

Dairy pre-farm gate PGP 2013/14 Quarter 1 report

Executive Summary

The two major themes of the pre-farm gate component of the Dairy PGP programme continue to perform as intended. While progress has been made across all areas of the programme, specific highlights for each of the themes this quarter include:

Theme 1: On-farm Innovation and Research

Overall progress within this theme has been steady with a number of subproject areas having reached the end of their initial scoping stage and coming to decisions about moving into a new phase under PGP. In other areas, the programme is delivering early and concrete results.

Release of the Fertility Focus Report: This quarter saw the completion and release of the Fertility Focus Report – a significantly improved tool available to farmers and information providers that will make it easier to assess the reproductive performance of a dairy herd. Having a robust assessment of reproductive performance is often the first step in identifying any systemic reproduction issues and will enable farm management changes to address them. This tool typifies the type of output targeted in the PGP programme: bringing together world leading science and research with technology to give farmers the tools to be more profitable and productive. As with other intended outputs from the PGP programme, this theme is strongly oriented toward uptake by farmers in the businesses. The involvement of farmer and advisors in the development of the tool will give it greater certainty of successful uptake. Improved reproductive performance will mean gains for increased farm productivity and profit at an individual and industry level. From now on the dairy industry as a whole will enjoy greater confidence in reproductive information published annually in NZ Dairy Statistics.

Theme 2: Building Capability for a Sustainable Future

The emphasis of this sub programme is equipping the dairy industry with the right capability to address critical issues facing the dairy industry now and into the future. A key challenge being targeted is sustainability.

IPENZ Practice Note: A subproject delivering a comprehensive approach to building capability in the area of effluent management has made further advances this quarter with the delivery to the industry of a Practice Note on Dairy Farm infrastructure. This document, produced in conjunction with engineers from the Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) is designed for rural professionals who design and construct infrastructure on dairy farms where improved design would assist with producing compliant effluent systems. There are five sections which include regulation, concrete considerations, underpasses, solids separation and feed-pads.

The IPENZ Practice Note bolsters PGP activity in the effluent capability. Already a train the trainers programme is being rolled out based on needs identification and gap analysis within the industry. It has been complemented by the development of tools for use on farm, such as the recently released iPhone Effluent Spreader App. Cumulatively these initiatives will help ensure dairy farmers and the

professions they trust understand and have the ability to manage effluent in keeping with regulatory and societal expectations.

Ag in Schools pet day resource: Primary Industry Capability Alliance has developed and distributed the Ag in Schools pet day resource. Schools are currently using the material within their Pet Day and Calf club day events throughout NZ. To date 6,582 students are involved in the programme. This project aims to engage with primary schools – rural and urban - to build awareness of the food story. Uptake of the resource has been significantly greater than the targeted uptake level (target of 900 students). The development of the resource involved 285 primary schools who provided content or ideas for the resource material, and to date, 53 schools are fully utilising the resource and on-line material (certificates, templates, material).

Mark & Measure Farm Business Governance Development courses: Twenty-seven large farm businesses continue to benefit from enrolment in the Mark & Measure Farm Business Governance Development courses; and over 400 rural professionals attended a national road show about the DairyNZ Mark & Measure Farm Business Governance Development Program and the important role they play in improving the governance of their clients businesses.