

OUR FARM, OUR PLAN

# Farm Fitness Checklist



WORKBOOK



# KEY CONTACTS

Regional Development Programs (RDPs) are the place to go about what's happening in your region. Contact them to find out about 'Our Farm, Our Plan' and other training, workshops, events and resources that are available.

Through the RDPs Dairy Australia supports farmer groups, including discussion groups, Young Dairy Network groups and others. Contact them about 'Our Farm, Our Plan' group activities and other programs that your group might benefit from.

  **GippsDairy**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/gippsdairy  
03 5624 3900

  **DairyNSW**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/dairynsw  
1800 270 778

  **DairySA**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/dairysa  
0417 218 263

  **DairyTas**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/dairytas  
03 6432 2233

  **Murray Dairy**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/murray-dairy  
03 5833 5312

  **Subtropical Dairy**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/subtropical-dairy  
0431 197 479

  **Western Dairy**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/western-dairy  
0429 110 485

  **WestVic Dairy**  
dairyaustralia.com.au/westvic-dairy  
03 5557 1000

DairyNZ has kindly given permission for Dairy Australia to adapt their QuickPlan and Farm Fitness Checklist resources for use by the Australian dairy industry. This is much appreciated and is another example of Trans-Tasman collaboration providing benefit to Australasian dairy farmers.

[dairynz.co.nz](http://dairynz.co.nz)

**DairyNZ** 

Our Farm, Our Plan has been developed with support from the Gardiner Dairy Foundation, reinforcing the value of the dairy industry working together.

[gardinerfoundation.com.au](http://gardinerfoundation.com.au)

**GARDINER**   
**FOUNDATION**

# OUR FARM, OUR PLAN

## FARM FITNESS CHECKLIST

### Design your path to success.

Our Farm, Our Plan is a program designed to assist farmers to use the plans in their heads to develop a clear understanding of their long term business and personal goals. Using two key tools—the QuickPlan and Farm Fitness Checklist—ideas are turned into goals, and goals are turned into actions.

This Farm Fitness Checklist is intended to be used by farmers, either on their own or with their trusted advisers. It will also be used in the delivery of the 'Our Farm, Our Plan' extension program.

### Where are you and your farm at now?

A fit and healthy farm business provides the platform needed to achieve your goals (business and personal), and be profitable and resilient in the long term.

How well do you and your partners know your farm and your business, and its fitness for the future?

Use this checklist to assess where you're at now and to help identify opportunities for improvement. It also suggests where to go to get the information, resources and support you need to make it happen.

## HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Each section of this checklist is designed to prompt your thinking about different aspects of your farm business.

It's a 'self-assessment' and there are no right or wrong answers. Your job is to identify areas that might be a priority for you by ticking the box that best describes where you are at for each question.

Yes, we've nailed it ✓	Ok, but we could do better ✓	No, and we should do something about it ✓	No, and it's not relevant to us ✓
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Try scanning through the checklist before you start ticking so that you have an idea of what's included. The aim is to identify and focus on a small number of areas that will move you forward significantly.

### Now, where, how?

Completing the checklist will give you a good sense about where you and your business are at now. This is an important step in the 'Our Farm, Our Plan' process. The QuickPlan can be used next to get your 'where and how' down on paper.

### Resources

In each section of the checklist there is a list of resources that you might find useful. Many of these can be found on Dairy Australia's web site – [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)

Information and support is also available from your Regional Development Program (RDP). They are your local connection point to Dairy Australia (see contact information at left).

US

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
We have a picture of what we want our life to look like in the longer term	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have identified what we will need to meet our retirement needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a plan to develop our skills for the future, e.g. people management skills, technical skills, financial skills, leisure activities, off-farm investment options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We really enjoy what we're doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are happy with the balance of time spent with friends, family, on work and on our other interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are positive people and interact with other positive motivated people regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We understand what causes us stress and know how to deal with it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are active, reasonably fit and healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We make an effort to eat well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We get enough sleep and sleep well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We get regular check ups with our GP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quick SWOT

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

## Focus areas

Reflect on the ratings you have given yourself. Note the areas you want to focus on or could see opportunities in improving here and write some goals and actions that would help.

