



Dairy NSW Regional Action Plan: Managing Natural Resources and Climate Variability

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This updated Dairy NSW Regional Action Plan is adapted from the DIDCO RAP 2006 which was updated from the original version by Barnett and Nelson 200.

Dairy NSW's Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Climate Variability (CV) is relevant to all Dairy NSW regions as a continuous improvement process by which the NSW dairy industry develops, delivers and demonstrates its duty of care for the natural environment and dealing with climate change within profitable dairy farming systems.

The Dairy NSW's RAP is aligned with Dairy Australia's national NRM strategy under the Dairying for Tomorrow (NRM focused) and Confidence 2 Grow (climate focused) programs, and includes utilisation of the process tools DairySAT-NSW and Targets for Change (also known as Farmer Targets for Change in NSW) including updated modules that address climate change impacts.

Dairy NSW's NRM and CV Coordination is delivered by Jess Jennings (j.jennings@uws.edu.au) and governed by the Dairy NSW Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC). This NRMC meets bi-annually and has senior membership from the following dairy and NRM stakeholders:

- Dairy NSW – Chairman, Executive Officer plus 1-2 farmer members
- Dairy Australia – NRM Coordinator
- NSW Farmers Association – Chair of Dairy Committee
- NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)
- NSW Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- NSW State Landcare Facilitator, National Landcare Program (NLP, DAFF)
- NSW Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator, (NHT, DAFF, currently considered)

Dairy NSW's Regional Action Plan is comprised of 5 core process principles:

- 1. Quantify NRM performance and CV preparedness by assessing risks of dairying operations.**
- 2. Develop NRM and CV targets achievable by farmers.**
- 3. Negotiate achievement of NRM and CV targets by farmers and dairy-NRM stakeholders.**
- 4. Evaluate achievement of NRM and CV targets and methods used.**
- 5. Promote economic, social, environmental and climatic benefits of dairying.**

Each of these five elements is supported by processes for action, as follows.

The core principles and processes by which the NSW dairy industry continuously improves its Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Climate Variability (CV) preparedness are as follows.

1. Quantify NRM performance and CV preparedness by assessing risks of dairying operations.

- a. Identify on-farm NRM and CV risks and performance using the Dairy Self Assessment Tool (DairySAT) or similar. Generally, this is achievable by the identification of all on-farm management practices that are either above, below or acceptable, with respect to industry best management practice across the issues of: **effluent, irrigation; nutrients; soils, chemicals, farm wastes, pests and weeds, biodiversity, air and energy, and Green House Gases.**
- b. Aggregate on-farm NRM and CV results to establish catchment scale NRM and CV performance of dairy industry.
- c. Document and present DairySAT results to participating farmers and, with farmer consent, to relative NRM and CV stakeholders (eg Catchment Management Authorities).
- d. Aim to deliver DairySAT to a minimum of 90% of dairy farming population in NSW.

2. Develop NRM and CV targets achievable by farmers.

- a. Identify all potential on-ground works across all DairySAT result areas.
- b. Prioritise urgency of on-ground works and management changes according to farmer preferences. Include consideration of:
 - whole farm productivity and profitability
 - on-farm NRM improvement and CV preparedness
 - seek win:win scenarios (profitable NRM and CV improvements)
 - on-farm cost-benefit analysis
 - local factors/issues as appropriate

3. Negotiate achievement of NRM and CV targets by farmers and dairy-NRM stakeholders.

- a. Directly engage the dairy industry with relevant NRM and CV stakeholders to link farmer's targets for on-ground change (step 2 above) with catchment objectives (such as CMA Catchment Action Plans).
- b. Delineate individual and collective responsibilities of farmers and contributing stakeholders to implement on-ground works. Including:
 - all resource allocations to support farmer's on-ground works
 - timeframes for achieving on-ground works
 - farmer contributions to on-ground works

4. Evaluate achievement of NRM and CV targets and methods used.

- a. Review process of conducting steps 1-3, including:
 - NRM and CV outputs (on-ground works achieved)
 - on-farm productivity gains (efficiency, profitability)
 - catchment NRM and CV outcomes (improved environmental health)
 - farmer experiences/satisfaction with social processes
 - stakeholder experiences of participation
- b. Document all feedback to improve future NRM and CV improvements processes and consider dissemination of valuable lessons to other dairy regions as appropriate. Also consider seeking NRM success stories from other regions across NSW and Australia (contact NRM Coordinator/Dairy NSW).
- c. Document areas of NRM improvement at both farm level and catchment scale, and inform Dairy NSW's **NRM Registry**. This registry provides an on-going record of all NRM and CV progress achieved by the NSW dairy industry at the regional level, including on-farm works and catchment health improvements. This registry is administered by the NRM Coordinator (Jess Jennings, j.jennings@uws.edu.au).

5. Promote economic, social and environmental benefits of dairying.

- a. As appropriate (at regional, state and national levels) demonstrate, justify and promote dairy industry resource usage relative to other (non-dairy) competing NRM and CV usage. Include consideration of:
 - dairy-NRM and CV productivity and efficiency
 - positive dairy contribution to catchment health issues
 - rewarding social processes utilised.
- b. Promote regional and state wide dairy-NRM and CV benefits that have been achieved relative to original DairySAT results and quantification of NRM and CV performance (step 1), and subsequent implementation of Dairy NSW's Regional Action Plan.

End.