

**AGDA 2023**

DIAA members shine at these awards

**The Dairy Report**

Member Profile: 'Tuscany in Bunbury'

**... and more**

innovative value-adding podcast, dairy science, milk market report, celebrations, vales, member news

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**I select and  
write cover  
lines****AUSTRALIAN**

# Dairy Foods

Official magazine of the  
Dairy Industry Association of Australia

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#### IFM

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**I sub edit this from submitted content (this is part of the cover ad**

# An exciting time, with much to celebrate

This edition you will see updates in our DIAA Member News about a few of the initiatives that we have launched so far this year.

If you're looking for a simplified way to search for grants, or have students in your workforce who would qualify for Associate Membership, you're looking for your next career move, or want to hire staff, or even want to download your winning product's artwork immediately, then we have some excellent news for you beginning on page 7.

I encourage all DIAA members to avail themselves of the programs and benefits that your Association has in place.

### Celebrating member successes

As the dairy industry continues to evolve, there are numerous success stories and new initiatives to applaud. We celebrate our members for their successes through the pages of this magazine – particularly in The Dairy Report, where we often showcase a member, highlighting their journey in business.

I know from talking to many of you that you find these stories interesting, and there's sometimes an "aha" moment of an idea that you can use in your own business. Our member profiled this issue has seen success through their agility, as you'll discover on page 24.



John Kruger

**Karen McIntyre**  
National President,  
Dairy Industry  
Association  
of Australia

The other exciting way we celebrate our members is through their success at product competitions, which have become a valuable platform for dairy processors to showcase their skills.

So far this year we have completed our Western Australian, Victorian and Australian product competitions. I would like to thank all the volunteers and contractors who contribute many hours and great expertise to ensuring an effective independent competition is delivered in every State.

DIAA prides itself on promoting our best dairy products, and these DIAA product competitions are one of our key deliverables that help support this nation's amazing industry.

If you want to get involved in the process, please contact your local State DIAA President, and watch our website for competition entries. I call on you all to support your local or interstate events to celebrate our award winners.

### See you soon!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible attending the Awards of Excellence Dinner in May, where we'll celebrate the best of the best around our nation.

### Audit & Risk Committee

We are seeking expressions of interest for DIAA members who are interested in joining our Audit & Risk Committee. Members have been sent an EOI email. Please contact our CEO, **Carl Partridge**, for further information or to register your interest.

### Thank you

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge three contractors who are leaving the DIAA to retire. **Kristine Manser**, who has long held our National office together, and our Treasurer **David Manser**, retired in April and March, respectively, with BDM **Janos Kaldy** retiring mid-year. I'd like to thank them for many years of service and send them our best. We will run a tribute to this trio in the June/July edition of **Australian Dairy Foods**. ■

### The DIAA thanks its 2023 national partners

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## USDA proposals aim to limit flavoured milk in US schools

Proposals reflecting the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) include excluding flavoured milk from some school menus in the USA. The new rules could come into force in 2027.

The **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** Food and Nutrition Service was calling for public comment on the proposals until mid-April. The USDA cited flavoured milk as a top source of added sugars in US school-supplied meals, accounting for nearly half the added sugars in lunches and a third in breakfasts.

US schools must offer fat-free and/or low-fat unflavoured milk at both meals, but can also offer either version of flavoured milk.

The USDA – which is responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to food, farming, forestry and rural economic development in the USA – is proposing two options:

1. to limit the availability of flavoured milk to higher grades
2. to retain the current standards, but limit the amount of added sugar in flavoured milk.

How does flavoured milk contribute to sugar and sodium intake during school meals?

A study carried out at the end of last year by the **Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)**, analysed the nutritional content of milks served in US schools, finding all 29 flavoured samples contained between 95-250mg of sodium – an average of 164mg – which is 48% of the DGA-aligned standard for younger-aged school children's breakfasts.

The USDA has said it is aiming to incrementally lower the targets across all school grades between 2025-29 for lunch programs, and between 2025-27 for breakfast; e.g.: a new sodium limit for younger children from July 1, 2025, will be 1,000mg for lunch, dropping to 810mg on July 1, 2029.

Seven flavoured milks in the study accounted for more than 100% of the DGA-aligned sugar allowance, with a further 13 contributing 80% or more.

The USDA's current proposal is to limit the amount of added sugars in flavoured milks to 10g per 8oz

(236ml) of milk for products served at both breakfast and lunch, with a higher proposed limit for products sold outside the meal for middle and high school students.

### Dairy industry unhappy

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) in the USA and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) have said they are "carefully reviewing" other provisions in the proposals, such as the weekly added sugars and sodium limits, and will submit formal comments.

**Jim Mulhern, NMPF President and CEO**, said, "Children having access to the healthful foods they need to grow and focus in school is a key priority for dairy farmers. Milk is the top source of calcium, potassium, phosphorus and vitamin D in kids aged two to 18, and 1% flavoured milk is a nutrient-dense, low-fat option [that] students will actually choose to drink.

**I seek & write News content**

## AUSTRALIAN

## Dairy Foods

## Coming up next issue

- We talk to DIAA member **Matt Rose**, who's recently taken over the family business **Exquisite** as CEO, about its dedicated route to sustainability.
- DIAA member **Andrew Ball** writes about the challenges in 2D coding for dairy production with its often-difficult physical environment.
- We cover the keynote speakers at the **2023 DIAA Victorian Conference**.



- We'll have the winners the **2023 DIAA Australian & Victorian Dairy Product Competitions** (and take a peek behind the scenes at judging).
- Plus we'll have a tribute to three long-serving **DIAA contractors** who are retiring.

... and more!

"We are pleased USDA is maintaining low-fat flavoured milk in schools, providing children with an additional – and favoured – choice to access the 13 essential nutrients milk provides, including three of the four nutrients of public health concern. But we question why USDA would propose school-meal options that could limit a child's access to these nutrients, and we urge instead that they expand access to dairy options. Providing low-fat flavoured milk will increase students' intake of nutrients vital for their growth and development."

**Michael Dykes, IDFA president and CEO**, said, "The most recent Dietary Guidelines report is clear: children are not receiving enough essential

nutrients for growth, development, healthy immune function and overall wellness. Healthy milk and dairy options in school meals offer the most important opportunity of the day for children to get the critical nutrients they need.

"For years, parents and nutrition professionals have agreed that milk and dairy products must remain key building blocks in school meals. While we are pleased that this proposed rule continues to make dairy central to child nutrition, we are concerned with USDA's ongoing efforts to propose limitations to milk and dairy in school meals, which run counter to the Dietary Guidelines and the mandate of America's parents." ■



*US Championship Cheese Contest Assistant Chief Judge Tim Czmowski (left) holds the first runner-up, Vintage Cupola American Original Cheese by Red Barn Family Farms, Wisconsin; Chief Judge Jim Mueller holds the 2023 US Champion, Europa by Arethusa Farm Dairy, Connecticut; and Director of Logistics, Randy Swensen, holds second runner-up, a Medium Cheddar by Associated Milk Producers Inc., Wisconsin. Image credit: Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.*

## Aged gouda wins 2023 top US cheese

An aged gouda was named champion at the 2023 United States Championship Cheese Contest, out of 2,249 entries from 197 dairy companies and co-operatives.

Europa, produced by **Arethusa Farm Dairy's** cheese team in Bantam, Connecticut, received a score of 98.739 and the top honour following two days of judging.

**Red Barn Family Farms**, Egg Harbor, Wisconsin, secured first runner-up in the competition, with its Vintage Cupola American Original Cheese

(98.613), which was made by the **Door Artisan Cheese Company. Associated Milk Producers Inc.**, Blair, Wisconsin, finished as second runner-up, with its cheddar (98.554) from cheesemaker **Dillon Sylla**.

**John Umhoefer**, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, which hosts the biennial competition, said, "The men and women of the US dairy processing industry are exceptionally passionate and dedicated to crafting quality products."

The top 20 finalists from 2023, in class order, are:

### Class 2: Cheddar, Medium (Three to Six Months)

**Cheese name:** Cheddar  
**Maker:** Dillon Sylla  
**Company:** Associated Milk Producers Inc.  
**Location:** Blair, Wisconsin.

### Class 4: Cheddar, Aged One to Two Years

**Cheese name:** Cracker Barrel Aged Reserve Cheddar  
**Maker:** Agropur - Weyauwega  
**Company:** Lactalis Heritage Dairy  
**Location:** Weyauwega, Wisconsin

### Class 6: Traditional Waxed Cheddar, Mild to Medium

**Cheese name:** Roelli Haus Select Cheddar  
**Maker:** Team Roelli  
**Company:** Roelli Cheese  
**Location:** Shullsburg, Wisconsin

### Class 8: Natural Rinded Cheddar

**Cheese name:** Lucky Linda Clothbound Cheddar  
**Maker:** Redhead Creamery  
**Company:** Redhead Creamery  
**Location:** Brooten, Minnesota

### Class 12: Baby Swiss Style

**Cheese name:** Baby Swiss Wheel, Rindless  
**Maker:** DV Team 2  
**Company:** Guggisberg Cheese  
**Location:** Millersburg, Ohio

### Class 13: Swiss Style Cheese

**Cheese name:** Founder 56 Emmentaler Swiss  
**Maker:** James Yoder  
**Company:** Rothenbuhler Cheesemakers  
**Location:** Middlefield, Ohio

### Class 19: Provolone, Mild

**Cheese name:** Mild Provolone Cheese  
**Maker:** Cuba Team 3  
**Company:** Great Lakes Cheese  
**Location:** Cuba, New York

### Class 23: Parmesan

**Cheese name:** Organic Copper Kettle Parmesan  
**Maker:** Team Lake Country Dairy  
**Company:** Schuman Cheese  
**Location:** Turtle Lake, Wisconsin

### Class 38: Gouda, Aged

**Cheese name:** Europa  
**Maker:** Arethusa Cheese Team  
**Company:** Arethusa Farm Dairy  
**Location:** Bantam, Connecticut

### Class 45: Washed Rind/Smear Ripened Semi-soft Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Whitney  
**Maker:** Jasper Hill Farm  
**Company:** Jasper Hill Farm  
**Location:** Greensboro Bend, Vermont

### Class 47: Pepper Flavoured Monterey Jack, Mild Heat

**Cheese name:** Pepper Jack  
**Maker:** Juan Torres  
**Company:** Glanbia Nutritionals  
**Location:** Twin Falls, Idaho

### Class 48: Pepper Flavoured Monterey Jack, Medium Heat

**Cheese name:** Ghost Pepper Jack  
**Maker:** Jim Falls Cheese Team  
**Company:** Associated Milk Producers Inc.  
**Location:** Jim Falls, Wisconsin

### Class 54: Open Class: Semi-soft Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Cello Fontal  
**Maker:** Lake Country Dairy  
**Company:** Schuman Cheese  
**Location:** Turtle Lake, Wisconsin

### Class 55: Open Class: Hard Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Vintage Cupola American Original Cheese  
**Maker:** Team Door Artisan Cheese Company  
**Company:** Red Barn Family Farms  
**Location:** Egg Harbor, Wisconsin

### Class 56: Open Class: Cheeses with Natural Rind

**Cheese name:** St. Malachi  
**Maker:** Team Doe Run  
**Company:** The Farm at Doe Run  
**Location:** Coatesville, Pennsylvania

### Class 59: Open Class: Hard Cheeses, Flavoured

**Cheese name:** Rumiano Pepato Dry Jack  
**Maker:** Rumiano Cheese  
**Company:** Rumiano Cheese  
**Location:** Crescent City, California

### Class 77: Hard Goat's Milk Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Hootenanny  
**Maker:** Goat Rodeo Team  
**Company:** Goat Rodeo Farm & Dairy  
**Location:** Allison Park, Pennsylvania

### Class 83: Hard Sheep's Milk Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Sweet Annie  
**Maker:** Landmark Creamery  
**Company:** Landmark Creamery  
**Location:** Belleville, Wisconsin

### Class 86: Soft & Semi-soft Mixed Milk Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Breezy Blue  
**Maker:** Kingston Cheese Team  
**Company:** Kingston Creamery  
**Location:** Cambria, Wisconsin

### Class 88: Hard Mixed Milk Cheeses

**Cheese name:** Wegmans Three Milk Gouda  
**Maker:** Todd Pontius  
**Company:** Old Chatham Creamery  
**Location:** Groton, New Hampshire

For the 2023 Australian Grand Dairy Champions, see pages 16-18.

For the 2023 DIAA Western Australia Dairy Product Competition Results, see pages 22-23.





## World Milk Day 2023

Last year's World Milk Day – the event's 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary – was one of the biggest so far, as social media campaigns and in-person events were run in 113 countries globally. For the second consecutive year, social media impressions topped one billion, with more than 346,000 social media posts.

