

JOURNAL

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From the President

Robert Brokenshire

Our dairy community has been saddened by the tragic passing of Victorian dairy farmer and industry leader, [Brad Collins](#), following a farming accident.

Brad was described as passionate, community-minded and deeply committed to the future of the dairy industry — particularly to encouraging young people to get involved. A third-generation farmer running a 300-cow dairy at Dixie in southwest Victoria, he was a respected voice and a valued contributor to his farming community and to Dairy Farmers Victoria.

On behalf of SADA, I extend our sincere condolences to Brad's family, friends and colleagues. When we lose one of our own, the impact is felt right across the broader dairy family — including here in South Australia. These moments remind us how close-knit our industry truly is.

Farming is rewarding, but it also carries inherent risks. ATV and machinery incidents remain a **sobering reality on Australian farms**. In the busyness of calving, harvest, irrigation, feeding out or simply moving around the property, it can be

easy to rush or to take shortcuts. Tragically, it only takes a moment for things to change forever.

Brad's passing is a timely and important reminder to all of us to remain vigilant around the farm. **Take the extra minute.** Wear the helmet. Check the terrain. Maintain machinery. Review safety procedures with staff and family. Make sure everyone — including young people — understands the risks and the importance of speaking up.

No job on the farm is so urgent that it can't be done safely.

Equally important is looking out for each other. If you or someone in your team has been affected by this news, please reach out. A simple check-in can make a significant difference. Our rural communities are strong because we support one another — not just in good seasons, but in the toughest times.

Vale Brad Collins. May we honour his contribution to the dairy industry by continuing to build a strong, safe and supportive farming community. Stay safe.



A Practical Guide Quad Bike & Side-by-Side Vehicle (SSV) Operation

Quad Bikes and SSVs are very versatile and convenient items of plant used on farms.

Their ability to carry loads, tow trailers, and simple to understand operation make them a popular choice for conducting a range of farm tasks. These versatile vehicles are commonly used in agriculture but can pose serious dangers if not operated safely and responsibly.

We're all feeling the challenges of this season. There are simple ways we can look after ourselves and each other in times like these.

Keep connected



Connecting with our family, friends and communities is a simple way we can all look after ourselves.

Celebrating 90 YEARS OF SADA

Save the Date FRIDAY MAY 15



From the SADA Desk: What you need to know

These are things that have come to our attention over the past month which might be of interest to you. If there is anything that you think we have missed or you would like to see in the newsletter, please email: sada@sada.asn.au



As 2026 begins, our thoughts are firmly with farming families affected by the devastating fires and extreme weather seen across parts of the country. These events are a stark reminder of the pressures our industry continues to face, from climate volatility to rising input costs, even as a new year brings new milk prices and renewed contract negotiations. The new year will also bring a new round of milk price bargaining, making this a timely moment to reinforce the critical importance of the [Dairy Code of Conduct](#). As farmers navigate offers and engage in discussions with processors, the Code remains essential in ensuring transparency, fairness and balance in negotiations. [Full Member Update Newsletter](#)

[MEDIA RELEASE | February 23, 2026](#)

UK court ruling should call time out for Aussie dairy imitators Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) has renewed its call for strong, enforceable rules on the use of dairy terms after a United Kingdom (UK) court confirmed plant-based products cannot be called “milk”, “butter” or “yoghurt”.



MEDIA RELEASE
7 February 2026

Dairy warns imminent FTA poses severe industry risk

The Australian dairy industry has highlighted serious concerns about deep and lasting consequences for their sector as the Federal Government gears up to sign the Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement (Australia-EU FTA). Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) Chair, Ben Bennett, said it is clear negotiations are effectively complete, but critical dairy outcomes remain unclear and appear heavily weighted in favour of the European Union.



Dairy Australia unveils ambitious plan to boost farmer profits by \$588m

Despite a quarter of dairy farms disappearing in five years, the industry has set bold targets to transform profitability by 2030. See the four key targets.

The 5-6 per cent return is to be supported by four shared goals for the majority of dairy farms by 2030:

- INCREASE earnings before interest and taxes by 30c per kg of milk solids (\$2.27-\$2.57);
- BOOST homegrown feed utilisation by one tonne per milking hectare (7.34 to 8.34);
- INCREASE genetic gain by \$90 per cow entering the herd (\$197 to \$287);

GROW the number of heifers reaching third lactation and beyond by 12 per cent.



Public views sought on the Basin's next chapter

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has released a Discussion Paper to support public consultation on the Basin Plan Review. In accordance with the Water Act 2007, the Authority is required to review the Basin Plan before the end of 2026.

Basin Review shows smarter management, not simply 'adding water' is the answer.



5 February 2026
[FULL MEDIA RELEASE HERE](#)

The MDBA 2026 Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper makes it clear that a healthy Basin will not be achieved by water recovery alone, reinforcing the need for a more balanced approach to environmental management.



