

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the
Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources

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**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

VICTORIANS SHINE AT FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Victorian farmers have taken two top gongs at the Weekly Times Coles 2018 Farmer of the Year Awards, winning the categories of Dairy and Innovation Farmer of the Year.

Clint Theodore and Brooke Lane from Alvie in the state's southwest took the dairy honour, crediting their scientific and economic approach that has seen them not only achieve a massive return on equity, but also named in the top 10 per cent of Australian dairy farmers for milk quality.

They run a high-production herd of 300 Holstein milking cows, each producing about 11,000 litres.

Anita Watt from Balmoral won the Farm Magazine Innovative Farmer of the Year category for her work in product innovation and diversification at Glenelg River Herbs in Balmoral.

The farm is one of the largest rosemary operations in the country and has managed to corner the market for the fresh herb, whilst also creating additional offerings with a range of dried herbs and essential oils.

Victoria was represented with finalists throughout the awards including Ben and Jane Young, who use innovative feed options in their livestock business in Macarthur and the Blomeley Family who run a mixed cropping business in Pura Pura.

Other Victorian finalists included;

- Luke and Stacey Madden, who found success producing milk for the cheapest-possible price, through a tried-and-true recipe of growing as much feed for their herd for their herd of 220 dairy cows in Naringal East themselves.
- Scott and Belinda McKillop, who are one of four farming families in Australia's newest cooperative Mountain Milk Co-operative in Dederang.
- Rob and Mariske de Wit who have transformed a humble flower-growing business into a multi-million dollar, vertically integrated company in Silvan that produces up to six million stems of specialist lillies and Dutch iris annually.
- Glen White from Dunkeld Pastoral Company, who has ramped up production, animal welfare and environment stewardship on the farms, which span 8300 hectares.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Farmers and rural communities across Victoria have demonstrated time and time again their capacity to overcome adversity by adapting to a changing climate and volatile prices, diversifying, embracing technology, and exploring new markets."

"I want to congratulate all our finalists and winners this evening and pay a particular tribute to our Victorian farmers who continue to lead the way with innovation."

"We're focused on making agriculture an attractive, profitable and rewarding industry for our young people, ensuring it is best placed to capitalise on international and domestic markets as well as digital opportunities."

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