The United Nations declared 1 June as World Milk Day in 2001, to celebrate the global dairy sector's contributions to nutrition, livelihoods and the environment. Global Dairy Platform annually co-ordinates a global social media campaign that brings supporters together from around the world to raise awareness of dairy's important role in sustainable food systems.

This year's theme will focus on showcasing how dairy is reducing its

environmental footprint, while also providing critical nutritional security and socio-economic benefits.

Global Dairy Platform said one of the best ways to help drive this is by featuring videos showcasing sustainability practices in place on farms and in factories.

### Youth World Milk Day

Celebrated concurrently, Youth World Milk Day aims to connect young people with each other and with those more widely in the global dairy sector. The objective is to share the perspective of a new generation of professionals in the dairy and milk sector, as well as involving current opinion leaders to identify and tackle challenges together.

Youth World Milk Day also promotes the milk and dairy sector to the new

generation in a way that relates to their lifestyle and regions.

Youth World Milk Day tackles three themes:

1. Nutrition: what is the added value of dairy in global food security and its nutritional value?
2. Sustainability: how can we make the dairy sector future-proof?
3. Succession: who is going to run the dairy farms of the future?

### Challenge for young people

The Youth World Milk Day Challenge asks young people globally to present their ideas on how the dairy sector can become more sustainable, by sending videos, pictures, text or illustrations depicting their vision of a sustainable future for the dairy sector to: [milkday@emergingag.com](mailto:milkday@emergingag.com) ■



## New DIAA associate membership

To encourage young people to join, the DIAA has introduced an Associate Membership, which will begin this year.

**DIAA President Karen McIntyre** said, "The new membership category is designed to build loyalty and awareness of the DIAA early on in a young person's career and supports our purpose by attracting people into the industry."

"DIAA membership will give them the ability to link with other like-minded individuals, and offer them access to career advice and mentors for their career development."

"The Associate Membership is free, and is designed to lead into a paying member post the young member's study."

Mrs McIntyre said Associate Membership was open to full-time students, first-year graduates, apprentices and trainees. Applicants must provide supporting documents signed by the head of their school or a company supervisor.

"Benefits to the DIAA include boosting member numbers and broadening the age and gender demographics of members."

She said Associate Members would receive a simplified membership package that included online publications (rather than hard copies) although they would not have voting rights until they signed on as full members. ■

For full details, see [diaa.asn.au/associate-membership/](https://diaa.asn.au/associate-membership/)

### Please note new DIAA addresses

The DIAA has moved, with new mailing and physical addresses.

Please address any posted items to:

Dairy Industry Association of Australia Ltd  
PO Box 290  
South Melbourne, Vic 3205.

Our new physical address is:

Dairy Industry Association of Australia Ltd  
Lakeside Business Centre  
Level 4  
Suite 13/150 Albert Road,  
South Melbourne, VIC 3205



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## DIAA prepares to launch Grants Hub

The DIAA has begun work on launching a Grants Hub in the first half of this year.

The member-only benefit will offer a guided search to help people find grants, funding and support programs from across the Federal and State Governments, and a range of private philanthropic providers.

The first grant, available for members in Western Australia, has been published on the DIAA website: Round 4 of the Agrifood

& Beverage Voucher Program supports small businesses across regional and metropolitan WA to access expert advice to build resilience and sustainability, competitiveness, scale and export preparedness into their operations. WA food & beverage manufacturing and processing businesses can apply for up to two vouchers, with up to \$15,000 per business available to access expert advice across five categories of professional services.

The program has issued nearly \$1 million in professional service vouchers that have helped to successfully transform over 134 agrifood and beverage manufacturing businesses – many of whom use locally sourced ingredients – generating jobs and flow-on benefits to industry, communities and the WA economy. ■

For full details, see [diaa.asn.au/grant-hub/](https://diaa.asn.au/grant-hub/)

## DIAA adds to member benefits with new Careers Centre

The DIAA is augmenting member benefits by developing a new Careers Centre.

DIAA CEO Carl Partridge said, "This new benefit, which has a host of inclusions, came about from member requests in our annual member survey earlier this year where members identified a desire for the DIAA to develop a Job Board.

"The DIAA launched the new Careers Centre in mid-February, and over the next few months we're anticipating significantly increasing the volume of career opportunities and breadth of services, including adding a feature that offers members the ability to apply for roles before that of non-members.

"The DIAA's mission is to provide a forum for communication, continuing education, professional growth, recognition and fellowship for all members, sectors and participant organisations involved with the dairy industry. We believe this is a further step to cementing that purpose."

Mr Partridge said members can search and apply for top dairy



### New DIAA Careers Centre Launched

industry jobs at companies that value their credentials. Members simply upload their resume so employers can contact them. They will remain anonymous until they decide to release their contact information."

Members can also create 'job alerts' and receive an email when a job matching their criteria becomes available.

He said employers can post a job on the site, which is "where the industry's most qualified dairy industry professionals go to advance their careers".

Members can email their job directly to DIAA job seekers via the DIAA's exclusive Job Flash™ email and search the DIAA 'resume bank' using robust filters to narrow their candidate search.

He encouraged members to explore the benefits of the DIAA's new Careers Centre by logging in or creating a new Careers Centre account today.

He said the Careers Centre included resume checking and advice services as well as coaching services.

"We have partnered with a leading international provider who is experienced at delivering this concept.

"The Careers Centre is free to DIAA members and offers further value for memberships. ■

For full details, see [careers.diaa.asn.au](https://careers.diaa.asn.au)



## 2023 product competition artwork available online

Medal artwork for DIAA Dairy Product Competitions is now available online for winners to download at their convenience.

DIAA CEO Carl Partridge said, "This means members do not need to wait to receive the artwork to use on the winning packaging, rather they can access it immediately they know they have won.

"This is more efficient for both the winning members and the Association."

To download the appropriate medal artwork, go to <https://diaa.asn.au/2023-product-competition-artwork/>, click the respective hyperlink and select "Save As" to download it as a JPEG file.

To receive the medal artwork in an EPS or PDF format, please email your request to [marketing@diaa.asn.au](mailto:marketing@diaa.asn.au)

Mr Partridge reminded members that the three-year time limit on medal use had been removed, and winning product packaging could display the appropriate medal indefinitely.

"This is a trust system where we trust our members to do the right thing in downloading medals. That is no different to the previous system where people could potentially have used medal artwork that was sent out on the wrong product, or indeed simply 'cut and pasted' off the website.

"The DIAA Dairy Product Competitions are highly regarded, and penalties exist for any person

or company found to be using the medal artwork falsely."

The medal artwork, along with guidelines for using the official DIAA Dairy Product Award medals on winning product packaging, the company website and staff email sign-offs can all be found here: [diaa.asn.au/2023-product-competition-artwork/](https://diaa.asn.au/2023-product-competition-artwork/)



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# An exciting new era for La Casa

A new world-class facility will allow this well-known South Australian cheesemaker to meet growing domestic demand and expand into new export markets.

“**L**a Casa Del Formaggio” literally translates as “The House Of Cheese”. The prominent Adelaide-based cheesemaker has now outgrown its own “house of cheese” in Glynde, and is preparing for a significant expansion into new manufacturing premises in Edinburgh.

The SA family-owned cheesemaker is moving into the new, \$35 million state-of-the-art dairy processing facility in May.

The new site is 10 times larger than the current facility, and MD **Claude Cicchiello** says state-of-the-art automation will set a benchmark for technology, efficiency, sustainability and workplace safety.

The new world-class facility will allow La Casa Del Formaggio to meet growing demand for its fresh cheese and dairy products in Australia, and expand into new export markets.

Renowned for its fresh, Italian-style cheese products – including bocconcini, mozzarella, burrata, ricotta and mascarpone – the new facility marks an exciting milestone in the company’s 35-year history, and is a realisation of the company’s vision to create one of Australia’s best cheese-manufacturing facilities.

## From small beginnings

It’s a big leap from La Casa’s beginnings in 1988, when Claude’s parents, **Gerardo and Rosa**, began making and selling cheese from a small retail store.

“Mum and Dad started the business 35 years ago with a view to supplying the local Italian community with fresh Italian cheeses, such as ricotta and bocconcini – things that were not readily available back then,” Claude says.

“I was employee number three in the business, and my job, at the age of 16, was to visit stores and bring them the products. This started a small wholesale run to the local continental delis, and that led to independent supermarkets and some local cafes, which in turn led to Coles and Woolworths in SA and then national distribution.



*MD Claude Cicchiello says the new facility has a high level of technology and automation, but will still capture the cheesemaking techniques for which La Casa is famous.*

Image credit: Tom Roschi Photography



"I often look back and reflect on where it started: in the beginning we were stirring milk with a wooden paddle on a gas burner. And now we're moving into this new facility, with a high level of technology and automation, but still capturing a lot of the cheesemaking techniques that our products are famous for."

### Focus starts on-farm

La Casa's sharp focus on quality starts at the farm. Claude says La Casa carefully selects the farmers who supply milk for their range of cheese products.

"We partner with farms that have similar values – they are generally family businesses but also farms that are aligned with us around quality," he says.

"Then it's our job to get the best products out of that milk. While the automation and control at each step in the new factory will ensure that we end up with a high quality product every time, cheesemaking isn't a straight science. We still need the art of the cheesemaker to be able to do stretch testing, to see the curd and adjust the cutting of curd at different steps. And we still need good farmers supplying a high-quality raw product."

### Growth in milk supply

La Casa's milk intake will continue to expand this year. As a result, the company has been looking at how to grow its milk pool.

"We've grown it consistently since 2014 when we had six family farms supplying us. We're up to about 20 now, with the view to continuing to grow that over the next five years," Claude says.

"For our current farmers, seeing us invest in a dairy facility like this gives them the confidence to keep investing in their farms. Milk prices are good, and we're seeing a high level of investment in our current group."

The increased milk supply will support the development of La Casa Del Formaggio's popular products – including bocconcini and ricotta – as well as burrata, a product that is relatively new to the Australian market.

### Burrata taking off

When making burrata, fresh mozzarella is formed into a pouch, which is then filled with shreds of mozzarella and cream before being pinched closed.

"You can add it to a cheese board, you can add it to a pizza, you can add it to a pasta. It's delicious. We brought that to market a few years ago and to see the growth and the acceptance – it's now one of our highest-searched products – it's so rewarding." ■

For more information on La Casa Del Formaggio visit: [lacasa.com.au](http://lacasa.com.au)



Claude Cicchiello says La Casa carefully selects the farmers who supply milk for their cheese products, and this year is looking to continue expanding milk intake.



La Casa's new, \$35m state-of-the-art dairy processing facility in Edinburgh is 10 times larger than the current facility; state-of-the-art automation will set a benchmark for technology, efficiency, sustainability and workplace safety.



La Casa introduced Burrata several years ago, which is now one of its highest-searched products.



# Milk flows have slowed, recent dynamics tipped to remain for a while

Smaller herds and big floods – the size of Australia's milk pool has become a general kitchen-table conversation topic of late.

**T**he overall size and direction of Australia's milk pool has become a consistently more mainstream topic of conversation over the past few months. Dairy Australia's March *Situation and Outlook Report* explains Australia's milk production has been drifting downwards, adding only 0.6% in 2020/21, followed by a contraction of 3.4% in 2021/22, and is forecast to decrease by a further 4 to 6% in 2022/23.

Despite intense and volatile cost pressures, the current season began with farmers in a strong position financially, with 68% of farmers feeling confident about their own businesses (as measured by the National Dairy Farmer Survey). Nevertheless, there have certainly been headwinds for milk production.

Competition for land, high beef prices, a shortage of labour and ongoing risk aversion remain barriers between confidence and growth. In particular, staffing constraints are holding back potential expansion plans across the country. The



**Eliza Redfern**  
Industry Analyst  
Dairy Australia



inability to secure, or in some cases retain, staff is contributing to exits or reductions in herd size; fatigued farmers are taking advantage of good margins to run a smaller herd (thus lowering workload) or realise the rapid gains in asset values after reducing debt. This dynamic is not expected to change in the short term.

## Challenges from the wet

Spring has generated some additional, immediate challenges for many farmers. Wet conditions across all dairy regions, except parts of south-west Western Australia, delayed fertiliser applications and silage cuts, and amplified all the usual issues

associated with managing dairy herds in muddy conditions. These include pasture damage, mastitis and lameness, among others.

Many farmers wound up fatigued and facing a strong incentive – if not necessity – to operate at conservative stocking rates, reducing herd numbers to take pressure off pastures and staff.

The impact of spring flooding in NSW, northern Victoria and Tasmania was particularly acute, especially for farmers directly in the water's path.