Why a drop in dairy export heifer values is not all bad for farmers

Story by Fiona Myers | **The Weekly Times** Dairy farmers are swapping older cows for younger heifers after a surplus has slashed prices to half their \$2000 peak. A surplus of dairy heifers is encouraging some farmers to offload chopper cows and incorporate younger milkers in their herds. [Full Story Here](#)

Fonterra's top man in Australia, Rene Dedoncker,

has been picked as the long-awaited replacement for Mark Allison as Elders' managing director.



[Full Story here](#)

Webinar | HVNL reform update



What it means for Road Managers

The amended Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) will commence in mid-2026. To support implementation, the NHVR is updating affected notices to align with the new framework while preserving the intent of existing road manager consent decisions.

Thursday 12 March [Register here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



THE FARM SMARTER PROGRAM 2026

Coming soon to the Murraylands region!



Farm Smarter 2026 is Coming to the Murraylands

SADA is launching *Farm Smarter: Preparing Your Dairy Business for a Changing Climate* — an eight-month, on-farm learning series focused on practical climate-smart approaches to build more resilient, efficient and climate-ready dairy businesses. Sessions will combine expert insights, peer discussion and on-farm learning.

Session details coming soon. Stay Tuned!

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA This project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the ClimateSmart Agriculture Program.



800+
ADC 2026 MELBOURNE
AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER DAIRY EVENT

If you missed this year's **Australian Dairy Conference (ADC)**, don't worry — you can catch up on all the key high-

lights, speaker insights and industry updates online. From forward-thinking sustainability discussions to market outlooks and innovation on farm, ADC delivered valuable conversations for our sector.

[Catch up on everything you missed here.](#)



Japan Dairy Study Tour
13 DAYS Escorted Tour Departs 01 June 2026

There are 13 places still available.

There are currently 15 registrations for the Dairy Industry Study Tour to Japan in June. If you're planning to join. Please register as soon as possible to secure your spot. The itinerary is attached, and you can confirm your place via the [booking link](#). As some accommodation providers now require paid deposits, we need to firm up numbers. Registrations will open to the broader dairy industry on Monday 23 February.

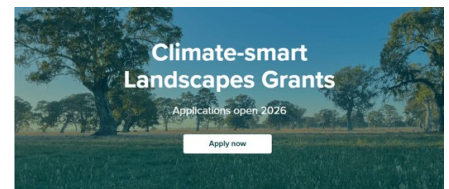


GRASSROOTS GRANTS 2026
Supporting our community to protect, restore and rejuvenate our environment.
The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants are now open, offering project funding of up to \$20,000.
Applications open 12 Feb - 2 April

Open 12 February to 2 April

Do you have a project that protects, restores or rejuvenates our local environment?

The Grassroots Grants programs puts up to \$270,000 on the table for projects that support volunteers, schools, environmental community organisations, not-for-profit groups and landholders working locally for environmental and regenerative land management outcomes. Grants are available for projects in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu across two funding tiers: less than \$5,000 and up to \$20,000.



Climate-smart Landscapes Grants
Applications open 2026
Apply now

2026-27 Limestone Coast Climate-smart Landscapes Grants

Agricultural growth opportunities while adopting sustainable management.

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board is providing up to \$150,000 in funding to primary producer groups, local landholders, landcare groups and First Nations peoples. The Climate-smart Landscapes Grants program is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.

Carbon Farming Webinar Series

Clear, practical advice to support decision-making



Carbon Farming Webinar Series
17 February - 8 May 2026
Clear, practical advice to support decision-making
REGISTER NOW



Save the Date
FRIDAY MAY 15
CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF SADA
SADA EST 1936
90 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

Stay Informed. Stay Connected. Become a Valued SADA Member

We've had a few new Members recently, If you've considered becoming a valued member of your industry body, now's the time!

You're not only supporting a strong, united voice for South Australian dairy — you're also gaining access to the most up-to-date and relevant information affecting your business. [JOIN NOW](#)



Have Your Say

Certificate II in Rural Operations

A revised [Certificate II in Rural Operations](#) has been developed, capturing the broad range of skills and knowledge required by learners working across rural and remote areas. The qualification has been updated to reflect the new requirements under the **Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF) 2025**.

The draft qualification is now open for industry feedback from **18 February to 20 March 2026**.

SADA is seeking input from members to ensure this qualification genuinely reflects the needs of South Australian dairy businesses. In particular, we are asking whether:

- The qualification meets the needs of industry, learners and training providers (including priority cohorts)
- It is flexible enough to support different farming systems and business models

There are additional electives that should be included to better reflect on-farm skills and workforce needs

A revised section of the **AHC Companion Volume Implementation Guide** is also available for comment.

Your feedback is critical to ensuring future training pathways are practical, relevant and aligned with real farm operations. Please forward your comments to the SADA office by **20 March 2026**, or contact us if you would like the draft documents.

