

# Macalister Demonstration Farm

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## NEWSLETTER 67

Monday May 14<sup>th</sup> 2012



*Extension projects at the MDF are funded by Dairy Australia, Sustainability Victoria and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, with support from GippsDairy.*

### Yellow Rag Bit

Jason McAinch, Dairy Advisor, DPI Maffra

#### Drying Off

Drying off cows in the herd starts with working backwards from the individual cows calving due date. Add the length of time you wish to have them dry (let's say 8 weeks) and then add (up to a week) to alter cows diets to drop milk production. Now add a couple of weeks to prepare paddocks and logistics for dry off and cows due to calve on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August require work to start now.

Start with the paddocks. They should have a good cover of pasture, very little areas of exposed dirt and limited wet areas such as drains and delvas. A good cover of pasture means the pasture should be short so as to limit the cows intake but enough pasture to ensure a sitting cow is not sitting in dirt (mud). These paddocks should be selected and grazed shortly to ensure limited pasture in a few weeks.

Ideally the paddock/s required for **pre**-dry off will be

- relatively close to the dairy to be able to collect the drying off mob
- have easy access to supply the pre-dry off supplement (hay)
- good sites for feeding out hay
- very little humps and hollows (cows in late pregnancy can cast themselves)

**Post**-dry off paddock/s (a few days after dry off) should have the above features **except** the paddock should be as far away from the dairy as possible to avoid the stimuli of cows hearing milking cow collection, milking cows walking past and the dairy noise.

*Now to the cows.* There is plenty of information out there about treatments that will not be covered here. The main issue for some farmers is getting these cows down under 12 litres and not lose too much of that hard fought cow condition. The reduction in milk procedure needs to be as quick as possible. Strategies to consider :

- reduce concentrates and increase fibre
- alter the cows routine
  - bring into the dairy through a different entrance
  - separate cows into manageable dry off mob in a separate paddock (as above)

- if you usually milk with the radio on, turn it off when the dry off mob are brought to the dairy
- milk the dry off mob at the end of milking

For more information or advice on options for your business please contact your trusted veterinarian, nutritionist, consultant, dairy Australia website (search: drying off) or a member of the Dairy Services Branch at DPI Maffra on 5147 0800.

## Macalister Demonstration Farm Profitability Project

After 5 awesome years, Mike and Sarah O'Brien are moving on from the Macalister Demonstration Farm, to nearby, to invest more heavily in dairyfarming.

So the MDF is in recruiting mode. We are following the Dairy Australia program, The People in Dairy, to carry out the recruitment. The [www.thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au) website is a great source of help for recruiting and managing all aspects of people on dairyfarms.

To ensure each step is carried out we have constructed a recruitment timetable:

ITEM	DATE	WHO
Adverts placed (Newspapers, radio, TV, notice boards, points of sale, the dairy network, websites, AusdairyL email list, job agencies)		
Contact networks, brainstorm possible applicants.		
Take calls and handle applications		
Show applicants the farm		
Close applications		
Contact some referees		
Short list for interview		
Interview		
Select using our selection grid		
Contact referees again if needed		
Inform first offer		
Confirm first offer		
Inform others		
Sign Contract		
Start work		

We are placing the following advertisement in a number of rural newspapers, and have placed it on the Dairy Australia email list, AusDairyL. The advert makes clear what the MDF requires. But the advert's main purpose is to attract suitable people, so it mentions the attractive aspects of the job. The advert is not cluttered with unnecessary words.



The **Macalister Demonstration Farm** is a profitable dairy farm that aims to demonstrate best practice.

**DAIRY FARM MANAGER**

To supply all labour and mobile machinery

Full responsibility for management of farm

Support from Farm Consultant, Consultant Vet, and the MDF Board

Financially and professionally rewarding position

5 mins to Maffra, Vic – 20 mins to Sale

(near the mountains and the sea)

School bus at front gate

300 cows

30 swing over dairy

73 irrigated hectares

Fixed sprays, subsurface drip, bike shift and flood

Young stock contract reared

Silage by contractors

Remuneration Range: \$100 - \$120K

\$20K machinery allowance

Performance bonus (last year \$20K)

3 bedroom brick veneer house

**Commence:** July 1st 2012

Phone Frank Tyndall

0409 940 782, [ftyndall@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ftyndall@ozemail.com.au)

Applications close 21 May 2012

The written Job Description follows. It helps the farm decide the type of person required and construct the advertisement. The Job Description will be sent to all enquires It will help applicants to assess whether they are suitable, whether they want the job, and how to apply.

## **Macalister Demonstration Farm (MDF)**

**285 Boggy Creek Road, Riverslea**

### **FARM MANAGER / CONTRACTOR**

#### **FARM AIMS AND MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The MDF is a co-operative, formed 1961, with around 400 shareholders, mostly local dairy farmers. The MDF has a board of 7 directors, a project manager, a farm consultant, and an alliance with the Maffra Veterinary Centre. It has a major public role to test and demonstrate systems of dairy farming that have the potential for improving farm profitability and sustainability in the Macalister Irrigation District.