With the disruption occurring at the peak period of the season, and following extended wet conditions that precluded silage cuts for many farmers, the productive impact is unlikely to be reversed between now and June. Equally significantly, the



floods (on top of the extended wet period) caused a range of issues that affected a much wider set of farmers. This includes the damage to grain and fodder crops, which added a significant source of domestic market pressure to input costs that were already at very high levels due to global market influences.

### Lack of (human) housing

Flooding of built-up areas also exacerbated the shortage of housing in many regional areas, a key constraint to alleviating dairy workforce shortages.

In the immediate term, floods disrupted the ability of many staff to access the farm at which they are employed, exacerbating the workload and fatigue of farmers through the crisis period.

Although the wet conditions caused substantial challenges, rainfall and soil moisture levels have gradually tapered



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over the summer months, with many farms experiencing an extended growing season. This has provided an opportunity to partly 'catch up' home-grown feed production.

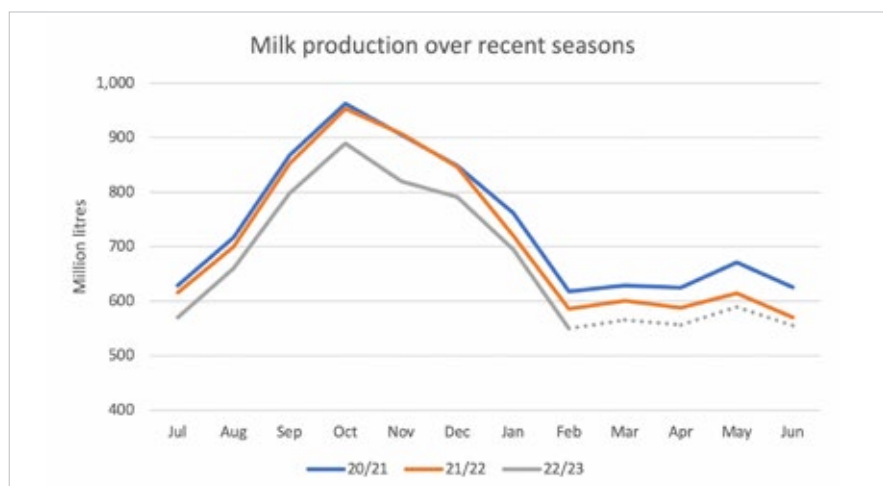
Additionally, irrigation storages are full, with ample irrigation water (and relatively low prices) assured across northern Victoria, Gippsland and north-west Tasmania. In a region where these are critical limitations to growth, short to medium-term confidence around water is valuable.

### Negatives despite positives

Despite these positives, the 2022/23 milk production outlook has become more negative than it was in June. The weight of pre-existing pressures and acute challenges created by the wet spring, led to Dairy Australia's recent forecast revision from 0% to a contraction of between 4% and 6%. This implies a season total of between 8.04 and 8.21 billion litres.

“  
*staffing constraints are holding back potential expansion plans across the country*  
”

The challenges of staffing constraints, competition for land, high beef prices, succession and efficiently pricing and managing risk, are more difficult to overcome. These are likely to keep milk production growth subdued into the medium term, and will remain the topic of much industry discussion regardless of weather conditions. ■



Source: Dairy manufacturers, Dairy Australia

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I sought & wrote this content, cross checking DIAA database for DIAA members who are winners. I sourced the images

# DIAA members shine in 2023 Australian Grand Dairy Awards

After a pandemic-induced hiatus, the Australian Grand Dairy Awards (AGDA) are back for 2023. Here are the results.

**D**IAA members shone across the 2023 AGDA, receiving one of the two top awards, and 16 of the 18 champions.

The AGDA, which recognise and reward excellence and quality in Australian dairy produce, saw Queensland producers score the highest number of champion titles – being awarded six of the 18 awards.

Queensland producers were recognised for the two most prestigious awards:

- **Woombye Cheese Company**, from the Sunshine Coast, was awarded Grand Champion Cheese for its Woombye Blackall Gold Washed Rind
- Sunnybank producer **Milani Minus Eight Degrees** won the title of Grand Champion Dairy for its Crème Brulée Gelato.

Some 320 entries for products from various manufacturers spanned 18 classes, including milk, yoghurt, ice-cream, butter, cream and an array of cheeses.

Dairy educator and Chief Judge **Russell Smith**, said the AGDA were about spotlighting local manufacturers and providing an opportunity to celebrate innovation within the Australian dairy industry.

“Australia has some incredible dairy producers, and we know Australians care about the provenance of their food more than ever. Congratulations to all producers who have entered this year.”

Woombye Cheese Company producer, **DIAA member Beth O’Leary**, said the Grand Champion award is welcomed recognition of

the years of work that have gone into producing the perfect cheese.

“We are proud of all the cheeses we produce, and to have been awarded the Grand Champion Cheese title is the cherry on top. We have an amazing team behind us, and we are thrilled to be taking this achievement home to those who have been a part of its success.”

Milani Minus Eight Degrees founder, **Yue Lin** said bringing a little bit of indulgence to its customers everyday was a privilege.

Entrants awarded a Gold Medal in any DIAA Dairy Product Competition are eligible for the AGDA. For more information, see <https://diaa.asn.au/competitions-and-results/>

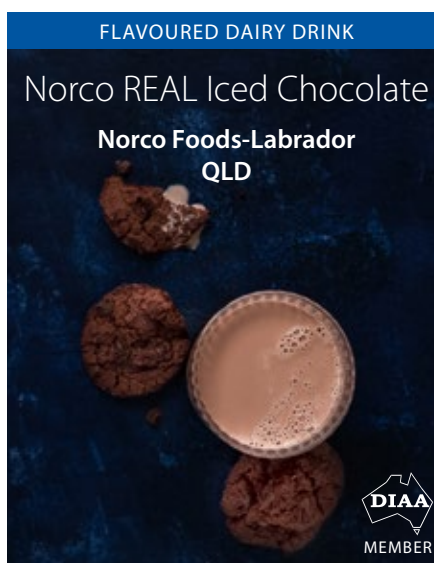
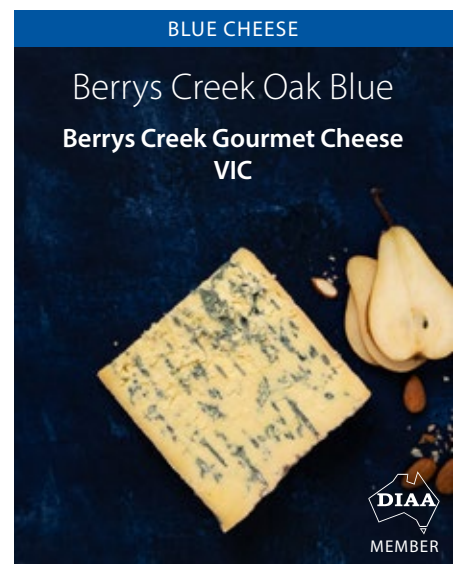
## Grand Champions





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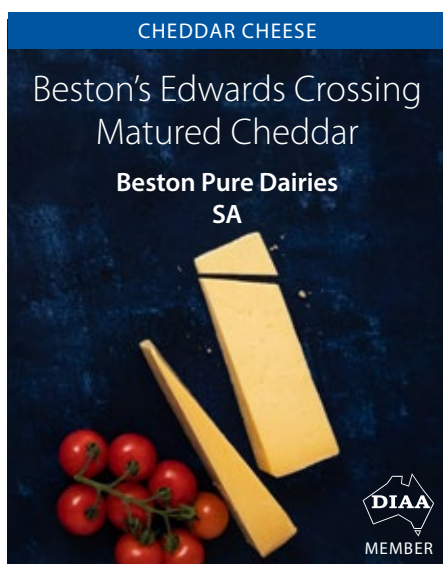
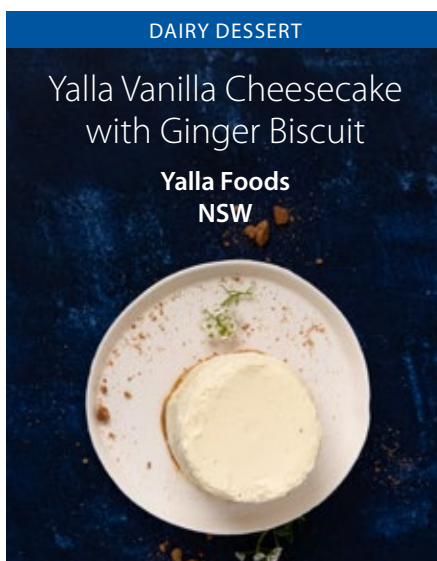
## Champions by Category





I sought & wrote this content, cross checking DIAA database for DIAA members who are winners. I sourced the images

## Champions by Category (continued)







# Judging training in Western Australia

Maintaining knowledge is core for DIAA judges.

I liaise with the organisers of DIAA events to send material post events. I wrote this article from their information

**T**he DIAA Western Australian Branch held the first judging training for 2023 before this year's dairy product competition.

**Phil Dayson, DIAA Board member and DIAA WA Branch Committee member**, said, "It was a very practical and useful day run by [DIAA WA Committee member] **Mike Rammer, of MGR Food Consulting**, and enhanced by the amazing knowledge

and experience of many of the participants."

The Sensory Analysis & Judging Dairy Products training was held at the brand-new **Food Innovation Precinct of Western Australia (FIPWA)**.

Phil said, "The training day was supported by **The Royal Agricultural Society of WA [RASWA], Murdoch University** and FIPWA.

"Technical presentations from Mike, along with group discussions were held either side of the practical product judging training, with DIAA WA Committee member **Richard Lester, from Brownes Dairy**, and myself assisting as stewards.

"The day showed we have excellent skills and capabilities in WA dairy manufacturing: from milk, to cheeses, flavoured milk, butter and custard – all

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**TECHNICAL – DIAA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: JUDGING TRAINING**

of which were sampled and judged on the day. WA has a consistent high-quality product range, mainly derived from milk from our dedicated WA dairy farmers.

"Some of the aspects covered were triangle and paired comparison tests, sensory perception and evaluation, judging basics, milk constituents and their role in determining flavour, and classes of dairy products.

"Of course, there was also the usual networking and exchange of knowledge and experiences.

"It's great to see the enthusiasm that we have here in WA for the industry, and the DIAA is proud to be supporting this and be part of the WA dairy family."

Phil said the DIAA WA Branch would like to acknowledge **Jodie Spirek**, from RASWA for the \$1,000 donation towards training costs, **Andrew Tilley** and **David Doepel** of FIPWA/ Murdoch University for the use of the exciting new FIPWA, and all the other attendees from WA's dairy manufacturing sector.

Attendees included DIAA members **Cate Weston** and **Mark Weston**, both of **Bookara Goat Dairy**; **Malgorzata Boratyn**, **Nikki Hogan** and **Josephine Priscilla**, all of **Brownes Dairy**; and **Marama Taylor** and **Henry Raphael** both of **BEGA Masters Dairy**.

BEGA Masters Dairy's **Lourens Van Niekerk** also participated in the training.

---

**Results of the 2023 DIAA Western Australian Dairy Product Competition were announced on 31 March. See p22 for details.**



*In background L-R: Cate and Mark Weston, David Doepel and Mike Rammer; Jodie Spirek is in the foreground.*



*L-R: Mike Rammer, Marama Taylor, Henry Raphael, Lourens van Niekerk, Malgorzata Boratyn and Nikki Hogan.*



*Facing L-R: Josephine Priscilla, Jodie Spirek, Andrew Tilley, David Doepel, Richard Lester, Mike Rammer and Mark Weston.*



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# Entries continue to grow in the DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition

Entries to this year's competition were up 7% – on top of 16% growth the year before – as WA dairy manufacturers show how valuable the product-quality benchmarking event is to their business.

**E**ighteen Western Australian manufacturers entered 203 products across 47 classes in the 2023 DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition.

**Chief Judge Michael Rammer** said, "The high level of interest in the competition resulted in 7% more samples being judged in 2023 than in 2022, which had already experienced a 16% increase in entries over the previous year."

The **DIAA WA Branch Committee member**, who has run food-advisory business **MGR Food Consulting Pty Ltd** since 2011, said, "The WA Branch has a long tradition of delivering a technical product competition using judges who are industry experts owing to their extensive experience in manufacturing many different types of dairy products.

"Judges use their expertise to judge samples against the highest industry standards.

"The objective of our dairy product competition is to support WA manufacturers in improving product quality by providing honest feedback."

He said this year's competition had been outstanding with more products being entered in the competition than ever before.

“*Despite the challenges experienced along the supply chain, rising manufacturing costs & a high inflation rate, our manufacturers showed strong support for the competition and the value it provides to the industry.*”

"Despite the challenges experienced along the supply chain, rising manufacturing costs and a high inflation rate, our manufacturers showed strong support for the competition and the value it provides to the industry.

