



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Media Release

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National Breeding Objective maps a more profitable future for dairy

For Immediate Release

The Australian dairy industry launched new breeding tools to support the National Breeding Objective (NBO) at the ADIC Industry Leaders Breakfast in Melbourne on 28 November 2014.

Developed by the NBO Task Force and driven by the [Australian Dairy Improvement Scheme](#) (ADHIS) after an extensive consultation process with dairy farmers from across all dairying regions, the NBO aims to deliver profitable herds that the Australian dairy industry needs for the future.

Genetic gains deliver 30 per cent of productivity improvements on Australian farms, with the estimated gap between actual and potential genetic gains worth \$25 million per year in extra farmer profits¹.

Offering a practical breeding index, which includes the breeding traits farmers want to improve in their herds, the NBO is designed to close this gap, and increase net farm profit via genetic gain.

General Manager of ADHIS, Daniel Abernethy said the three indices; a Balanced Performance Index, a Type Weighted Index and a Health Weighted Index were designed to align with farmers' different breeding priorities.

"The Balanced Performance Index achieves the NBO for farm profit and will align to the breeding priorities of most Australian dairy farmers," Mr Abernethy said.

"Two additional breeding indices have been developed to meet the needs of those farmers whose breeding philosophies focus on type or health."

ADIC Chair, Noel Campbell said the level of farmer and industry involvement in developing the Breeding Objective is a testament to the entire supply chain's commitment to securing a more profitable future for dairy.

"The direct input of farmers, processors and research and development bodies through participation in farmwalks, surveys and forums has directly impacted the outcome of the NBO," Mr Campbell explained.

"Investment in innovative genetics strategies such as the NBO and research outcomes from the Dairy Futures CRC will help our farmers to breed the type of cow they *want* to milk, faster, which will improve the productivity and profitability of our herds."

While existing programs like the Australian Breeding Values express a bull or cow's genetic potential for a single trait such as fertility or protein kilograms, most farmers want to improve more than one trait in their herd.

The new index will be used to rank bulls, cows and herds for breeding programs.

ADHIS is an initiative of Australian Dairy Farmers', that receives the majority of its funding from Dairy Australia through the Dairy Services Levy.

A summary of the National Breeding Objective is available via the [ADHIS website](#).

ⁱ Report Commissioned by Dairy Australia, Coats, S & Lacey, R., 2013, *Development of Genetics Scenarios and Implications for the Australian Dairy Industry*, 13 August 2013.

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