



Good business management is good carbon management

Dairy Australia

This **Dairy Australia** initiative focused on embedding carbon reduction messages into existing dairy industry programs and communication channels. The theme being “good business management is good carbon management”.

The results:

The 650 cow Riverina Resource Efficiency Carbon Focus Farm managed by David and Jenni Owen. After two years the resource efficiency focus farm had

- > **Increased home-grown fodder produced from 5 t DM/ha to 7 t DM/ha**
- > **Improved the quality of the home-grown fodder conserved**
- > **Reduced the age of calving from 27 months to 24 months**

These management strategies reduced the greenhouse gas emission intensity of the farm by 0.5 kg CO₂-e/kg MS (0.04kg of Co₂-eq/litre).

The increase in Forage DM/ha is estimated to be worth \$300/ha across a milking platform of approximately 300ha (AUS\$90,000/year).

How they did it:

The project focused on resource use efficiency as extensive industry research has shown that by using farm inputs more efficiently and reducing wastage, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions per litre of milk is reduced. For example, using nitrogen more effectively by applying it at the right time and at the right rate reduces nitrous oxide emissions as less nitrogen is needed to grow the same amount of pasture.

The project directly involved over 3000 farmers and service provider participants, with a further 3000 farmers and service providers exposed to carbon messages through existing extension programs. The project adopted a range of approaches from embedding the carbon message into existing industry extension programs such as In Calf, Cool Cows, and Fert\$mart through to activities focused specifically on resource efficiency.

Extension activities included the establishment of resource efficiency carbon focus farms and the delivery of the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator to identify areas of farming practice that could be more efficient.

The Calculator was developed to enable farmers to calculate their on farm greenhouse gas emissions by providing information about their inputs and production figures. To streamline data entry the calculator has recently been integrated into the industry Farm Business Management database, DairyBase.

Farmers participating in activities to increase fertiliser efficiency reported an average saving of \$15,000/year (Gippsland Fert\$mart delivery reports 2015).



“It (the Australian Dairy Carbon Calculator – DGAS) is a really good snapshot of how you are going.... it highlighted a few areas we could save money.”

– **Farmers Shawn and Tanya Robbins, Boorcan, Victoria Australia**