"Several innovative products were submitted, with new and unique flavours in ice-cream/gelato classes, which was reflected in several outstanding, high-scoring products."

He said the cheese classes also showed many outstanding and high-quality products, with a well-deserved **Grand Champion** in **Dellendale Creamery** for **Torndirup Appenzelle**.

"Overall, the quality of products in the competition was of a high level, with participants receiving 83 Gold Medals and 118 Silver Medals, and the results confirm the exceptional quality of WA dairy products."

He said the judging panel congratulates all manufacturers on the quality of dairy products they produce in WA, which also meet international best practice

"Product feedback from the judges can be used as a vehicle for further improvement and future development, while the competition enables medal winners and category champions to demonstrate product quality and consistency with buyers and consumers.

"I would like to thank the WA Branch of the DIAA for organising the competition; as well as the judges, stewards, data-entry personnel, **European Foods**, and **The Market Place** in Osborne Park for providing the location for judging.

"I appreciate the personal effort of everyone involved who volunteered their time in running this product competition to improve WA dairy products."

Results for the 2023 DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition were announced on Friday 31 March at Cottesloe Golf Club. You can also find them online here, and download a PDF of the full results: <https://diaa.asn.au/competitions-and-results/>

For an in-depth interview with the **2023 Most Successful Exhibitor**, and winner of the **Champion Dairy Dessert** and **Champion Ice-Cream, Gelato Buonissimo**, please see page 24.



# Sponsored Trophy Awards

Best in Category

## 2023 GRAND CHAMPION



Dairy Industry  
Association  
of Australia

**Dellendale Creamery**

Torndirup Appenzelle

### CHAMPION FLAVOURED MILK



**Bega Dairy & Drinks**

Dare Double Espresso  
NAS

### CHAMPION CHEESEMAKER



**Dellendale Creamery**

Chris Vogel

### CHAMPION YOGHURT & FLAVOURED MILK WITH NO ADDED SUGAR



**Bega Dairy & Drinks**

Dare Double Espresso  
NAS

### CHAMPION MILK



**Hunt & Brew**

Extra Creamy Milk

### CHAMPION BUTTER



**Harvey Cheese**

Cultured Butter with  
Chive & Garlic

### CHAMPION CREAM



**Bannister Downs**

Fresh Cream

### CHAMPION NON-BOVINE



**Bookara Goat Dairy**

Pressed Feta

### CHAMPION CHEESE



**Dellendale Creamery**

Torndirup Appenzelle

### CHAMPION YOGHURT



**Brownes Dairy**

Natural Greek Style  
Yoghurt

### CHAMPION DAIRY DESSERT



**Gelato Buonissimo**

Salted Caramel

### INNOVATION AWARD



**Harvey Cheese**

To Oven Bake Cheese

### CHAMPION ICE-CREAM



**Gelato Buonissimo**

Apfelstrudel

### MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR



Dairy Industry  
Association  
of Australia

**Gelato Buonissimo**

Gelato Buonissimo

# The Dairy Report



Andy Smith and Anita Gherardotti-Smith just before they closed the gelateria to go wholesale. Image credit: Pieter Naessens.

## Tuscany in Australia

I seek & write this content, OR pay a contractor myself

A family with Italian, English and Zimbabwean roots has developed a business in Western Australia that leans fully into the Italian part of its heritage – making award-winning gelato.

DIAA member **Daniela Smith-Papasergio** tells *Australian Dairy Foods* their story, including how her dad **Andy Smith**'s exceptional palate and ability to 'taste flavours in his mind' has been the impetus that saw the Smiths go from gelato carts to award-winning products – including this year's Most Successful Exhibitor in the DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition.



The Wildflower Honey, Rosemary & Orange Zest was Gelato Buonissimo's Champion Gelato in the 2021 DIAA WA awards.



This is a story of re-invention, adaptability and a quiet simplicity that makes **Gelato Buonissimo** a special part of WA's landscape.

The Smith and Gherardotti families' course has altered many times, and on each occasion they have made lemonade out of those lemons.

Their forebears were initially pushed from England and Italy, respectively, to Southern Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) in the aftermath of World War II – with Andy and his father establishing the stainless steel industry in Rhodesia for breweries and dairies, before it became Zimbabwe.

Then, 23 years ago, **Andy Smith** and his wife, **Anita Gherardotti-Smith**, packed up their four children and immigrated to Alice Springs in Central Australia. That Australian shift evolved into another – and final – move to Busselton in South-West WA 11 years ago, where they settled and came full circle to find their Italian destiny.

Their former careers (Andy in sheet-metal work and Anita in teaching) didn't translate easily into Busselton's vibrant beach town, 220km south-west of Perth, so they bought two gelato carts.

Several years later, in 2014, they bought the gelateria that supplied them. As the family's "foodie", it was a natural progression for Andy to learn from the former owner and become the new Gelatiere, putting his own mark on the 50-odd flavours rotating through the shop every year. The learning curve included him studying the gelato craft in Melbourne.

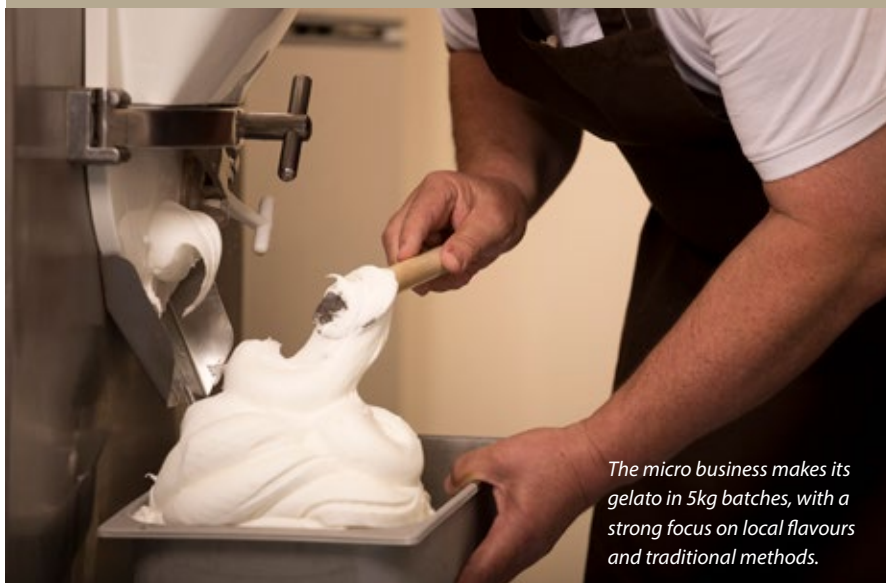
### Hours honoured family's Tuscan heritage

In the summer, the shop was open from 10am until 9pm to take advantage of the holiday destination. Daughter **Daniela** became the business's sales arm, while daughter **Cristina** helped with the initial brand

### Differences between gelato and ice-cream

The differences between these two frozen products are:

- Gelato has a lower fat content compared with ice-cream.
- Gelato has less air than ice-cream, making it denser and tastes more intense on the tongue.
- As gelato is denser, it is often served at a slightly higher temperature than ice-cream, allowing it to be scoopable and giving it a silky texture.



*The micro business makes its gelato in 5kg batches, with a strong focus on local flavours and traditional methods.*

Image credit: Pieter Naessens.

design work. Their two sons work outside the business; **Timothy** is a wildlife guide and photographer in Namibia, while **Evan** is a successful local musician and sound technician with the **Dallas Radio** band, which has toured in Australia.

In 2018, large cruise ships started docking at Busselton and Daniela says the queues would routinely be out the door and down the street. The family deliberately kept the long hours – to honour the authentic Italian way of enjoying gelato.

"The Italian side of our family comes from Tuscany, from Greve In Chianti [the home of Chianti wine]," Daniela says.

"In Italy, you have your dinner and then you go out into the piazza or town square to get a gelato and you hang out with your friends. We live right by the sea at Busselton. We used to have a lot of people who went

home for dinner and then, between 7pm and 9pm, our shop would be full of people getting a gelato and going for a walk down on the beach. It created something to do in the evening.

"We were proud to be a traditional gelateria, which celebrated our Italian heritage. Gelato is supposed to be something that is enjoyed all day, all year – whether it's freezing cold or boiling hot – you should have a gelato in your hand."

### Authentic flavours meant saying 'no'

Daniela says while they had three very distinct influences on their upbringing, their Italian heritage dominated.

"There was a very Italian side from our grandparents. They spoke Italian and everything was still made in the original way. We also had a very English influence also from

my dad's family, and then we had the African culture because that's where my parents lived for 45 years. We all speak Italian, except Dad. He understands it though – and he can swear fluently in Italian. The Italian side of our family has always taken up a large chunk of our family tradition."

She says for that reason they have always resisted complicating the gelato.

"It was important for us to keep this gelato authentic and true to itself. We had a lot of people asking us if we do Cookies and Cream, Bubblegum, Rocky Road, or can we pour sauces or sprinkles over this, for example.

“*This is a micro business. The maximum gelato we can produce in a day is 100kg.*”

"We always say, 'no', because we are proud to be traditional."

And people travel for their gelato.

"We used to have people come from Perth [more than two hours] or Bunbury [40 minutes] for the day, just to enjoy our gelato. It was an institution. It was really successful, and it was very busy."

## The pandemic intervenes

Business peaked when cruise ships began docking in Busselton, with often over 200-300 people pouring into the town. One day they were serving hundreds of people. The next day the country was in lockdown because of COVID-19.

"We'd gone from this busy shop to closing, and not being able to trade," Daniela says. "It was frightening, because we were still paying rent, and not knowing what was going on. For a little while in WA the whole world was very uncertain.

"However, it gave Dad a chance to actually sit down and take a break. Like

## All about the base

Daniela says there is a strong point of difference between gelatos.

"One of our points of difference – outside of staying traditional – is that my Dad makes his own base.

"There are a lot of opportunities now on the market to buy a pre-made base to make the gelato. That's fine, but you don't get the same end product.

"Dad makes it from scratch using his secret recipe and we believe it's that base that really creates a very smooth gelato and contributes to our very clean flavour.

"With gelato – because it has less fat and less air – [see box] the flavour comes at you as soon as you put it in your mouth. If it's a good gelato, you should literally have a nice smooth texture and instant flavour.

"Your gelato can only be as good as its base. If it's grainy on your tongue, it's not good. If it's icy on your tongue, it's no good. There is lots of detail which is important to make great gelato and we don't use preservatives or colouring or sauces to pimp it up.

"It's clean, natural and traditional."

Daniela has embraced the sales and marketing.

"The product that we've developed is our branded tubs which include 10 flavours. We chose some of the most popular and generic flavours we could for the market.

"We now sell our small tubbed product through a number of IGA supermarkets around Perth, Busselton, and the Margaret River region, gourmet delis and specialty food shops. Supplying a few wineries and boutique breweries is a big one for us down here." ■



Andy Smith is Gelato Buonissimo's Gelatiere.

Image credit: Pieter Naessens.

many people in the world who had been working very, very hard, Dad got a chance to think, and not just 'do'.

"He said, 'We didn't only sell gelato in the gelateria, we had sold cakes, biscuits and coffees too – it was a lot, and it was long hours'.

"Our lease was due to expire ... so we sat there and thought about it and Dad said, 'I'm just going to close up as it is all very uncertain and the long hours are getting harder to do'. My sister and I said, 'You can't do this! Why don't we put the gelato in pots and sell it, so that people can enjoy it at home'."

### Retail to wholesale

That was to be their "ah-ha" moment.

Gelato Buonissimo was re-born, and Andy moved into a place where he was happiest – coming up with new flavours in the quiet of his gelato laboratorio, as it's referred to in Italy.

Image credit: Pieter Naessens.



*Gelato Buonissimo's Tiramisù is a popular flavour within its range.*

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Daniela says, “It is science and art at the same time when you’re making gelato. Over the years Dad has refined his recipes, and he has this amazing ability to imagine a flavour combination and be able to taste it in his head even before he makes it.

“This is a micro business. The maximum gelato we can produce in a day is 100kg. It’s made in 5kg batches. We don’t have a mega machine pumping out 50-100kg at a time. It’s literally made in 5kg increments. It’s small, niche, and that’s the beauty of it.

“While the locals were devastated when we closed the shop, they now order small tubs and 5kg tubs and take it home and enjoy it. It’s just not in a cone anymore.”

“

*locals now order 5kg and take it home and enjoy it*

“

*Dad has ... this amazing ability to imagine a flavour combination and taste it in his head before he makes it.*

### Direction never in question

The family has never disagreed about the direction of the business. They continue to court the “niche” end of the industry, preferencing local suppliers.

