundation herd – cows with strong LIC genetics behind them. From the start, the herd stood out for the right reasons.

"They were just trouble-free," Nick explains. "Quiet, easy to handle, and they just did everything right. You'd open a gate and they'd flow through – no stress, no issues."

That early experience shaped the direction of the herd they wanted to breed: fertile, efficient cows that could work well in a pasture-based, seasonal system. As more animals were brought in over time, Nick continued to look for cows with that same LIC background, helping create a more consistent herd.

Breeding with continuity

Nick says the support of local LIC District Manager Colleen has also been important throughout their journey.

Having known the original herd and its genetic base well, Colleen has been able to bring valuable context to the breeding decisions being made today – helping Nick and Annie build on what was already working, rather than starting from scratch.

"Colleen understands the history of these cows – the breeding decisions that have been made over time and why," Nick says. "Her experience is valuable and gives us real confidence in the direction we're heading."

Rather than starting again, Nick and Annie have been able to build on an established genetic base that already fits their system.

"It's not just about picking bulls on paper," Nick says. "It's about understanding what's already in your herd and making decisions that complement it."

A system that supports the cow

At the centre of the couple's approach is a simple idea: build the farm system around the cow, rather than forcing the cow to fit the system.

Variable milking has become an important part of that. The herd is milked twice a day early in the season, then moves to three milkings in two days, before finishing on once-a-day ahead of drying off.

"It gives us flexibility, reduces pressure on the cows, and supports condition going into the next season," Nick explains.

Rather than chasing maximum production, the focus is on running a profitable, sustainable system that works for the cows and for the people behind the business.

Health by design

One of the most pleasing outcomes on farm has been low levels of mastitis and lameness. While good management is an important part of the equation, Nick believes genetics provide the foundation.

"We don't have many issues with mastitis, and lameness is minimal," he says. "Yes, management plays a big role – but genetics absolutely underpin that."

Fresh cows are managed separately and only join the main herd once Nick is confident they are ready, helping reduce pressure around calving and lowering the risk of problems spreading.

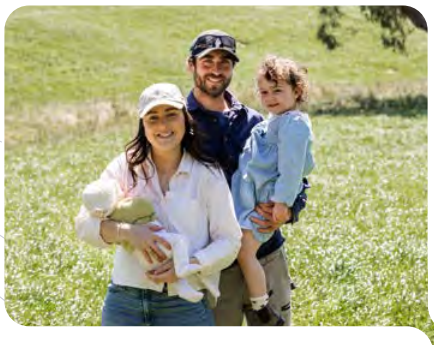


Photo courtesy of Burra Foods

For Nick, though, the bigger story is the resilience of the herd. "These cows are bred to be healthy and functional. They get in calf, they stay sound, and they keep working."

Even with hill-country tracks and varied terrain, the cows continue to suit the job. "It's not about the highest-producing cow," he says. "It's about the cow that lasts and fits your system."

A different way of thinking

Coming into dairy from outside the industry has shaped the way Nick looks at the business. He is comfortable questioning why things are done a certain way, while recognising that a system only works when decisions are consistent.

For Nick, that means a seasonal, pasture-based system built around fertile, efficient cows, with technology used where it adds real value. He has invested in collars with virtual fencing to improve pasture and crop management across the farm's hill country.

The ability to manage grazing more precisely, reduce labour involved in shifting fences and better utilise challenging terrain aligns with the way he wants to farm. Crops such as chicory and fodder beet also help maintain feed quality and extend grazing options through summer and winter.

For Nick, technology is simply another tool to support better grazing decisions, improve efficiency and help the whole farm system perform.

Clear on the system

For Nick and Annie, success comes back to having a clear system and sticking to it. From the beginning, Nick made a conscious decision to build a pasture-based, seasonal system and breed cows that would thrive within it.

"I think the most important thing is picking your system and sticking to it," he says.

LIC District Manager Colleen Mourie and Nick discuss breeding decisions, building on the herd's strong genetic foundation.

"You can't run one type of cow in a completely different system and expect it to work."

That philosophy is reflected in the results, including strong in-calf rates, low empty rates and steady growth in herd numbers.

A partnership on and off the farm

While Nick leads the day-to-day farm operation, Annie plays an important role in supporting the business and balancing family life. The couple are now raising their young children, Hettie, 3, and Matilda, 9 months, while managing the realities of farm life.

For Annie, the lifestyle is demanding but rewarding. "There's a real sense of purpose," she says. "You're building something together, and you're doing it for your family."

"You have to enjoy the day-to-day," Annie says. "Because this isn't just a job – it's a lifestyle."

Nick and Annie's dairy journey is still in its early stages, but the foundations are already well established: a clear system, a herd bred to suit it, and trusted people around them who understand both.

With LIC genetics at the core, Colleen Mourie's long-standing herd knowledge supporting breeding decisions, and farmer mentors willing to share their experience, the operation is a strong example of what can happen when new entrants bring fresh thinking to an industry built on generations of practical know-how.

Beyond the Farm Gate in Gippsland

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- LIC breeding and genetics programmes
- Large-scale robotic milking technology
- Variable milking systems
- Fertility and herd management strategies
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The LIC Australia team – supporting farmers, sharing knowledge and enjoying the journey along the way

"Celebrating 25 years in Australia is a significant milestone. It reflects the strength of our people, our partners and our commitment to serving Australian customers for many more years to come." – Paul Dunbar, General Manager International, LIC

Daisy, keeping a close eye on the LIC Australia team

All smiles at the GippsDairy Muster – Colleen Mourie and Tandia Sharman

Rowan with Tasmanian farmer Tom Snare, talking all things genetics and farming at AgFest

Enjoying the good life – LIC Charolais calves in Tasmania

A chance to catch up – Tim Harris and Hilary Lunn at the AgFest Field Days Show

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