

AUSTRALIAN DAIRY
CONFERENCE 2010

‘Sea Change : See Change’

The Australian Dairy Conference was held in Wollongong in February. Over 500 people attended, including a majority of dairy farmers, company representatives and international speakers from all over the globe. The event was a huge success with interesting topics and a great opportunity to network with like-minded people. Below is a summary of some key presentations:

Su Hao (James): Co-founder and General Manager of East Rock, China (dairy facility development business).

At a glance China has a population of over 1.3 billion people, with a national dairy herd under 13 million cows. Where will all their milk come from to feed the nation? **Younger Chinese generations are showing to have a more dairy dependent diet and dairy consumption is predicted to climb dramatically.** China’s dairy industry has its own set of challenges. Who could forget the melamine outbreak in September 2008? This has made consumers aware more than ever the importance of Food Safety and the production of high quality milk. Since the melamine outbreak large numbers of Chinese consumers are seeking high quality milk and dairy products from foreign countries. Not only did Australia and New Zealand send more than 45,000 heifers to China in 2009, Australia also sent 250,000MT of milk powder.

China is also looking for technologies from developed dairy nations in the areas of dairy design, cow comfort, housing equipment, ventilation, cooling, waste processing and construction. James’ message was clear - Australian dairy products and livestock are now and will continue to be in high demand from China. Our staff and technology will also continue to be much sought after commodities from this market. But as Hank Bruger, Rural Advisor of Warakirri Dairies responded ‘you can take our bottom end heifers but you can’t take our people’.

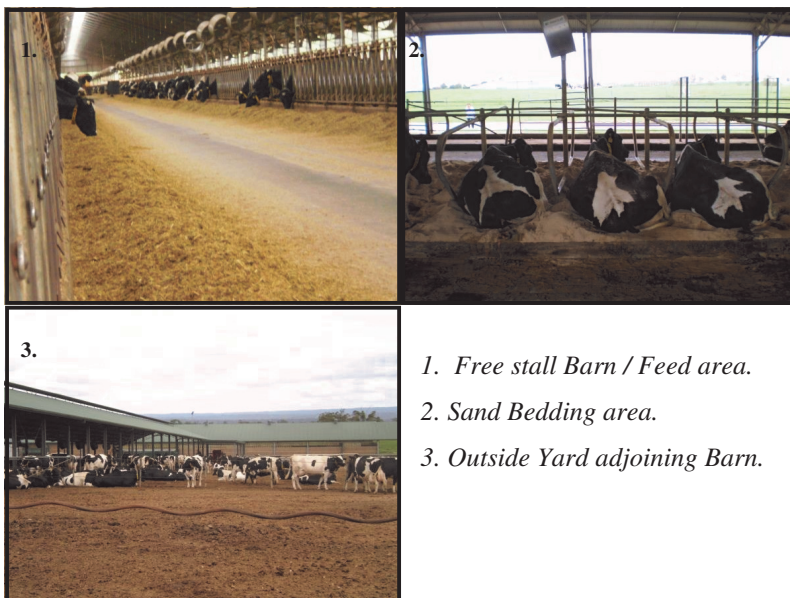
Dr Andrew Johnson, Wisconsin: Milk Quality consultant:

Consulting on milk quality for the past 30 years, Andrew’s largest group of farms milk 65,000 cows, averaging 38L/day, and have an average SCC of 165,000 for the year. Dr Johnson believes the bottom line is simple ‘**Dairies with low SCC provide a better quality raw ingredient as well as healthier cows that are more profitable**’. Getting the right processes in place to have a system running smoothly and efficiently is the key. Milking routine is most critical when producing low SCC milk, low clinical mastitis and healthier teats. Cows with a poor milking routine will milk slower, have more teat end problems, a higher SCC and more cases of clinical mastitis. Andrew stated that **70% of all over-milking actually happens at the start of milking.** So is having a full preparation before putting the cups on the answer?

Dr Johnson has many clients using a two step approach, which he believes to work well. First step is to fore-strip milk from each teat and then pre-dip each teat. Once prepared, the teats are wiped dry with a cloth towel and then cups are put on. After milking machines are removed, teats are dipped. Dr Johnson prefers dipping to spraying, as it uses less teat dip and gives better coverage. Latest data in the US shows the lag time (time from fore-stripping to cups on) should be a minimum of 90 seconds. This means the cups are attached to a teat full of milk and the cow will have higher flow rates and milk out much faster, rather than over-milking at the beginning.

This is a process Leppington Pastoral Company have adopted, which they attribute to a SCC drop of 50,000 (now stabilizing at 170,000) across 2,000 cows. It has required an extra labour unit in the dairy, which they believe to be well worth the effort.

Kim Brister



1. Free stall Barn / Feed area.
2. Sand Bedding area.
3. Outside Yard adjoining Barn.

**LEPPINGTON PASTORAL
COMPANY TOUR**

A post conference tour at Leppington Pastoral Company gave attendees the opportunity to see how this farm operates.

Leppington Pastoral Company is a family owned and operated dairy farm based at Bringelly, NSW. Kolombo and Julia Perich founded the dairy in 1951 at Leppington, NSW milking 25 cows. Currently the operation is milking 2,000 cows in a freestall facility. The dairy is a rapid exit 36 double-up herringbone, requiring 4 labour units for each 8hour shift. The dairy operates 24 hours/day except for 45 minutes when the plant is being washed.



Dairy design is unique, with a subway housing the milking components, including electronics. This not only extends the life of the hardware but also makes herd testing a lot less stressful as it can all be done from the subway, not upsetting the milking routine.

Cows are milked 3 times a day, currently averaging 33L. They are housed in free-stall barns, with sand as a bedding. Once calved, cows are only grazing pasture when they are dry. Leppington Pastoral Company have the ability to transport their own milk. They also manage a 10,000ha property, where grain/hay is grown and transported back to the dairy farm.

LPC are now using a pasteurisation process to treat milk from the hospital cows to feed the calves. This uses the same technology as that for pasteurised milk for human consumption. The process helps to remove any harmful bacteria from the milk that may disadvantage the calves and reduces wasted milk product.

It was a fantastic tour, with a detailed picture of the operation on offer. LPC place great emphasis on cow comfort, health and minimising stress on both the animal and operator. This farm is a great example of latest technology, coupled with a passion for dairy farming - a success story of our industry.