They source their dairy components from **Brownes Dairies** and their honey from an elderly beekeeper, **Brian Bunter**, whose honey is only available at the Busselton Farmers’ Market. Their lemons come from Daniela’s husband’s family property at Bridgetown. If the **Papasergio** family doesn’t have enough lemons, they again turn to the Busselton Farmers’ Market. Anita prepares all the fresh produce.



Image credit: Pieter Naessens.

Anita Gherardotti-Smith chops, dices and grates the fresh produce sourced from suppliers in the Margaret River region for Gelato Buonissimo’s gelato.

Daniela says, “One of the most popular flavours we have – which was the biggest seller in our store – is the wildflower honey, rosemary and orange-zest gelato. Dad found that the wildflower honey that Brian collects from his hives goes really well with the rosemary and orange. That slightly different honey just changed the whole thing and brought out different flavours. It’s amazing.”

### Winning awards

It was so exceptional that Daniela decided to enter it in the DIAA Western Australian Dairy Product Competition – the first competition they had ever entered. She didn’t tell Andy until he couldn’t do anything about it.

2021  
DIAA WA  
results  
1st year of  
entry

## Gelato Buonissimo

Gelato Buonissimo



### Yoghurt & Caramelised Fig

Class 34 Reduced Fat Flavoured or Fruit Ice Cream/Gelato

### Jarrah Honey & Macadamia

Class 37 Standard Flavoured/Fruit Ice Cream/Gelato

### Wildflower Honey, Rosemary & Orange Zest Gelato

Class 34 Reduced Fat Flavoured or Fruit Ice Cream/Gelato



### Milk Chocolate (Cioccolato)

Class 34 Reduced Fat Flavoured or Fruit Ice Cream/Gelato

### Choc Chip (Straciatella)

Class 34 Reduced Fat Flavoured or Fruit Ice Cream/Gelato



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## THE DAIRY REPORT – MEMBER PROFILE: BUSINESS AGILITY

It won the 2021 DIAA WA Champion Gelato. They also won a swag of golds and silvers with other gelatos that year.

“Dad’s so humble and he doesn’t like to blow his own horn, so that’s why I do it for him,” Daniela smiles. “I entered all the gelato into the dairy competition without his knowledge or consent, initially. You should have seen the eye rolling that came with that.

“I wanted to prove to him that what he’s done is amazing. He didn’t even go to the awards ceremony, because he didn’t want the fuss.

“We’ve got some photos that night, and I’m holding the award, even though I didn’t make the gelato.”

### DIAA membership brings connections

Daniela says her DIAA membership had not only allowed the business to shine in the competition, it had also helped with connections as they have delved deeper into the gelato conversations.

“It’s a re-affirmation that what we are doing is on the right path and that people appreciate it. Obviously from a business point of view, it assures our customers that they are purchasing a high-quality product



Daniela Smith receives the DPIRD Award for Champion Ice-Cream from Hon. Alannah MacTiernan, MLC, Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry, at the 2021 DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition Awards. The winning product was their Wildflower Honey, Rosemary & Orange Zest Gelato.



Daniela Smith and DIAA Branch President Phil Madden with Gelato Buonissimo's three gold and two silvers at the 2021 DIAA WA Dairy Product Competition Awards.

“  
*been involved in making  
signature flavours for  
wineries and breweries*

that is made locally.”

They have formed some collaborations with a local olive oil farm **Destiny Farm**, which they have incorporated into their base on some gelato flavours.



"It is just glorious. The flavours of the olive oil don't come through, but the texture is just really, really good."

They source their flavour pastes directly from Italy – through a Perth supplier. There are also bountiful fresh-produce choices through the Margaret River region, including goat and sheep farms.

"We may make a base using goat or sheep milk in the future, but you'll never find us doing almond milk," Daniela asserts.

She says because they were agile, they had also been involved in making some signature flavours for wineries and breweries that incorporated wine or beer.

They did recently bend a little and added some chocolate, in the form of choc-tops, dipping the gelato in authentic Italian chocolate.

"The 'choc tops' are amazing; however, it's limited availability because they are labour intensive – they are scooped by hand. We have five outlets selling them around Busselton and the Margaret River region."

## The future

Daniela explored sales on the east coast, but says it proved to have difficulties.

"We'd love to go interstate, but we did get some push back. There is a lot of competition out there in the ice-cream and gelato markets in the last three years. We feel like there have been a lot more Italians looking for a new way to make a living post-COVID, and the gelato scene has flourished.

"We couldn't find the right target audience over there. It's price sensitive, we're using high-end quality ingredients, and the distance adds cost."

Daniela says for right now, their future remains in Western Australia.

"Dad is not interested in making this a mega business. We want to stay small and micro-focused.

"As soon as you get bigger, you start losing your integrity, and then you're going to start having to find alternatives to make things easy and it no longer becomes a pleasure to make.

"We were never in it for the mega growth. Maybe one day when Dad retires, there may be opportunity for someone to take it over and make it bigger.

"But, for now our focus is to keep it unique, traditional and we hope that people see the value in that." ■

**Results of the 2023 DIAA Western Australian Dairy Product Competition were announced on 31 March. See p22 for details.**



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# Grass-fed milk: scientific aspects

In this article, **DIAA member Emeritus Professor Hilton Deeth** looks at the scientific aspects of grass-fed milk on the back of increasing consumer demand both in Australia and overseas.

**I**n recent years, there has been increasing consumer demand in Australia and in several countries for grass-fed milk. This demand has been driven mostly by perceived health benefits and concerns about animal welfare (Benbrook et al. 2018). Grass-fed milk refers to milk from cows which receive predominantly grass or pasture as feed and no, or very little, grain or concentrates.

The term “pasture-fed” is sometimes used interchangeably with grass-fed indicating that the feed may contain various plant species, including legumes, found in pasture. Another term used is grass milk. In Mexico, it has even been called “Latte Nobile” (Noble Milk).

In some countries, there are specifications for how much pasture cows have to be fed for their milk to qualify as ‘grass-fed’. In the USA, lactating cows must consume >60% of their dry matter intake as pasture during the grazing season, with a grazing season being at least 150 days (Benbrook et al. 2018). Packaged milk from certified grass-fed cows can carry relevant labels from USDA and the American Grassfed Association. A Canadian grass-fed milk standard specifies that “forage/ grass must provide at least 75% of the total dry matter intake of a dairy cow” (Dairy Farmers of Ontario 2021).

In New Zealand, Fonterra specifies that grass-fed milk must be from cows whose diet consists of at least 80% grass on a dry weight basis or 92% on an “as consumed” basis (Fonterra Grass and Pasture Fed Standard | NZMP.com).



Image: Nigel Welch

**Hilton Deeth**  
Emeritus Professor  
of Food Science,  
University of  
Queensland

In Australia, according to Dairy Australia about 60-65% of dairy cows’ feed is fresh grazed grass. On only about 2% of dairy farms are cows fed a mix of preserved grass and crops, grains and other feeds rather than fresh pasture.

## Compositional changes in grass-fed milk

The interest in grass-fed milk is mostly due to its nutritionally beneficial altered composition compared with milk from cows fed grains and concentrates, or what is sometimes called a “total mixed ration”. The major differences are in the fatty acid composition of the fat where there are increases in  $\omega$ -3 fatty acids (the major nutritional feature of fish oils), particularly  $\alpha$ -linolenic (18:3), and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), especially its principal isomer 18:2, cis-9, trans-11, rumenic acid), and a decrease in  $\omega$ -6 fatty acids (which are high in polyunsaturated vegetable oils), particularly linoleic acid (18:2, cis-9, cis-12) and some long-chain saturated fatty acids such as palmitic acid (C16:0).

One result of these fatty acid changes is a decrease in the  $\omega$ -6/ $\omega$ -3 ratio. In their grass-fed milk standard, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario (2018) proposed a ratio of  $\leq 3.0$ . Table 1 shows a comparison of the  $\omega$ -6/ $\omega$ -3 ratios and CLA in milk from four management systems with different feed profiles (Benbrook et al. 2018). The grass-fed milk used in that comparison was “Grassmilk™” which is a brand of organic milk supplied by the US co-operative

“*interest in grass-fed milk is mostly due to its nutritionally beneficial altered composition*”

**DIAA-paid content contributed 3 x issues per year, which I sub edit. I liaise with the contributor.**





Photo by Leon Eppner via Unsplash

**DIAA-paid content contributed 3 x issues per year, which I sub edit. I liaise with the contributor.**

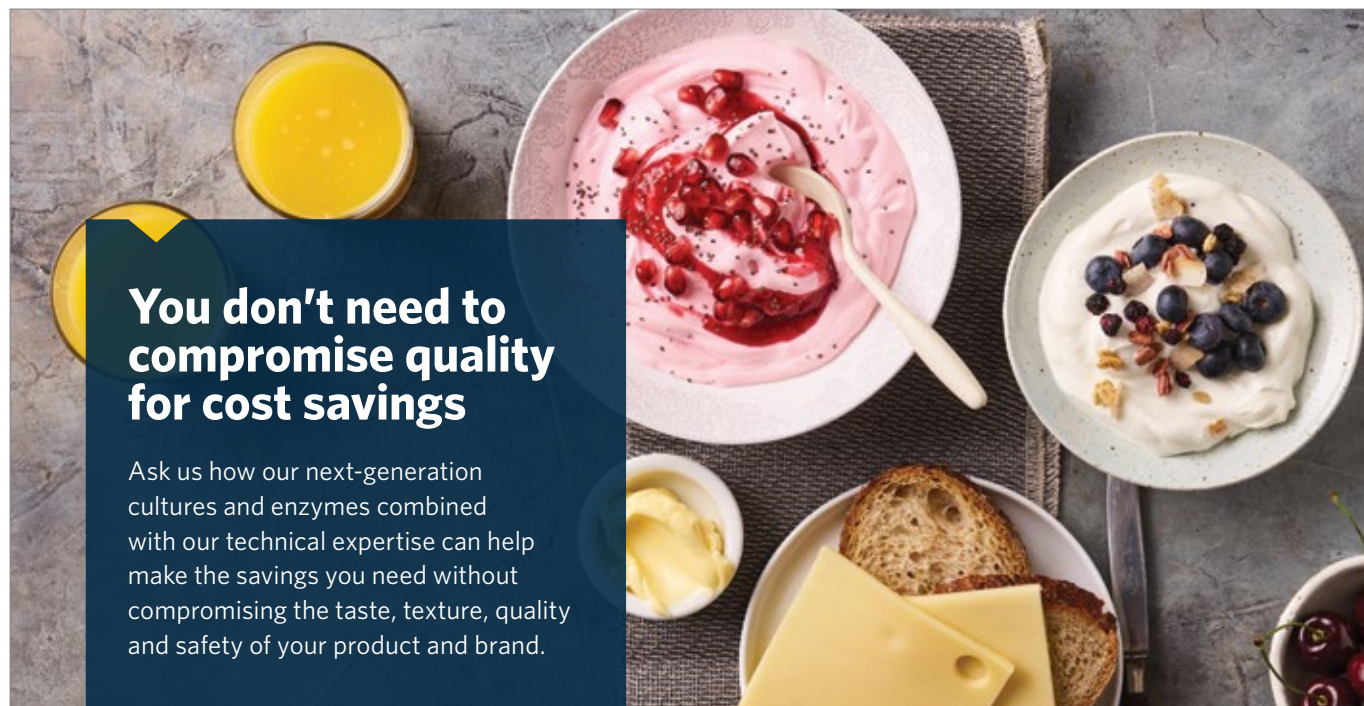
CROPP. Eligible farms supplying milk for that brand have very strict feeding requirements including no feeding of grains and supplements.

The three-year, US-wide study reported by Benbrook et al. (2018) involved 1,163 grass-fed milk samples collected from 140 farms. The organic and conventional milk data in Table 1 are from a large 18-month study of milk from 14 processors in seven regions in the USA (Benbrook et al. 2013).

The milk from cows fed 100% fresh or stored forages differed markedly from milk produced by cows fed a considerable

quantity of grains and concentrates. A survey of the literature reveals a large variation in the reported absolute levels of individual fatty acids, but the comparison of grass-fed and other milks is consistent with the data shown in Table 1.

Another reported fatty acid change is an increase in C18:1 trans-11 (vaccenic acid) in milk from grass-fed cows while the milk from cows fed a total mixed ration has elevated C18:1 trans-10 (Elgersma 2015). This has led to the suggestion that the ratio of C18:1 trans-11 to C18:1 trans-10 could be used to distinguish grass-fed from other milk (Benbrook et al. 2013).