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## Resources

- Stepping Stones - planning for the future
- Your health and wellbeing
- Managing your farm team
- Young Dairy Network (YDN)

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://thepeopleindairy.org.au)
- [feed.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://feed.dairyaustralia.com.au)

# OUR FARM

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
The farm housing is suitable (family home and staff accommodation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The dairy and yards have sufficient capacity to meet current needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The dairy and yards have sufficient capacity to meet future growth plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laneways allow for ease of stock movement around the farm in all conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm fencing allows for effective stock containment and implementation of appropriate grazing management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feed facilities are adequate and feed wastage is minimised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our stock water supply is sufficient to meet herd stock needs during prolonged dry periods in terms of flow, quality and quantity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The effluent system is of the appropriate size and meets EPA guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irrigation infrastructure allows for efficient delivery of water to meet pasture and crop needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We can capture and reuse irrigation run off	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calf rearing facilities are adequate and allow for efficient feeding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cow cooling infrastructure (sprinklers, shade, water access) is adequate for extreme heat events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On farm feed storage facilities provide the necessary buffer to cover prolonged dry periods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quick SWOT

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## Resources

- Water and irrigation
- Sustainability
- Energy
- Dairy infrastructure planning
- Feedpads, dairy shelters and freestalls
- Cool cows

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [dairyinfrastructure.com.au](http://dairyinfrastructure.com.au)
- [coolcows.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://coolcows.dairyaustralia.com.au)

# PEOPLE

	Yes, we've nailed it ✓	Ok, but we could do better ✓	No, and we should do something about it ✓	No, and it's not relevant to us ✓
All of our employees have been inducted into the business and we have a record of the induction process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We think our employees understand what is expected of them, and would describe us as good employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate with our employees about how they contribute and add value to our business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every employee has an employment contract, including a job description	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our farm team consists of the right people with the right skills, to enable the required work to be completed in the required time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have accurate records of the hours worked, wages paid, and holidays and leave for each employee on farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our employees work on a well designed roster and usually work less than 50 hours per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have discussions, at least twice a year, with each of our staff about their performance, training needs and career aspirations, and we take action from these discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have identified the risks that exist on our farm, have systems in place to isolate or minimise these, and talk about health and safety risks regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We would be confident going away and leaving our staff to run the farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Quick SWOT

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## Resources

- ESKi - Dairy Employment Starter Kit
- Farm Safety Starter Kit
- Stepping Stones for career planning
- The People in Dairy

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://thepeopleindairy.org.au)

# OUR BUSINESS

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
We have a written business plan or list of goals that we are working towards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have key measures and targets for the financial performance of our farm business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We analyse the profitability of our farm business and monitor the change in our net worth over time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We can confidently analyse and evaluate new business opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We know our cost of production in \$/kg MS or cents per litre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We develop an annual budget and update it through the year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use our annual budget to help make the best possible farm management decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have an up to date succession plan in place which is written down and discussed with family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a good relationship with our bank and are able to provide them clear plans and budgets when required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We review our performance and progress at least annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Resources

- DairyBase
- Dairy Farm Business Analysis fact sheets
- Dairy Farm Business Analysis training
- Farm Business Fundamentals
- Dairy Cash Budgeting Tool
- Dairy Farm Monitor Project
- Stepping Stones - planning for the future

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [thepeopleindairy.org.au](http://thepeopleindairy.org.au)
- [feed.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://feed.dairyaustralia.com.au)

# THE ENVIRONMENT

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
We are compliant with our milk companies Quality and Assurance program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have farm maps with all the environmental risks highlighted e.g. bridges, culverts, infrastructure, erosion areas, heavy soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We comply with EPA regulations with respect to effluent management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We do an annual nutrient budget which is used for decision making on farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a riparian management plan and are working towards completing plantings and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We implement appropriate fertiliser application practices to avoid nutrient losses off farm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stock are excluded from waterways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We avoid pugging and compaction of soils and pastures as much as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have completed an energy audit and identified areas for energy savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are confident that we will leave the natural resources on this farm in a better state for the next generation than they were in when we started	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quick SWOT

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## Focus areas

Reflect on the ratings you have given yourself. Note the areas you want to focus on or could see opportunities in improving here and write some goals and actions that would help.

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## Resources

- FertSmart
- Soils, fertilisers and effluent
- Climate and extreme weather
- Dairy Self Assessment Tool - Dairy-SAT
- Environmental management tools

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [dairyingfortomorrow.com.au](http://dairyingfortomorrow.com.au)

# FEED

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
We have a feed plan in place with targets for home grown feed production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our feed plan covers supplementary feed requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have clear strategies to deal with feed surpluses and periods of feed deficits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a robust set of decision rules covering fodder conservation and feeding supplements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a good understanding of the costs and benefits of bought-in feed and off farm grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have good on farm feed storage facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a good understanding of our supplementary feed reserves and how they will be used to manage risk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have good systems and management tools to monitor, record and optimise pasture and crop growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quick SWOT

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## Focus areas

Reflect on the ratings you have given yourself. Note the areas you want to focus on or could see opportunities in improving here and write some goals and actions that would help.

