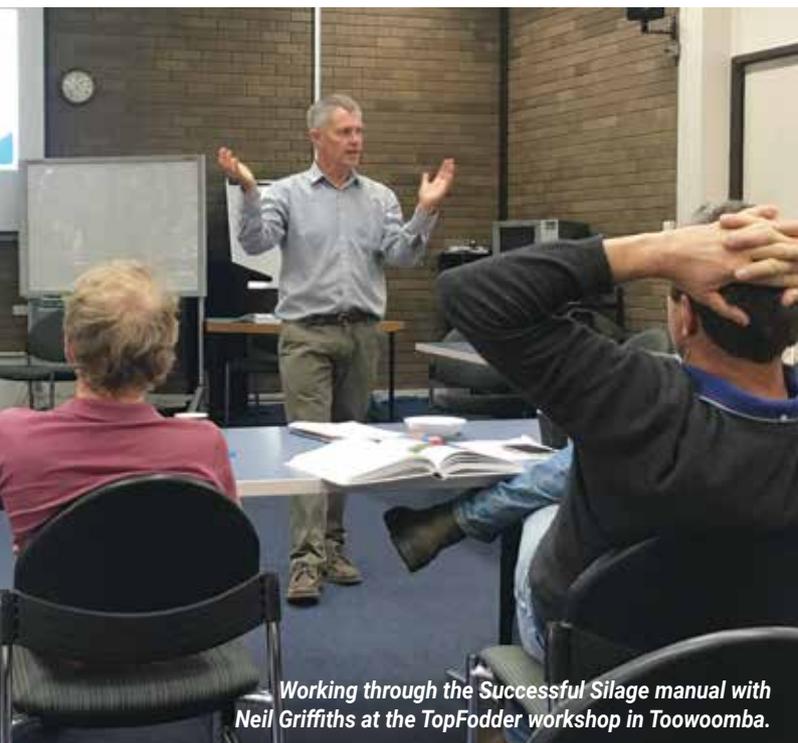


Neil Griffiths calculating the dollar value of wastage in a silage bunker



Working through the Successful Silage manual with Neil Griffiths at the TopFodder workshop in Toowoomba.



Making TopFodder in the Subtropical Dairy region

Making and feeding high quality silage was the focus of a two-day workshop delivered in Toowoomba in early August, 2018. The revamped TopFodder workshop was delivered by Neil Griffiths, NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Technical Specialist - Pastures, based at Tocal, and TopFodder Silage Coordinator.

A group of ten farmers and service providers attended the session which concentrated on the production and feeding of high quality silage to enhance cow performance and improve on-farm returns.

The TopFodder program works through the technical areas covered in the 'Successful Silage' manual published by Dairy Australia and the NSW Department of Primary Industries. These technical areas cover: the use of silage in farming systems; the principles and science of silage making; factors affecting the quality & quantity of silage; harvesting silage; managing the wilting process; storage options for baled and chopped silage; the use of additives and inoculants; feed testing of silage and feeding silage to the dairy herd. The economics of silage production and feeding are also incorporated into all discussions throughout the workshop, with participants working through some fundamental calculations and using some web-based spreadsheet tools.

Areas of particular interest during the Toowoomba session included: the assessment of silage as a feed option based on its feed value; making quality silage and the considerations of moisture content at the stage of ensiling; considering quantity versus quality; the science of making quality silage; and pH levels.

As a follow-up to the workshop, participants expressed an interest in making use of the Subtropical Dairy Discussion Group funding to organise a discussion group meeting to further investigate silage making practices. This is planned to be held at the University of Queensland Gatton Dairy.

Subtropical Dairy with Dairy Australia have made resources available for future TopFodder workshops throughout the Subtropical region. To access the TopFodder manual and other resources online visit www.dairyaustralia.com.au/farm/feedbase-and-animal-nutrition/supplements or www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pastures-and-rangelands/silage/silage/successful-silage