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**Table 1. Impact of cow management system on some milk fatty acids** (From Benbrook et al., 2018)

Management system	Average annual dry matter intake source			Milk fatty acids	
	Grazing	Grazing + stored forages (%)	Grains and concentrates (%)	$\omega$ -6/ $\omega$ -3	CLA <sup>1</sup> (g/100 g)
Minimal forages	0	40	60	8.0	0.010
Conventional	3	53	47	5.8	0.019
Organic	28	80	20	2.3	0.023
Grass-fed <sup>2</sup>	42	100	0	0.95	0.043

<sup>1</sup> CLA = conjugated linoleic acid; <sup>2</sup> The grass-fed milk was Grassmilk™

An important feature of grass-fed milk is an elevated level of antioxidants, particularly  $\alpha$ -tocopherol and  $\beta$ -carotene. Typical reported values for grass-fed and other milks are 19.0 and 14.6 mg/kg fat for  $\alpha$ -tocopherol and 7.5 and 4.9 mg/kg fat for  $\beta$ -carotene (Marino et al. 2014). The increased  $\beta$ -carotene level gives the fat in grass-fed milk increased yellow colour. Several other carotenoids and tocopherols occur in increased amounts in grass-fed compared with concentrate-fed milk (van Vliet et al. 2021).

The higher antioxidant levels correspond to higher levels of the polyunsaturated  $\omega$ -3 fatty acids and CLA in grass-fed milk. In cheese, the antioxidant levels, together with the reducing environment in cheese, appear to prevent off flavours from lipid oxidation (Kilcawley et al. 2018). However, research by the same group found that whole milk powder derived from pasture diets was more susceptible to oxidation. This was shown by increased volatile aldehyde production (Clarke et al. 2021).

In addition to antioxidants, other phytochemicals which originate from pasture are higher in grass-fed milk than milk from cows fed grains and concentrates. These include terpenoids and polyphenols. Their presence is directly related to the composition of the cow's diet. Cows grazing more diverse pastures accumulate higher amounts of these chemicals in their milk (van Vliet et al. 2021). A recent paper showed that terpenoids and fatty acid composition varied according to the altitude of milk production in a region in Italy, because of the differences in pasture composition. The authors suggested these compounds could be used to verify the altitude of origin of the milk (Cifuni et al. 2022).

### Organic milk vs grass-fed milk

Organic milk is not the same as grass-fed milk. Some organic milk can be classified as grass-fed, e.g., Grassmilk™ mentioned above, but this does not apply to all organic milks. Organic certification depends on farm management practices. All feed, whether pasture or concentrates



New Zealand grass-fed milk-based infant and toddler formula powder (Grass Fed Milk - Bing images)



Australian grass-fed milk-based infant and toddler formula powder (Grass Fed Milk - Bing images)

## Hungry for more science content?

The DIAA website is home to more than 1,700 scientific papers and technical articles, published in the *Australian Journal of Dairy Technology* between 1960 and 2010. DIAA members can download individual articles and full issues of the journal for free. Non-members can buy articles for \$15 each.

Find out more on [www.diaa.asn.au](http://www.diaa.asn.au) > Resources > Australian Journal of Dairy Technology



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must be grown and processed without the use of chemicals, fertilisers or genetically modified organisms. Organic farmers also aim to be ecologically sustainable. The composition of organic milk largely depends on the cows' feed.

Organic milk from cows whose feed accords with the requirements for grass-fed milk, i.e., almost entirely pasture-based, has similar composition to grass-fed milk. There are reports of the composition of organic milk differing from that of grass-fed milk, but this can be attributed to the inclusion of (organically produced) grains or concentrates in the cows' feed (see for example, data in Table 1).

The US National Organic Program requires that lactating cows on certified organic farms receive at least 30% of daily dry matter intake from pasture during that portion of the year when pasture grasses and legumes are actively growing, with a minimum of 120 days per year (Benbrook et al. 2013). This is a less strict requirement than that for grass-fed milk in the US, as mentioned above.

## Nutritional implications

A major nutritional feature of grass-fed milk is its low  $\omega$ -6 to  $\omega$ -3 ratio. A high  $\omega$ -6 to  $\omega$ -3 ratio "promotes various diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, whereas increased levels of  $\omega$ -3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (which lower  $\omega$ -6 to  $\omega$ -3 ratio), exert a suppressive effect" (Simopoulos 2006).

In Western diets the ratio is around 15. As illustrated in Table 1, milk produced by cows fed a high percentage of grass/forage has low  $\omega$ -6 to  $\omega$ -3 ratio, much lower than milk from cows fed a diet high in grain or concentrate. Benbrook et al. (2018) suggested that, because milk and milk products are highly consumed foods, consumption of grass-fed milk could lead to a reduction in the  $\omega$ -6 to  $\omega$ -3 ratio, with potentially reduced risk of cardiovascular and other metabolic diseases.

CLA has been shown to have anticarcinogenic properties. This was reviewed in a seminal paper published in the *Australian Journal of Dairy Technology* by the late Australian dairy scientist Peter Parodi (Parodi 2015). The high levels of CLA, together with enhanced levels of antioxidants and polyphenols, further support the nutritional benefits of grass-fed milk. ■

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# New podcast explores value-adding innovation

Episode four in a new podcast series, *Innovation AG*, looks at value adding in dairy. *Australian Dairy Foods* spoke to those behind the creation at the **Vic Hub**.

**I**nnovation AG is a new, 10-part podcast series that examines innovation throughout the agribusiness supply chain.

Created by the **Victoria Drought Resilience Adoption & Innovation Hub** (or the “Vic Hub”) this free podcast has proven popular since its launch in January.

**Sabine Tausz-Posch, Associate Director – Innovation** at the Vic Hub, says, “There is no clear ‘innovation roadmap’ in farming and agriculture, thus we decided to create this new podcast series as a guide for farmers who are deciding whether to invest

in new agtech, or trying to fund or future-proof their next project.”

Sabine says *Innovation AG* is also for those who want to value-add to their agricultural businesses, or even just keep up with industry changes.

“The podcast picks the brightest minds, examines the latest research and maps out a step-by-step process to help farmers implement change. Hear from farmers, scientists, technologists and ag industry leaders, who are all working towards innovation, improved sustainability and new opportunities in agriculture. This podcast draws out the practical

lessons, so farmers can apply them on farm, in industry or research.”

Hosted by Vic Hub Knowledge-Broker and former ABC radio and television journalist, **Kirsten Diprose**, the free 10-part series is supported by funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund.

Kirsten says, “I am so very excited about this podcast. *Innovation AG* is intended to act as a ‘guide book’ to innovation on-farm and for the broader agriculture industry. While there’s no perfect playbook for innovation, throughout the series we’re drawing on the latest research from universities, farmers and industry to help those on the land navigate what can be a messy journey of changing practices. We also share the ‘fails’ too, because no innovation happens without the odd misstep along the way.”

The experienced broadcaster and rural-storyteller said the Vic Hub podcast series brings together the best advice from farmers, academics and science.

“We ask questions such as ‘what motivates people to innovate?’ and ‘how can you make the right decision when thinking of introducing a new innovation?’ And – the big one – ‘how do you fund it?’.

“*Innovation AG* is different to other farming podcasts: we incorporate the latest research as well as farmers and rural communities. I live on a farm and I work in academic research, so I get that these two worlds don’t always sit down for a chat. But they do on this podcast!



**Episode Four:**  
**How to Value-Add to Your Business**

**INNOVATION AG PODCAST**

**Cressida Cains**  
**Pecora Dairy, NSW**

“There are so many bright minds we have interviewed for this series and I feel so privileged to be hosting, with the series brought to life by the Vic Hub’s talented producer **Rachael Thompson**, who has worked on many podcasts and films over the years.

“In episode four, ‘Value adding’, one of the people I interviewed was dairy farmer **Cressida Cains**.”

Here is an abridged version.

### The beginnings of Pecora Dairy

Returning to Australia after post-university work overseas, Cressida began working in the wine industry. A few years later she and her husband **Michael** moved to a small property in Robertson, in the NSW Southern Highlands

“And that was where we got the idea of sheep milking. We were very clear

“*innovation and technology feeds into what makes a sustainable and profitable small business*”

right from the beginning that we wanted to go into a very high value product.

“We don’t come from a family farm, so we had work it all out ourselves. It was a huge learning curve but we had some very clear pillars that we wanted to stand by – the very high value product, good proximity to main markets, to have an environmentally sustainable business and to treat our animals ethically.”

Cressida said the wine industry was an interesting example to learn from.

“Back in the ‘70s, we really assumed that wine from overseas was far better than anything we could produce in Australia. Some of it was, but our skills as winemakers in Australia then developed. Back in the day, if you wanted to be the height of sophistication going to a dinner party, you’d take a French Beaujolais or something like that. Whereas today we have such a dedication to our Australian wine industry that wherever you are, you take your local wine. So I think there’s some really good parallels there. The wine industry has done a fabulous job of branding and value adding to their product.

“I believe value adding is a really sustainable and profitable way of running a business; it can be done with most agricultural commodities – such as wine or cheese – and obviously some areas more than others, but I think it’s a really



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interesting and poignant area at the moment particularly after COVID and all the supply chain issues.

“The other thing of course, is that when we walked into supermarkets during COVID, we suddenly realised that there were all these empty shelves and exactly how much we were importing into this country. So I think consumers, together with the environmental concerns they have in regards to climate change and the like, are really interested to know where their food comes from.

“So to be able to tell the story of your product, and to help the consumer understand where the product is coming from is really, really important.

“The other element from my point of view is the health consideration. There are a lot of people who are turning away from eating meat

or dairy – which is, of course, completely up to their own desires – but I would also pose the question that maybe we should be looking at what is being farmed and how it’s being farmed.”

She said more broadly, stakeholders are increasingly applying the “ESG” or non-financial metrics of “environmental, social and governance” to analyse companies and assess risk and growth opportunities.

When they established Pecora Dairy over a decade ago, the Cains identified markets that they wanted to move into; Michael gradually moved away from consulting to do more work on the farm.

“It was a very organic process. We didn’t have the ability then to travel overseas widely to do a lot of research, so our research was

online and from setting up systems ourselves. In some ways it was quite interesting because neither of us come from a traditional Australian agricultural background, so we were perhaps able to look at things with different eyes. We have dairy sheep, not dairy cows, so the systems that we put in place were those that we developed and that worked for us.”

## Opportunities

“In the 12 years that our business has been in operation, there are basically the same number of sheep dairies in Australia – half a dozen.

“To me, there’s a massive opportunity with sheep dairying. Certainly if you look at New Zealand, they’re taking the ball and running with it. There’s a huge amount of government investment and stakeholder investment in sheep, because there are massive markets in Asia, low cow-

milk tolerance, so sheep milk is a very good alternative.

"There's no doubt that sheep milking is a sustainable, profitable industry. Hopefully one day there will be more interest in Australia."

Cressida said the focus on more land, with bigger machinery and higher livestock numbers is starting to flip due, in part, to a consumer focus on sustainability and food provenance."

## Innovation and technology

"Things are starting to be more interesting for very small producers, which feeds into what makes a sustainable and profitable small business.

"Consumers are interested in alternative forms of protein too."

Kirsten said the disruption to supply chains that the pandemic created was a shock to many people, unable to get what they wanted or finding items were outrageously expensive due to shortages.

This has renewed a focus on local production and local manufacturing, making it a fantastic time to be involved in value adding produce. From consumers, there is much more of a push towards local produce and a greater understanding of the need to support small Australian businesses, but there needs to be a balance for consumers in lower-priced specialty goods too.

"People will choose more expensive cheese to have at a restaurant or on a special occasion, while there's the every-day cheese for the lunch boxes."

## Food waste

Cressida said, "We need food to be a fair price so consumers can feed their family proper, nutritious, fresh produce. One comment I would make is that maybe we need to look at actually consuming less. Food waste in this country is massive, and is still yet to be seriously addressed. We could, perhaps, all look at buying better quality and eating less of particular products – it's something to be considered in that food-waste conversation."

Kirsten said, "For farmers who have traditionally supplied the commodity market, it can be a really tricky switch to start thinking about value adding.

"How do you potentially switch your mind? I think it's a big barrier – I'm speaking from personal experience from when I talk to my own husband about it: he cannot see the value in value adding at all, so it's hard for me to show him a business case without starting the process of it. Value adding is a different way of thinking, in building a business around a brand."

Cressida said, "It's definitely a different way of thinking. We do need larger producers, and we really do need to be able



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to produce food in this country at a good price – that's essential.

"From my point of view as a producer, I can't comment too much on a big producer because that's not my area of expertise. But in terms of being a really small producer, I think starting that having a good idea, creating a clear plan, and then implementing it, it's important as a small producer to be able to jump in and 'have a go', because you're never going to have all of the details crossed off at the start. At some point you have to hop in and make decisions on the fly, knowing that they are moving towards your overarching goal of that clear picture of where you see your product and how you want it to be produced and sold."

So does value adding open up agriculture to other business models, and that perhaps you don't need large tracks of land to have a successful farming business?

Quite possibly.