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## Resources

- Feed Planning Tools and Resources
- Growing, Grazing and Conserving Feed
- Feeding Your Herd
- Forage Value Index
- Feeding Pastures for Profit
- Top Fodder - training and resources. Contact your RDP
- Animal Nutrition

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [feed.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://feed.dairyaustralia.com.au)

# ANIMALS

	Yes, we've nailed it ✓	Ok, but we could do better ✓	No, and we should do something about it ✓	No, and it's not relevant to us ✓
We are confident that all our animals are healthy and well fed, and meet animal welfare expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our animal vaccinations are all up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We regularly weigh our replacement calves and heifers and track their growth against targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our reproductive performance provides sufficient replacement stock to maintain herd numbers or grow if we choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We regularly assess the Body Condition Score (BCS) of our herd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a bobby calf management strategy that meets industry guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our milking equipment is tested and serviced regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We proactively prevent, monitor and treat mastitis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We proactively prevent, monitor and treat lameness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We sit down with our vet annually to discuss animal health requirements, including mastitis and milk quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a biosecurity plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We record all animal treatments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Quick SWOT

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

## Focus areas

Reflect on the ratings you have given yourself. Note the areas you want to focus on or could see opportunities in improving here and write some goals and actions that would help.

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## Resources

- Rearing Healthy Calves
- Animal Health
- Animal Welfare
- Dairy Biosecurity Plan
- Fertility
- Cool cows
- Countdown Downunder - milk quality and mastitis

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [coolcows.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://coolcows.dairyaustralia.com.au)

# MANAGING RISK

	Yes, we've nailed it	Ok, but we could do better	No, and we should do something about it	No, and it's not relevant to us
	✓	✓	✓	✓
Our business is robust enough to withstand various 'shocks' such as milk price drops, interest rate hikes, drought, floods, staff vacancies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have an appropriate business structure in place with effective insurance coverage (farm and life insurance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a good relationship with our bank and have the capacity to get additional financial support for working capital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have access to sufficient capital that allows us to invest in development work or opportunities when they arise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have identified the risks that exist on our farm, and have systems in place to isolate or minimise these	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate regularly with our staff about health and safety risks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a good understanding of our supplementary feed reserves and how they will be used to manage risk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a plan for managing the farm and animals during extreme weather e.g. droughts, extreme heat events and floods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quick SWOT

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>

## Focus areas

Reflect on the ratings you have given yourself. Note the areas you want to focus on or could see opportunities in improving here and write some goals and actions that would help.

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## Resources

- DairyBase
- Dairy Farm Business Analysis workshop
- Business Governance and Investment workshop

## Go online

- [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)
- [dairybase.com.au](http://dairybase.com.au)

# SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a well used technique that you might have used before. It gives you the chance to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for you and your business. Based on your answers to the checklist, have a go at using the table to capture information about where you are at now.



**STRENGTHS**

INTERNAL

EXTERNAL

**OPPORTUNITIES**



CORRECT OR  
AVOID ...

**WEAKNESSES**

FACTORS

FACTORS

**THREATS**

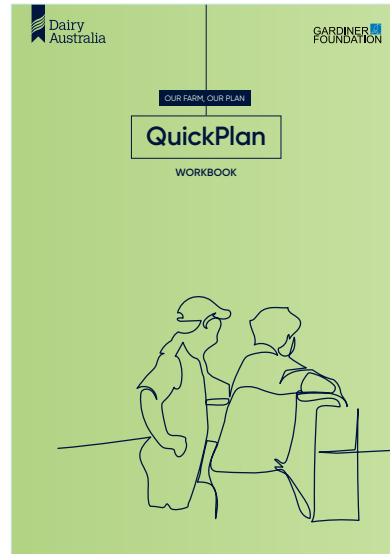
MITIGATE ...

# QUICKPLAN

In addition to the Farm Fitness Checklist the 'Our Farm, Our Plan' program provides a QuickPlan workbook for farmers to get their business and personal goals down on paper, along with the actions they plan to take to achieve those goals.

To find out more about the QuickPlan contact your Regional Development Program - their contact information can be found on the inside front cover.

The QuickPlan can be downloaded from Dairy Australia's web site - [dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)



## PLAN ON A PAGE



### FOCUS AREA: *Farm safety*

#### GOALS AND ACTIONS:

Goal: the farm is a safe working environment, with relevant policies and procedures in place that everyone understands and carry out.

Actions: Michelle to use DA Farm Safety Starter Kit to develop policies and procedures for our farm by 30 Nov 2019.

John to put safety as a standing item on our weekly team meeting agenda to discuss how we work on our farm and get input from the team, starting next week.

Team to use mobile phones to allocate tasks to staff, capture safety issues, track the completion of all jobs, get feedback and capture ideas - try WhatsApp as a team communication tool, starting 1 Sept 2019.

