

Darling Downs Focus Farm

Subtropical Dairy has received funding from Dairy Australia to run a Focus Farm on the Darling Downs for the next two years. Selection is currently underway for a farm in the region to take part in the project.

The Focus Farm model aims to provide local visibility around key on-farm decisions and farm performance over time. The tracking of decisions on farms over a two-year period provides visibility and insight into the impact of those decisions on the bottom line. In addition, Focus Farms allow consideration and discussion about the factors impacting decisions at any point in time, including seasonal and market conditions.

The recently completed Northern Rivers Focus Farm project had some great outcomes. Run between 2014 and 2016 on Andrew Wilson & Kelly Boyd 'Woodlawn' farm near Lismore, the story of their progress was followed and shared by the region's dairy farming community.

The Wilsons are fourth generation dairy



farmers who at the start of the project were milking 250 cows in a pasture-based system. They had just purchased a neighbouring property and their focus was to improve their home grown feed supply and increase the milking herd to 300.

Through facilitated discussions with the support group and the input of a farm consultant over the two years, a significant increase in farm profit was achieved with return on capital going from 0.7% to 5.1%. With milk price remaining relatively stable over this two year period, the main influences were deemed to be an increase in amount and quality of home-grown feed harvested, an increase in production per cow, an increase in herd size, and a decrease in the cost of production achieved through tighter cost control.

The Darling Downs Focus Farm selected will be supported over two years by a farm consultant and a support group made up of other farmers and service providers selected by the focus farmer. This support group will provide guidance, advice and suggestions to assist the farmer in meeting their business goals.

Focus Farm field days will also be run during the project where the wider dairy farming community will be invited to visit the farm and look at the impact that changes are having on the business's bottom line.

For further information about the Focus Farm please contact Vivienne McCollum on 0428 718620 or email vivienne@subtropicaldairy.com.au