Young people who don't come from a farming background have difficulty in Australia acquiring land for a farm. Apart from more traditional share-farming, other models include

small parcels for small-scale food production.

And while a criticism could be "consumers want low-priced food", in the past 10 years, the opportunity for self-marketing and branding yourself, just with the technology available, has exploded the concept of food trails. Silo art trails have joined in the tourism boon.

With this concept of food trails growing, is the door opening for another crack at that value adding in Australia experience that perhaps didn't work 20 years ago?

Cressida Cains thinks so.

### The tourism boon

"Back when we started 12 years ago, we did a lot of farmers' markets to start people understanding about our brand. We watched so many young people who would do the rounds of the market, and then really make a very targeted decision about what they wanted to purchase.

"And cost was not the main factor: they were really interested in how things were produced, the story behind it, and they would make a

very very strategic decision. I think there's a huge amount of room for that. Certainly if you look at our model at Pecora Dairy: during the pandemic when a lot of other people were actually moving out of hospitality, we decided to move *into* hospitality.

"Let's take a piece of cheese that we produce on-farm; now we actually up the value chain and serve that as a piece on a cheese plate with a glass of wine, which is the most profitable way that you can serve that. So for small producers, there are so many different and innovative ways that you can sell your product and value-add agile product." ■

See the next issue of *Australian Dairy Foods* magazine for the continuation of this feature, where we hear about food as the connector, shaping stories, how to begin value adding, Dairy Cocoon, Kevin the cheeky ewe and taking opportunities.

For more information on the Innovation AG podcast, please see [vicdroughthub.org.au/podcast](http://vicdroughthub.org.au/podcast)



## That's a mini burrata

**That's Amore Cheese**, established by DIAA member **Giorgio Linguanti**, has added a new mini cheese to its range: a Mini Burrata aimed at lovers of the highly popular, gooey Burrata.

About half the size of the original, the Mini Burrata has the same oozing centre of mozzarella strips bathed in cream within the mozzarella outer layer.

The Mini Burratas are packaged in a tub of two, weighing 120g per tub, compared with the regular-sized Burrata at 125g.

Like That's Amore Cheese's award-winning regular sized Burrata, the Mini Burrata is a fresh cow milk cheese made from mozzarella and cream. To make it, That's Amore's cheesemakers create an outer shell of mozzarella, which is crafted in a money bag style, then filled with strips of mozzarella bathed in cream. ■



## LIMITLESS INNOVATION – LACTOSE-FREE

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Vale

# John Bennett AM

Visionary and leader of the Australian Dairy Industry



**John Bennett AM**, co-founder of **Ashgrove Farms** and **Ashgrove Cheese**, dedicated his life to farming, his family, the local Deloraine community and transforming the Tasmanian and Australian dairy industry. In 2017, John was awarded the **Kondinin ABC Rural Australian Farming Legend of the Year**, recognising his visionary leadership, courage and life-time contribution to the Australian dairy industry.

**I**n 1961, John received a **P&O Young Farmer Scholarship** to study agriculture in the United Kingdom. The experience of 16 farm stays, visiting some 180 farms and attending agriculture research institutions to learn about the latest farming practices in the UK made an indelible mark on John's life. The experience ignited his drive to innovate and lead change both at home on the farm and in the Australian dairy industry during the extremely challenging times for Tasmanian dairy farmers in the 1970s.

## Services and agri-politics

John first represented dairy farmers in 1972 as a delegate to the Northern Dairy Division of the **Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA)**, and, in 1974, was elected as Chair of the State Division of the Dairy Council. He was a founding member of the TFGA, and a member of the inaugural board of the **National Farmers Federation**.

John was President of the **Australian Dairy Farmers Federation** from 1976-85, and Deputy Chair of the **Australian Dairy Corporation** from 1981-86. As inaugural Chair of the **Australian Dairy Industry Conference** (1976-85), he was responsible for bringing together farmers and dairy manufacturers for

“  
*strongly committed  
to dairy research and  
helping dairy farmers and  
manufacturers to ... stay  
market relevant*

the first time. In 1980, John initiated the establishment of the **Australian Speciality Cheese Producers Association**.

His appointment as Director of **Asia Dairy Industries (HK) Ltd** (1977-87) led to John's appointment as President Commissioner of **P.T. Indo Milk** (1977-84) and a Director of **Thai Dairy Industry Co. Ltd** from 1980-87.

John's international status was evident when he was elected Vice President of the **International Federation of Agriculture Dairy Division** in 1982.

In 1991, John was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to the Australian dairy industry.

John was instrumental in shaping the modern Australian dairy industry through the reforms that were implemented to the sector's

marketing system in the 1980s. Until 1983, the dairy industry operated under a marketing system developed in the 1930s, which was antiquated and needed change. Under John's leadership, the dairy industry remained united and successfully negotiated essential reforms to the industry's structure.

As reported in the article '*Tassie dairy farmer key national figure*' by Anabel Fulton in *The Examiner* on 1 February 1991: "During his time as chairman of the Australian Dairy Farmers Federation and the Australian Dairy Industry Conference, Mr Bennett also tackled the EC over its subsidies, ensured the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for the dairy industry as part of the Closer Economic Relations agreement with New Zealand and had significant input into the Kerin Plan. The battle for reduction in EC subsidies alone has saved the industry \$10 million per year."

On the Federal Government's Kerin Plan, and concern that it would damage the dairy industry if changes were not made, the article quoted John's efforts to persuade the Minister and Prime Minister to amend the original plan, which was done after the legislation was blocked in the senate, "result[ing] in many more

dairy farmers than there would have been if the plan had got through”.

John was strongly committed to dairy research and helping dairy farmers and manufacturers to compete better, grow and stay market relevant. This included being a key driver and the inaugural Chair of the development of the Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme, which was formed in 1982. Establishing the scheme involved significant challenges as it necessitated all states cooperating to provide the data required to identify the genetically best animals in the national dairy herd. John's leadership was critical to the project during its formative years.

John also initiated the establishment of the *National Dairy Farmer Magazine*, to provide farmers with up-to-date technological know-how. Today, in an age of rapidly advancing technology, with increasing popularity and interactivity offered by the internet, a regional magazine may seem unimportant. However, 30 years ago the establishment of a free, specialised rural magazine that educated farmers and connected regional communities, business and families, was important, and it continues to be published today.

### Building Ashgrove

The idea of starting on-farm dairy processing was initiated by John in the late 1980s, and arose from his experience as a young man studying agriculture in the UK, where he observed cheese manufacturing on family farms. As John explained, “At the time, unemployment in north-west Tasmania was high, Tasmanian dairy farmers were the worst paid in the world, and five generations of the Bennett families were proudly in gumboots and were going nowhere.”

The notion of a vertically integrated paddock-to-plate farm was unheard of in the 1990s and the risk for John, his brother, Michael, and their wives, Connie and Maureen – the original founders of **Ashgrove Farms** and **Ashgrove Cheese** – was enormous.

“

*He was a founding member of the TFGA, and a member of the inaugural NFF board*

John took a hands-on approach to developing Ashgrove Cheese on his farm at Elizabeth Town. He was the owner-builder and project manager for the initial Ashgrove Cheese factory construction and well as owner-builder for subsequent developments. The original Ashgrove Cheese factory was hand-built by John and a local builder in 1992/93, from recycled building materials and equipment sourced from the Rossarden Mine.

John was actively involved in all subsequent developments and expansions of the factory. With an integrated business approach, John headed Ashgrove Farms, developing it into one of the strongest and most successful family dairy-farming businesses in Australia, which is now led by his son, **Paul**. Furthermore, as Chair of Ashgrove Cheese, John initiated and guided developments for it to become one of Australia's leading premium, independent dairy brands and on-farm manufacturers.

### Community and family

John also served his local community including as a Deloraine Municipal Councillor from 1970-79, a member of the **Deloraine Rotary Club** for 20 years including President in 1997-98, awarded a **Paul Harris**

“

*Under John's leadership, the dairy industry ... successfully negotiated essential reforms to the industry's structure*

**Fellow** in 2002, and Director of the **Tasmanian Craft Fair** in 2000-01 and 2004. In later years, John spent more time with his own woodwork craftsmanship and was always delighted to assist his grandchildren with their school woodwork projects. A keen fisherman, John loved his trips to the Great Lakes, magnificent Tasmanian rivers and deep-sea fishing trips with friends.

In 2006, John was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma and, while battling recurrent episodes, he continued his work at Ashgrove.

John's life was one of service – to his family, his community and the Australian dairy industry. It was a full life and well-lived. John is survived by his wife of 58 years, **Connie**, and children, **Susan**, **Mary**, **Paul** and **Anne**, and adored grandchildren.

John was a visionary whose mantra was “to look beyond, embrace cultural and rural diversity, transcend boundaries and stay focused”.

As his daughter, Susan, wrote on John being awarded the Australian Farming Legend of the Year: “Dad's focus has always been community and on small companies ‘doing their bit’. That entrepreneurial spirit, passion, energy and love of community, will ensure modern farming in this country remains not only viable and sustainable, but continues to make a vital and growing contribution to our nation's economy.”

– contributed by the Bennett family

*The DIAA extends its deepest sympathies to the Bennett family.*

To learn more about Ashgrove Cheese, see *Australian Dairy Foods* magazine April/May 2022, p12-18 (vol 43, no.2), and to find out about the business's work in sustainability, see *Australian Dairy Foods* magazine August/September 2022, p32-33 (vol 43, no.4),



Unsolicited free content contributed  
ad hoc. I liaise with the contributor.



## Vale Jim Marshall

DIAA Life Member Jim Marshall, who received the **J. I. Scarr Gold Medal** for Outstanding Service to the Dairy Industry Association of Australia (DIAA) in 1998, passed away in October, aged 82.

**B**orn in the United Kingdom in July 1940, Jim moved to Australia in 1954, then spent three years in the army followed by full-time study for two years at **Urrbrae Agricultural High School** in Adelaide as a mature-age student.

On matriculation from Urrbrae, Jim obtained a **South Australian Department of Agriculture Cadetship**, which required him to attend **Hawkesbury Agricultural College** near Sydney. He spent two years there and obtained his Diploma in Dairy Technology. (Hawkesbury College is now a campus of the University of Western Sydney.)

On his return to Adelaide in 1964, Jim began work with the **SA Department of Agriculture**.

His work in the department was in the **Dairy Branch**, a section responsible for overseeing the production of cheese, milk, yoghurt and other dairy products in SA. With qualifications in biotechnology, Jim focused on

production processes, food hygiene standards and related matters, as well as regulatory requirements. He also graded cheese for export and domestic market sales.

Jim's real enjoyment came from visiting farmers, cheesemakers, milk-tanker drivers and factory workers on site, helping them to improve their production processes and product quality.

This role took him all over the state, and sometimes further afield. He prepared and delivered TAFE courses on cheesemaking, milk pasteurisation, milk testing and milk grading for tanker drivers, helped

new cheese factories become established, made films about cheesemaking, and even co-authored a book about cheesemakers in SA.

He was also a dairy products judge with the DIAA SA Branch and for the Royal Adelaide Show for many years, and was recognised for his dedication by the Show Society.

A change of State Government when Jim was in his mid-50s saw him made redundant as part of major public-service cutbacks. He subsequently established a consulting business, working directly with farmers, cheesemakers and tanker drivers, and continued this work for many years. Jim also developed a ladder to allow safe access to milk tankers. ■

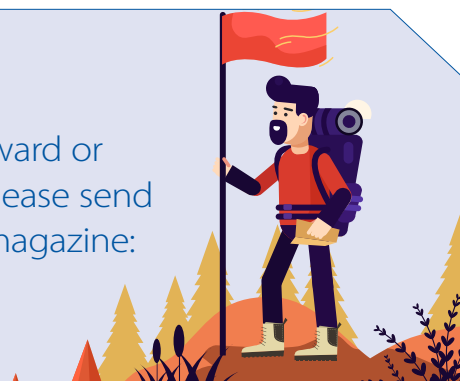
– written by David Marshall

“  
*Jim also developed a ladder to allow safe access to milk tankers.*

***The DIAA extends its deepest sympathies to the Marshall family.***

### Have 'dairy people' news?

If you've moved companies, been promoted, won an award or have any other exciting news about your dairy career, please send a short piece to the editor for possible inclusion in the magazine:  
[editor@diaa.asn.au](mailto:editor@diaa.asn.au)



## John Williams appointed as ADPF Executive President

**T**he Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF) has appointed **John Williams** to the role of Executive President.



Outgoing ADPF Executive President, **Grant Crothers**, said as an immediate ADPF Vice President and long-serving Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) Director, John's understanding and passion for advocacy is well demonstrated and will enable continuity of delivery of value for members.

