

South Australian Dairy Awards: Reece Donhardt takes out innovation award

Nangkita Dairies' Reece Donhardt received his Innovative Farmer of the Year award from SA Primary Industries Minister Clare Scriven.

Nangkita Dairies' Reece Donhardt has taken out the state's dairy industry's most innovative farmer award.



It was awarded at the 2025 [South Australian Dairy Awards Gala](#) held at Adelaide Oval and hosted by the Dairy Industry Association of Australia's South Australian branch.

Set against the theme of "A Dairy Wonderland", the event brought together more than 300 farmers, processors and industry leaders for a night of celebration and recognition.

The awards recognise the best of South Australia's dairy industry, from innovative farming practices and sustainable leadership to strong processor relationships and the rising stars shaping the future.

SA Dairyfarmer's Association chief executive officer Andrew Curtis said on a family-run farm of 750 cows, Mr Donhardt was redefining what's possible in dairy.

With fourteen Lely robots now managing all milking, Mr Donhardt has unlocked the potential of steep and previously underutilised land for pasture, even reclaiming swampy areas once inaccessible to tractors.

"His investment in agricultural drone technology, coupled with CASA accreditation, has allowed for efficient spraying and fertilising land that no ground rig could safely reach, improving productivity and land health," Mr Curtis said.

"Weed control, including blackberry infestations on steep slopes, is now handled with precision from the air."

Automation also extends to calf rearing, with data-driven decisions shaping every aspect of the farm.

"[Reece meets the challenges of climate change](#), labour shortages, and land constraints with strategic thinking and a commitment to sustainability," Mr Curtis said.

"His leadership proves that innovation isn't just about technology; it's about vision, adaptability, and care for the future."

As well as the farmer awards presented on Friday night, a range of awards were given for the state's best dairy products.

Winners included Little Yarra Cheese Company for their Lilyarra goat curd with fresh dill that won champion SA-manufactured cheese, champion cheese from a small-scale producer and most outstanding non-bovine exhibit.

Ice cream manufacturers 48 Flavours won the most outstanding bovine exhibit and champion frozen dairy with its salted pistachio variety.

Tweedvale Milk's pure double cream won both the judges choice award and champion fresh product.

By [Paula Thompson](#) | September 1 2025