

Northern Australian Dairy Innovation Day 2018



The Bakes property at Crossmaglen via Coffs Harbour NSW



Jason and Michelle Bake telling their story with Subtropical Dairy Chairman, Paul Roderick



Andrew and Naomi Mullins with Ned modelling a Dairy Australia Farm Safety high viz vest.

In early November, the Subtropical Dairy Programme held the Northern Australian Dairy Innovation Day at Dorrigo and Crossmaglen on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. This was a superb event held over two days with a farm tour on the afternoon of Thursday 8th November, and the Innovation Day on Friday 9th November.

On Thursday, participants gathered at Adam and Donna Darley's picturesque farm on the outskirts of Dorrigo for a farm tour. The farm was presented immaculately and those who attended, were fortunate to hear from Adam and Donna about their business. A highlight from the afternoon was the opportunity to view the calf rearing facilities and to hear about their GEA Heat Detection system.

Following the farm tour was the Subtropical Dairy Annual General Meeting held at the Lookout Mountain Retreat outside Dorrigo. Each of the Regional Group chairs presented to the AGM on projects carried out for the 2017-18 year.

Participants had an early start on Friday 9th for the Northern Australian Dairy Innovation Day at Jason and Michele Bake's farm at Crossmaglen. The Innovation Day started off with an address from Norman Repacholi, Commercial Research and Analysis manager from Dairy Australia, who delivered the Industry Situation and Outlook presentation. This was followed by the Official Opening by Dr David Nation, Managing Director of Dairy Australia.

The highlight of the day was hearing Jason and Michele Bake's story. This was full of challenges as Jason has progressively lost his sight over many years. This has impacted on his ability to perform many tasks on farm, in particular the operation of machinery. Jason and Michele place enormous importance and invest a lot of energy into ensuring their team of people feel valued and important within the business. This underpins the success of their operation. Jason and Michele rely on leased land to grow much of their forage and in recent years have moved away from buying grain to growing all of their starch on farm. They have worked closely with Dr Bruce Hamilton (Dairy Nutrition and Management Consultant) and Matt Thompson (Agronomist with MNC Agronomy) to achieve their goals. Bruce delivered a presentation titled 'Profitable herd nutrition using high forage diets' and Matt delivered a presentation titled 'Growing and harvesting multiple forages in

high rainfall environments. Both presentations were packed full of information and tips relating to Jason and Michele's system.

After enjoying lunch, participants heard Ray Murphy (Senior Scientist from Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) discuss how farms growing a high proportion of their own feed perform in regard to key profit and risk indicators.

The final session of the day focussed on how high forage farms perform in low and high rainfall regions. Andrew Mullins from the Darling Downs and Jason Bake discussed the similarities and differences of their farms. The day closed with a farm tour of Jason and Michele's farm.

We would like to thank everyone involved with the Northern Australian Dairy Innovation Day 2018, particularly the Darley's, the Bakes, our sponsors, our speakers and attendees. We look forward to seeing you at our next one! ■■



The Northern Australian Dairy Innovation Day in Jason and Michelle's calf and hay shed



Dairy Australia Chairman, Mr Jeff Odgers talking with Far North Qld dairy farmer Owen Daley.

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Non-Attending



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Jason Bake discussing how their feedpad is integral to their business in the feeding of high starch forages