

What is involved in being a Focus Farm in NSW?

Background

Focus farm programs have been successfully running in other regions of Australia for the last eight years. The model is new to Dairy NSW and the intent of this program is to focus on a farming family or enterprise with an aim to enhance farm profitability through improved business decision making. This is achieved by close monitoring of farm activities and expenditures with guidance provided by a support group made up of farmers and local service providers, and facilitated by an experienced facilitator.

What to expect

Support group meetings

The support group traditionally meets once every six weeks on farm. These sessions will run for about 3-hours, including a farm walk and discussion. The discussion will revolve around whatever issues are relevant, but also include a financial analysis for the period and ongoing planning. These support group meetings will run from May 2014 until March 2016. There will be approximately 16 meetings over the two year program.

Prior to the meeting, the facilitator will contact the focus farmer to prepare for each meeting's focus and discussion. They will seek to understand what has happened on the farm since the last meeting and will provide direction in relation to what information is needed for the meeting.

Field days

There will be several field days where the farm is open to the general public to participate in a farm walk and discussion about the ways the business is operating. The consultant will facilitate the day and support the focus farmer to participate in the discussion.

Promotion of learnings

There is an expectation that finance and production key performance indicators will be promoted in the Dairy NSW newsletter and website throughout the program. Capturing images and video footage for promoting the learnings is also expected to ensure a wider audience learns from the focus farm journey.

Project reporting

The project is fully funded by Dairy Australia (DA) and Dairy NSW. Dairy Australia requires progress reports and the Dairy NSW Board requires regular updates. The reporting will be organised by the facilitator and a project manager employed by DA. From time to time the focus farmer will be asked to make comments on the program and provide updates on what is happening on farm.