

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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NEW SCIENCE SECURES BRIGHT FUTURE FOR DAIRY SECTOR

Victorian scientists are working on ways to reduce emissions to create a more profitable and sustainable dairy sector, honing in on the environmental footprint of the Australian dairy cow.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today launched DairyBio21-26 – a five-year, \$55 million research partnership between industry and government to address many of the issues facing dairy farmers, including how to breed more productive cows that produce fewer emissions.

The partnership with Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Dairy Foundation will support scientific research focused on genetic improvements to animals and forage species.

The long-term vision is to provide farmers with the tools and information they need to breed and feed cows that produce more milk, healthier calves and less methane under a changing climate.

As a result of climate change and other regulatory and trade changes, forecasts suggest that dairy farmers will need to increase their productivity by 1.5 per cent per year to maintain profitability.

DairyBio21-26 will support scientists to meet this challenge, targeting an additional value of \$200 per cow each year for Australian dairy herds by 2040. This will be achieved through genetic improvements that will result in cows that live longer and produce fewer emissions – with the flow-on benefits of reduced costs.

Victoria's dairy industry leads the nation, accounting for 77 per cent of Australia's dairy exports – valued at \$2.1 billion – with the gross value of milk produced in Victoria worth \$2.7 billion (2018-19).

Aligned with the Andrews Labor Government's leadership in climate change, DairyBio21-26 will facilitate world-leading research and innovation ensuring a bright future for our dairy industry.

It will also support the Government's transformational Agriculture Strategy which commits to positioning Victoria as a leader in low-emission agriculture.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"DairyBio21-26 will support our world-leading scientists to meet the challenges facing our dairy industry head-on and to deliver practical solutions to our dairy farmers as they adjust to operating under a changing climate."

Quotes attributable to Dairy Australia Chairman James Mann

"DairyBio21-26 continues the focus on two of the major drivers of industry success – improving the herd and improving pastures. New inventions, matched with real industry needs and support from across government and commercial sector are what excite us at Dairy Australia."

Quotes attributable to Gardiner Dairy Foundation Chair Dr Len Stephens

"Many technologies and products from DairyBio are already available and delivering significant value to farmers today. The next five years of DairyBio will bring about a broader range of outputs, including some exciting new forage cultivars, that will deliver sustained value to dairy farmers."

Media contact: Nadia Dimattina 0438 701 306 | Nadia.dimattina@minstaff.vic.gov.au