

November 2017



HERD IMPROVEMENT
CO-OPERATIVE AUSTRALIA LTD

Newsletter



Welcome to the November edition of the Hico Newsletter.

As the newly elected Deputy Chairperson of HICO I wanted to take this opportunity to engage with my fellow shareholders and give you a brief update of some happenings within the Co-operative. An election was recently held where our Chairman Stewart McRae was re-elected to continue in his current role as Chairman. As Deputy Chairperson I look forward to working alongside and supporting Stewart, as do the rest of the HICO Directors. I am also pleased to report that we have had some interest from shareholders in the opportunity to join the HICO board, we would further welcome anyone who may be interested in joining the board to make contact with your local Director.

HICO was recently given the opportunity to send a Board Director and staff member on a trip to the United States of America with ABS Global, Inc (ABS). It was a great privilege for myself and Tim King (Sales Supervisor) to join some ABS staff as well as other semen resellers to Madison, Wisconsin U.S.A. Not only did the trip present us with the opportunity to visit some of ABS's facilities and get a first-hand view and insight into some of their new ventures, but also coincided with the World Dairy Expo.

We were lucky enough to visit some farms in Wisconsin which included a sixth generation family farm milking 2,500 cows on 4,000 acres. On this particular farm cows are milked three times a day which involves milking 24 hours a day employing 70 staff. All fodder is cut and stored in huge bunkers as silage and then fed as mixed rations. Interestingly they weigh and measure the feed and rations depending on the age group as well as the stage of lactation a cow is in. Genetics also play an important part of their farming business as they push their cows to increase production while trying to chase longevity.

The tour also went onto some smaller farms, where it was great to be able to talk to these family farm operators about the challenges they face with their business, which are similar to ours in Australia around the cost of production and labour. A tour of ABS's laboratory presented us with Sexcel, a new semen sexing technology owned by ABS, which they believe has the ability to change the genetics world. We should start to see some of this Sexcel semen in Australia in 2018! ABS also took us to De Novo Genetics, a farm that is part of ABS and is a cutting edge nucleus breeding herd and also comprises of a donor herd.

We had the opportunity to check out the World Dairy Expo, where Tim King and I met with the principle of one of the largest herd testing companies in the States, AgSource Cooperation, where we enjoyed sharing notes on our businesses. Most farms in the States understand the value of herd testing with most testing on a monthly basis.

Overall the trip was a great insight into ABS and how they go about their business, but also great to get a look into the American dairy industry – an industry 10 times the size of the Australian dairy industry! I think we should be excited by the work that is being done by all semen companies as they compete to provide us with the next best products!

I hope the season is treating you all well.

Regards,

Ross Anderson, Deputy Chairman.



Pictured above is Deputy Chairman Ross Anderson, Tim King and Nick Brasher on their recent trip to the United States.

Meet Hico Colac's Sampling Officer Alison Ross

After growing up in Creswick and from a non farming background Alison completed a Advanced Diploma in Agriculture at Longorong College in 2016.

Alison's love for cattle made the job at Hico as a Sampling Officer a easy choice when she was appointed early this year. Alison now lives in Birregurra with her partner Courtney, who is a truck driver.

Alison now works out of the Hico Colac office as a Sampling Officer.

Most days Alison heads in a different direction to the previous day with Hico Herd Test farms located from Warrnambool to Ballarat to Winchelsea. Alison finds her job very satisfying, with every day's goal to make herd testing simpler and easier than in the past. **"My aim is to take the hassle out of Herd Testing for the farmer."** Alison comments

Alison works closely with Terry Kavanagh to ensure the Hico Herd Test clients receive simpler and more accurate Herd Test results thru the use of Hico's Electronic Milk Meters (EMM's).

For more information on Herd Testing or to discuss how a Hico Sampling Officer can help with your next Herd Test contact your local Hico Representative.



Dairyfarming and herd testing is in the Waltham blood...

Fourth generation dairy farmer Adam Waltham, along with his parents George and Joy milk 170 cows at Glengarry in West Gippsland.

The Waltham's began herd testing in the 1960's and have continued to do so ever since. Testing 10 times per year has allowed them to make accurate culling decisions on low production and high somatic cell count (SCC) cows. These decisions have shown with the Waltham's being in the Top 100 SCC herds for last 2 years in a row.

"We dry off the High SCC cows early to give them a longer break and we have found this has worked well for us." Adam comments.

The Autumn calving operation grows all of their own silage and feeds just over 1 tonne of grain per cow in the dairy. The production per Hectare has improved in the last 10 years and this has been shown by making accurate decisions with our herd test results. "We don't breed from our low production cows and we feel this helps us get as profitable herd as possible." Adam believes.

For the last two years the Waltham's have used EMM's for herd testing. They have made herd testing much easier, but also better for the shed set up as they have cup removers. The Waltham's will continue to use EMM's as it also requires one less staff member in the dairy for herd test night.



Adam & George Waltham with Maffra Sampling Officer Holly Briede.

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Please email us at info@hico.com.au**

Care and maintenance of your semen tank

Now we are into the Spring joining season, it is a good time to remind you of the correct care and maintenance of your semen tank. Semen tanks are designed to have a vacuum created between the inner and outer walls of the tank. It is this vacuum that allows the tanks to retain Liquid Nitrogen Gas for long periods of time. Liquid Nitrogen Gas (LN2) is a dangerous product as it is colourless, odourless, and tasteless and boils at -160 degrees. It is critical you use your tank in a well ventilated area and use the correct protective safety wear to avoid freezing injuries or asphyxiation. If a freezing injury does occur, it should be treated the same as a burn.

It is recommended that you store your tank in an area away from heavy traffic and off the ground, either on a piece of wood or carpet to help prolong the life of your tank. The average tank lifespan is 7 - 10 years, so if your tank is older it is critical to keep a closer eye on it. It is best to store your tank away from animal urine or faeces as the acids within these can contribute to the tank corroding. Check your LN2 level weekly and more often during peak usage periods, using a dip stick to record the level. Keep your eye out for abnormal tank activity including frosting or sweating. If you notice frosting around the outer neck area of your tank or anywhere on the outer shell, please take your tank to your nearest Hico branch as this is a sign of a vacuum leak and can lead to a loss of stock in your tank. **For new tank enquires or to purchase a dipstick please contact your local Hico branch.**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS:

December 12th
DataGene Official Proof Release Date.

December 25th
Happy Christmas from all the Hico Staff to all our hard working farmers.



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Contact Hico today:

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