"With a career in dairy manufacturing that spans three decades, with **Warrnambool Cheese and Butter** and more recently **Saputo** in internationally and domestically focused roles, John is eminently qualified to fulfil the position," Mr Crothers said.

"In addition to his executive experience, John brings to the role deep Board level experience in peak industry, and research and development bodies. His experience and leadership across dairy innovation, manufacturing, sales and marketing – both domestically and globally – will doubtless prove to be of great value to the ADPF moving forward."

**ADPF Executive Director Janine Waller** said, "We are delighted to welcome John to the role and look forward to continuing to work with him to represent the interests of our members. I would also like to sincerely thank Grant Crothers for the leadership he has shown in his more than six years as ADPF President. We wish him all the best in his new and many endeavours." ■

Spread the word, and see Australia's peak dairy-processing industry association grow.

If you know someone who'd benefit from DIAA membership, please recommend they visit <https://diaa.asn.au/join/>

To encourage more young people to join our association, apprentices, full-time students, first-year graduates and trainees are all eligible for a **FREE** Associate Membership.

Full memberships for Australia and internationally are just \$220 (the Australian price even includes GST). See the above link for all details and to join.



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# Dairy Diary



Although many events have been held face to face, some re-emergence of COVID-19 outbreaks mean it's wise to double check the website of any event you wish to attend regarding changes in location, date, etc. Double check the date before making any bookings or travel arrangements!

30 April – 2 May

**Foodservice Australia 2023**  
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre,  
Melbourne, VIC  
[www.foodserviceaustralia.com.au](http://www.foodserviceaustralia.com.au)

4 May

**Interpack 2023**  
Messe Dusseldorf, Am Staad,  
40474 Dusseldorf, Germany  
[www.appma.com.au/eventdetails/11474/interpack-2023](http://www.appma.com.au/eventdetails/11474/interpack-2023)

4-5 May

**DIAA Victoria Branch Conference**  
Flemington, VIC  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

4-10 May

**Interpack 2023**  
Dusseldorf, Germany  
[auspack.com.au](http://auspack.com.au)

5 May

**DIAA Victorian Dairy Product Competition Awards**  
Flemington, VIC  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

14 May

**Mother's Day Lunch**  
360Q  
Queenscliff, VIC  
[www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/Things-to-do/Events/Events-calendar/Mothers-Day-Lunch-at-360Q](http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/Things-to-do/Events/Events-calendar/Mothers-Day-Lunch-at-360Q)

14-15 May

**Bakery Showcase Canada Trade Show & Conference**  
Vancouver Convention Centre West  
Vancouver, Canada  
[www.bakeryshowcasecanada.ca/](http://www.bakeryshowcasecanada.ca/)

19 May

**DIAA Awards of Excellence**  
Melbourne, VIC  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

19-21 May

**Good Food & Wine Show**  
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)  
Melbourne, VIC  
[goodfoodshow.com.au/melbourne/](http://goodfoodshow.com.au/melbourne/)

22-25 May

**Bakery China**  
National Exhibition & Convention Centre  
Shanghai, China  
[10times.com/bakery-china](http://10times.com/bakery-china)

22-25 May

**Sweets & Snacks Expo**  
McCormick Place,  
Chicago, USA  
[10times.com/sweets-snacks-expo](http://10times.com/sweets-snacks-expo)

25-27 May

**Expo Food Guangzhou**  
Poly Trade Center  
Guangzhou, China  
[10times.com/world-food](http://10times.com/world-food)

31 May – 2 June

**Baking Industry Trade Show**  
Moonee Valley Racecourse  
Moonee Ponds, Victoria  
[www.eventalways.com/baking-industry-trade-show](http://www.eventalways.com/baking-industry-trade-show)

1 June

**World Milk Day 2023**

5-8 June 2023

**Saudi Food Expo**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
[10times.com/e1zh-3rz4-x14z](http://10times.com/e1zh-3rz4-x14z)

17-19 June

**Food Asia International Trade Fair 2023**  
Karachi Expo Center  
Karachi, Pakistan  
[www.foodasia.net/](http://www.foodasia.net/)

25-27 June

**Fine Food New Zealand**  
ASB Showgrounds  
Auckland, New Zealand  
[hub.xpo.co.nz/events/fine-food-new-zealand/](http://hub.xpo.co.nz/events/fine-food-new-zealand/)

29 June

**DIAA Tasmania Branch Conference Welcoming Event**  
Hobart, TAS  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

30 June

**DIAA Tasmania Branch Conference**  
Hobart, TAS  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

23-26 July

**Foodpro Melbourne**  
MCEC, Melbourne, VIC  
[foodproexh.com/](http://foodproexh.com/)

30 Aug – 1 Sep

**Agricultural Shows Australia 2023 Conference**  
Adelaide, South Australia  
[www.sanextgen.com/agshowsaustraliaconference](http://www.sanextgen.com/agshowsaustraliaconference)

4-6 September

**Food Ingredients Asia**  
Jakarta International Expo  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
[10times.com/fi-asia-indonesia](http://10times.com/fi-asia-indonesia)

5 September

**APPMA Member Dinner**  
Melbourne, VIC  
[www.appma.com.au/events-training/events-calendar/](http://www.appma.com.au/events-training/events-calendar/)

6-9 September

**WorldFood Istanbul**  
Tüyap Fair, Convention and Congress Center  
Istanbul, Turkey  
[10times.com/worldfood-istanbul](http://10times.com/worldfood-istanbul)

11-14 September

**Fine Food Australia 2023**  
International Convention Centre,  
Sydney, NSW  
[www.showsbee.com/fairs/Fine-Food-Australia.html](http://www.showsbee.com/fairs/Fine-Food-Australia.html)

14 September

**DIAA NSW Branch Conference**  
Parramatta, Sydney, NSW  
[diaa.asn.au/events/](http://diaa.asn.au/events/)

19-21 September

**Foodtech Packtech**  
Auckland Showgrounds  
[www.foodtechpacktech.co.nz](http://www.foodtechpacktech.co.nz)

19-22 September

**Food & Hotel Malaysia**  
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
[10times.com/food-hotel-malaysia](http://10times.com/food-hotel-malaysia)

1-6 October

**World Dairy Exp 2023**  
Alliant Energy Center  
Madison, USA  
[www.expobeds.com/event/world-dairy-expo](http://www.expobeds.com/event/world-dairy-expo)

3-5 October

**Dairy Industries Expo**  
Harrogate Convention Centre,  
Harrogate, UK  
[www.dairyindustries.com/events-diary/](http://www.dairyindustries.com/events-diary/)

15-16 October

**Foodservice & Hospitality**  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre  
[foodserviceaustralia.com.au](http://foodserviceaustralia.com.au)

16-19 October

**IDF World Dairy Summit**  
Chicago, USA  
[idfws2023.com](http://idfws2023.com)

17-19 October

**Morocco FoodExpo**  
Rue Tiznit, Face à la Mosquée Hassan II  
Casablanca, Morocco  
[www.eventseye.com/fairs/f-morocco-foodexpo-23195-1.html](http://www.eventseye.com/fairs/f-morocco-foodexpo-23195-1.html)

7-9 November

**The Speciality Food Festival**  
Dubai World Trade Centre  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
[10times.com/speciality-food-festival](http://10times.com/speciality-food-festival)

8-11 November

**Café Show Seoul**  
COEX Convention Center  
Seoul, South Korea  
[10times.com/cafe-show](http://10times.com/cafe-show)

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## DIAA events

Keep an eye on this page and the DIAA website for dates and registration details.

### AUSTRALIA WIDE / NATIONAL

**19 May:** DIAA Awards of Excellence

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**14 September:** DIAA NSW Branch Conference

### TASMANIA (note change of dates)

**29 June:** DIAA Tasmania Branch Conference  
Welcoming Event

**30 June:** DIAA Tasmania Branch Conference

### VICTORIA

**4-5 May:** DIAA Victoria Branch Conference

**5 May:** DIAA Victorian Dairy Product Competition  
Awards

Please see website for details  
[diaa.asn.au/events](http://diaa.asn.au/events)



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8-11 November  
**SIAL InterFOOD**  
Jakarta International Expo  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
[10times.com/interfood-indonesia](http://10times.com/interfood-indonesia)

14 November  
**APPMA Member Dinner**  
Adelaide, SA  
[www.appma.com.au/events-training/events-calendar/](http://www.appma.com.au/events-training/events-calendar/)

1-2 December  
**ICDST 2023: 17. International Conference on Dairy Science and Technology (digital)**  
Auckland, New Zealand  
[waset.org/dairy-science-and-technology-conference-in-december-2023-in-auckland](http://waset.org/dairy-science-and-technology-conference-in-december-2023-in-auckland)

7-9 December  
**SIAL India**  
Pragati Maidan  
New Delhi, India  
[10times.com/food-new-delhi](http://10times.com/food-new-delhi)

17-20 December  
**Khadya Khurak**  
Helipad Exhibition Center  
Gandhinagar, India  
[10times.com/khadya-khurak](http://10times.com/khadya-khurak)

## 2024

21-24 January  
**Dairy Forum 2024**  
J.W. Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge  
Phoenix, USA  
[www.idfa.org/dairy-forum](http://www.idfa.org/dairy-forum)

## 2023 Competitions coming up

Keep an eye out on the DIAA competitions page for opening dates, Exhibitor Guides and times for DIAA Dairy Product Competitions in NSW, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia.

[diaa.asn.au/competitions-and-results/how-to-enter-a-competition/](http://diaa.asn.au/competitions-and-results/how-to-enter-a-competition/)

Entry to the Australian, Victorian and Western Australian competitions is now closed.

**Make sure you book** to attend these awards ceremonies; see the **Events** page on the DIAA website for details.

To join the Dairy Industry Association of Australia, or if you have any questions about the dairy foods industry, contact the officers listed here or visit [www.diaa.asn.au](http://www.diaa.asn.au)

**National:** Carl Partridge DIAA National Office, PO Box 290, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205; Lakeside Business Centre, Level 4, Suite 13/150 Albert Road, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205; ph: 03 8742 6600, fax: 03 8742 6601, [Info@diaa.asn.au](mailto:Info@diaa.asn.au)

**New South Wales:** David Wong, FMCG Industry Solutions, ph: 1300 628 104, [david@fmcgis.com.au](mailto:david@fmcgis.com.au)

**Queensland:** Philip Kerridge, Lactalis Australia, ph: 07 3840 0988, [phil.kerridge@au.lactalis.com](mailto:phil.kerridge@au.lactalis.com)

**South Australia:** Karen McIntyre, Lion Bega, ph: 0400 800 356, [karen.mcintyre@diaa.asn.au](mailto:karen.mcintyre@diaa.asn.au)

**Tasmania:** Rod Wyker, Southern Sky Cheese Company, [rod@southernskycheese.com.au](mailto:rod@southernskycheese.com.au)

**Victoria:** Tim Blanchfield, ph: 0438 313 926, [tim.blanchfield@saputo.com](mailto:tim.blanchfield@saputo.com)

**Western Australia:** Colin James, ph: 0419 969 223, [cwj101@my.nlv.com.au](mailto:cwj101@my.nlv.com.au)



## DIAA Victorian Branch hits the golf course

One of the great things the DIAA offers is networking. This is not always at a conference or seminar ... sometimes it's on the golf course.

Members of the DIAA Victorian Branch gathered at the Rosebud Country Club at the end of February. Here's a snippet of what they got up to... ■



Steve Harrison presented the Furphy Engineering prize to Visy Industries Matt Mountney.



Thornhill Australia receiving the Furphy Engineering sponsored prize – the novelty award.



Clinton Barillaro of Ecolab presents the winners, the National Food Institute team, with their prize: Phil Telfor, Geoff Cohen, Ross Freeman and David Pinnock.



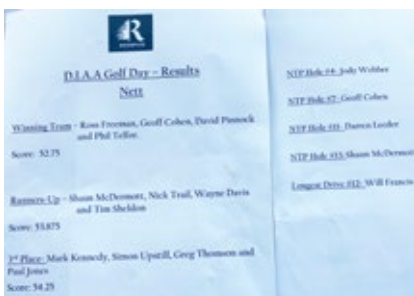
The runners up: the Saputo Allansford team of Shaun McDermott, Nick Trail, Tim Sheldon and Wayne Davis receiving the Visy Industries prize from Matt Mountney.



The third-placed team from Saputo Maffra were Mark Kennedy, Simon Upstill, Greg Thomson and Paul Jones, here receiving the Jasol prize from Daniel Irwin.



Longest drive (#12) was Will Francis from Tetra Pak, pictured here receiving the Rowe Scientific prize, along with Steve and Ben Harrison.



Frank Baldi (NxGo), Jason Harris (Koch Separation), Michael Fragapane (Specialised Mixing Solutions) and Darren Leeder (Furphy Engineering).

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