Have Your Say

on the Future of VET in Agriculture

South Australia's dairy industry is invited to contribute to the development of a new **Workforce Development Framework** aimed at building a strong, fit-for-purpose VET workforce for regional, rural, and remote communities.

This framework will guide employers and RTOs to support career pathways – from mentor to supervisor to VET educator – linking practical actions, resources, and partnerships to local needs.

Stakeholders are encouraged to **join the co-design process** through online and in-person roundtables and networking events across Australia in early 2026. Key topics include: Strengthening VET workforce pathways and the future of agricultural trade apprenticeships, and how to better support apprentices, employers, and trainers

Your input is vital – help shape the future of agriculture VET in your region.

Register and find out more here: [VET Workforce Project](#)



Apply Now!

nuffield.com.au

2027 NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY PRODUCERS

- Invest in your personal development, your business, your future
- 15 weeks overseas travel

Applications close 8 May 2026

Nuffield Australia

Sally Bethune is a dynamic and community-minded dairy farmer who will study the “keys to success in value adding for dairy farmers”. Sally has a passion for innovation and sustainability, and together with her husband manages a 1000-cow crossbred dairy herd, milk processing business, irrigated cropping operations and a 500-head beef/dairy herd across 5000 hectares.



Stock Journal

Your voice matters: tell us what you want to see in agricultural news

Wednesday 18 February, 2026 - 12:00PM



Complete our reader survey for your chance to win a \$200 prize.
[Read Full Story](#)



NATIONAL FARMER wellbeing SURVEY 2.0

LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP?

LAST CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY!

Lend your voice to help shape our Aussie farming future.

SUPPORTED BY

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2026 SA Rural Women's Award finalists

We couldn't be prouder to share that **Narelle Zanker** has been named a finalist in the 2026 SA Rural Women's Award. As co-founder of Dairy Adventures, Narelle is passionate about connecting people with agriculture and helping communities better understand where their food comes from. Through hands-on farm experiences and her background in education, she is bridging the gap between city and rural in a practical, engaging and inspiring way.



Congratulations Narelle — as our 2025 Young Dairy Farmer of the Year, your dedication to dairy, education and advocacy continues to set an incredible example for our industry.

Narelle is one of three outstanding South Australian finalists in the **AgriFutures Rural Women's Award**, which celebrates leadership, innovation and positive impact in rural and regional communities.

We wish her every success and thank her for the energy and passion she brings to South Australian dairy.

Three inspiring South Australian women have been named finalists in the 2026 AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, recognised for their leadership, innovation and positive impact on rural and regional communities.

Narelle Zanker is a dairy farmer and educator who co-founded [Dairy Adventures](#)

Kelly Kuhn has created two environmentally conscious tourism ventures near Mannum: [Juggle House Experiences](#) and [River Murray Dark Sky Tours](#).

Hayley Hancock is transforming farm insurance through [Insurable](#).



The Weekly Times Coles 2025 Farmer of the year awards: Finalists announced

Finalists have been revealed for *The Weekly Times Coles 2025 Farmer of the Year Awards*, recognising 18 of the best farming businesses from across Australia.

While the awards celebrate excellence across beef, cropping, dairy, horticulture, sheep and innovation, **we're especially proud to see a South Australian dairy business on the shortlist.**

Hicks-Jacobs Dairies, run by the Hicks and Jacobs families at Mount Compass, has been named a finalist. What began as a handshake agreement between neighbours has grown into one of South Australia's most successful dairy partnerships, now milking 800 cows across two properties.

Their business is underpinned by strong data-driven decision making, annual benchmarking with Dairy Australia, and a major investment in robotic milking technology — improving production, easing labour pressures and supporting a better lifestyle for the whole team. 🐄🐄

[READ MORE ABOUT HICKS-JACOBS DAIRIES](#)

Upcoming Events can be registered on our Website, send through your event details on our online [registration form](#)



SADA 90 Years

The Celebration Begins

Last month we acknowledged a significant milestone for our Association **90 years of SADA**, This anniversary represents nine decades of strong advocacy, leadership and commitment to South Australian dairy farmers.

Since then, planning for our 90-Year celebrations has been gaining momentum, and things are coming together nicely. Throughout the year, we'll continue having special highlights from our archives, drawing on more than 50 years of SADA journals to revisit the milestones, challenges and achievements that have shaped our industry.

We're especially looking forward to celebrating together at our **90-Year Gala Dinner** an evening to reconnect with fellow dairy farmers, both past and present, and recognise the people and progress that have built the industry we are proud to be part of today.

Tickets will open on 13 March,

With an exclusive earlybird offer available for a limited time. Keep an eye on your [inbox](#) and our [socials](#) for further details we can't wait to celebrate this remarkable milestone with you.