The farm aims to carry out a simple farming system at “best practice” level. The farm may not be currently achieving the following, but these are its aims:

- **Production aim: 540 kg MS per cow, on 73 ha of irrigated grazing.**
- Body condition score at calving: 5.0
- Feed per cow: 3.5 tonne of grass and 2.5 tonne of concentrates.
- Stocking rate: 4.0 cows per hectare.
- **Grass consumption: 14 tonne per hectare.**
- Variable rotational grazing, topping paddocks when needed at each third grazing.
- Feeding Pastures for Profit principles and the Rotation Right tool used to manage grazing and supplementary feeding.
- Feeding profitability monitored using Tracker analysis
- Spring calving only.
- No cropping.
- Base fertiliser, plus Nitrogen (350 kg N /ha) applied at each grazing.
- Irrigation based on soil moisture monitoring, applied quickly, and surplus removed quickly.
- All farm inputs, treatments, and livestock movements recorded at all times.

## FARM DESCRIPTION

### Milkers:

300 spring calving cows, with a long history of Artificial Breeding.

Currently producing 1.5 kg MS, in body condition score 4.5.

### Dairy:

30 swing over. 10,000 litre vat

### Irrigation water:

Water right:	290 ML
Water S&D	24 ML
Bore water right:	193 ML
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507 ML</b>

### Irrigation layout:

Lasered flood:	37.9 ha
Old layout flood:	2.4 ha
Bike shift spray:	13.5 ha
Computerised fixed spray:	12.3 ha
Computerised subsurface drip (SSD)	6.8 ha
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73 ha</b>

Re-use system can re-use all flood, bike shift, and SSD runoff.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a financially and professional rewarding job, is well supported, on a well set-up farm, in one of the most reliable dairying districts in the world. This job offers an opportunity to learn and extend skills in conjunction with the consultant, consultant vet, and by developing networks with people in the dairy industry.

### The MDF dairyfarm manager needs to:

1. Have all dairyfarming practical skills.
2. Be result focused.
3. Be able to work co-operatively with the help of the farm consultant and consulting veterinarian.
4. Carry out best practice, in a relatively simple, but high input, dairyfarming system.
5. Be able to employ and manage the additional staff effectively and complying with all laws (Award, Tax, Super, OHS).
6. Enjoy the public aspects of the job.

**The Farm Manager** is responsible for all day-to-day management and farm work.

- Milking
- Effluent disposal
- Herd health
- Mating
- Calving
- Calf rearing
- Irrigation
- Fertilising
- Grazing
- Feeding supplements
- Record keeping

**The following machinery needs to be supplied and maintained by the Farm Manager:**

- Tractor, with front end loader bucket and forks.
- Mower-topper
- Fertiliser spreader
- Grader blade
- Rotary drainer
- Motorbike
- Feed out cart
- Channel spraying gear
- Computer, with broad band connection
- Electric fence reels and posts
- Pressure cleaner
- General tools, chainsaw

**Work that will be contracted out, paid by the Board, but managed by Farm Manager:**

- Artificial insemination
- Fodder conservation
- Pasture renovation
- Rearing of calves after weaning
- Capital improvements.

The MDF will supply and continue to own all livestock.

## **THE PACKAGE**

- It is expected that 2.5 labour units or 100 hours per week of work, on average, is needed.
- The contractors are to provide all staff (employing necessary additional staff) to carry out the work, at all times of the year.
- Base amount: \$100,000 to \$120,000 (plus GST).
- Plus \$20,000 (plus GST) for the provision of machinery.
- Plus 7% of any operating surplus (plus GST).
- House (3 bedroom) provided free (worth \$10,000). School bus passes the gate.
- The engagement is by a legally written contract, paid monthly in arrears, via invoice, GST added, no income tax removed, no superannuation added.

## **TO APPLY**

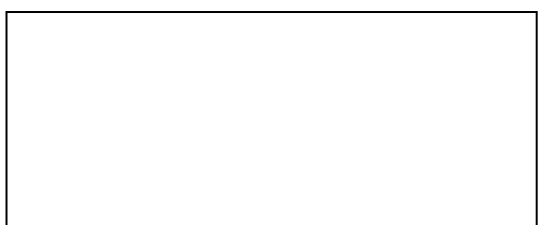
Please email an application to [ftyndall@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ftyndall@ozemail.com.au)

The application should include:

- A short covering letter addressing the six qualities, listed above, that we require of the MDF farm manager.
- Your Resume.
- Two referees (and their phone numbers) who we can call and who will speak on your behalf in relation to your professional dairyfarming experiences.

Frank Tyndall 0409 940 782 [ftyndall@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ftyndall@ozemail.com.au)

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA



**SENDER:**



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