

Looking for data-loving dairy farmers



DataGene is on the look out for dairy farmers who keep meticulous records to join Ginfo, the industry's national reference group for genetic information.

Participating herds will have their 2-year-old heifers DNA tested (genotyped) and classified for free and have the option to test young female calves at a discount. They also receive a year's free subscription to the HerdData app and early access to DataGene's reports and tools under development.

To be eligible, herds need to be regularly herd-testing and recording information such as calvings, joinings, sires and dams, pregnancy test results and health events such as mastitis.

DataGene CEO, Dr Matt Shaffer, said Ginfo had enabled Australia to lead the world in genomic breeding values for traits that are difficult to measure such as feed saved and heat tolerance.

"Ginfo is a critical data set in the genetic evaluation system for the Australian dairy industry. It's enabled us to develop new breeding values and to improve the reliability of existing breeding values, especially fertility," Dr Shaffer said.

Over the next couple of years, DataGene plans to double the number of herds in Ginfo to about 200. Ginfo herds are located across Australia's eight dairying regions. ■■

Endorsements from existing Ginfo farmer participants

Queensland

"We have good records so it seemed like an obvious thing to get involved in. Any research to help the dairy industry has to be a good thing. We can't control the milk price but we can control which cows we breed from and which bulls we use, and the Ginfo project is helping with those management decisions."

IAN AND CATH SCOTT, Nanango – Qld, milking 220 Holsteins.

NSW

"We've always been interested in the genetics and breeding side of the dairy industry and being in Ginfo means we get more information on our cows by accessing genomic testing. It's giving us a better understanding of our breeding program and which bulls to use over which cows. The more information gathered by the Ginfo project the better because it will result in better reliabilities and help farmers make better breeding decisions."

DARREN PARRISH, Bodalla – NSW, milking 200 Holsteins.

DataGene manages Ginfo on behalf of the dairy industry, in collaboration with Holstein Australia, Jersey Australia, DairyBio, Agriculture Victoria and Dairy Australia.

Dairy farmers can express interest in joining Ginfo by filling in the form on www.datagene.com.au or contact Erika Oakes at DataGene 0427 995 248 or eoakes@datagene.com.au