Have a team dinner at the local pub once a month - our shout. First Tuesday of the month starting Sept 2019.

### FOCUS AREA: *Growing our equity*

#### GOALS AND ACTIONS:

Goal: grow our equity from \$1.5 mill to \$2.5 mill by 2030, so as to achieve financial freedom with enough equity to fund the lifestyle we want when we turn 55.

Goal: generate an average \$70k cash surplus each year for debt reduction or future investments.

Actions: Meet with our consultant by the end of Oct 2019 to agree the important measures of financial performance (KPIs) for our farm business and track our farm performance annually.

Use DairyBase annually to track and benchmark financial performance, starting with last financial year - Michelle to register by 30/09/2019.

Allocate specific regular time to investigate the next opportunity to grow equity - meet together every 6 months starting Dec 2019.

### VISION:

To enjoy life while steadily growing our business, extending our knowledge and having the courage to take on new challenges creating a secure balanced future for our family.

#### I/WE VALUE:

- Courage
- Flexibility
- Passion
- Initiative

### FOCUS AREA: *Lifestyle*

#### GOALS AND ACTIONS:

Goal: to be healthy enough physically and mentally to undertake farm activities and enjoy family and leisure time - ongoing.

Goal: to complete one significant exciting activity per year - every year.

Goal: to be active in our local community and make a contribution that matters to us - ongoing.

Actions: Michelle to book us both in for a check up with our GP by the end of October.

Decide between going to the Grand Final or a week in Queensland and book it. Maybe book both! John to book by end of August.

Invite the neighbours and new people to the area over for a bbq - do it after calving and before harvest starts. Michelle to make this happen.

Be more active with the fire brigade, starting with the next training day - John to contact brigade captain by end of Sept re training days.

### FOCUS AREA: *Feed*

#### GOALS AND ACTIONS:

Goal: know our feed costs, including cost of growing and conserving the feed we grow on our farm (home farm, lease blocks, out blocks).

Goal: we have clear strategies to deal with feed surpluses and periods of feed deficit.

Actions: Plan our feed requirements annually and plan purchasing needs post harvest to meet requirements and manage risk - John by end of November each year. Ensure the farm is walked weekly, to generate a feed wedge, update grazing plan and discuss at weekly Monday morning meeting - Michelle to make this happen.

Have a team meeting heading into spring to highlight the approach to growing, grazing and conserving as much feed as possible - Michelle to make this happen by end of August.

Talk with grain suppliers about opportunities to look in prices for a proportion of our grain supply - John to do this by end of September.

OUR FARM, OUR PLAN

# WHAT ELSE?

Other Dairy Australia programs that might be of interest include:

## **Our Farm, Our Plan for groups**

Dairy Australia is delivering group workshops to assist farmers to get their long term plans down on paper. Workshops utilise the key 'Our Farm, Our Plan' resources – the Farm Fitness Checklist and the QuickPlan workbook.

Support will be provided to farmers taking part to pressure test their plans and to review their progress.

The Our Farm, Our Plan workshop for groups is ideal for discussion groups and other farmer groups, including Young Dairy Network groups.

## **Farm Business Fundamentals**

Build your skills and knowledge to pull together farm financial and physical information.

Farm Business Fundamentals covers getting organised, budgeting and farm financial systems and introduces the Dairy Standard Chart of Accounts and Cash Budgeting Tool.

## **Dairy Farm Business Analysis**

Better understand and analyse farm business performance using DairyBase. This training covers the importance of getting annual farm financial and physical numbers right, how to interpret farm performance data, and to understand business performance on the basis of cash, profit and wealth.

## **Business governance and investment workshop**

This two day workshop takes farmers to the next level in their strategic planning. It assists people running larger and more complex farm businesses to think strategically and develop policies and systems to be more efficient, more effective and better manage their farms.

## **Stepping up, stepping back**

Dairy offers a lifelong career with a real sense of value, purpose, flexibility, stimulating work and work / life balance. Many employees aim and succeed in buying a dairy farm or land, growing their business and being highly successful business owners.

As in most industries, many dairy farm owners and managers are aging and considering their options to scale down their involvement or 'step back' from the day to day of the business. This opens up a range of opportunities for both groups to consider including share farming, leasing, selling, scaling back or expanding operations and business partnership models.

### **CONTACT YOUR RDP**

Contact your Regional Development Program for more information about any of the above, and what else is happening in your region.

(See inside front cover for contact details)

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ISBN 978-1-925347-46-3



**Dairy Australia Limited** ABN 60 105 227 987  
Level 3, HWT Tower  
40 City Road, Southbank Vic 3006 Australia  
T +61 3 9694 3777 F +61 3 9694 3701  
E [enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au)  
[dairyaustralia.com.au](http://dairyaustralia.com.au)