



Welcome to the first newsletter of 2019. As chairman of the Hico board I would like to take the opportunity wish you all a successful year, hopefully some of you have had the chance to take it a little easier through the festive season and spend some quality time with those close to you. Across our service regions we had a real variety of season's pre Christmas, and apart from East Gippsland and the Macalister Irrigation District, I am hearing reports of record fodder harvests. With autumn approaching fast we are hoping that the break comes earlier and we get some consistent weather which benefits all our shareholders and customers. I believe a good autumn in all of our regions will be well received and will be necessary to alleviate some of the extra pressure that high feed costs are putting on businesses.



At board level I am excited by the board that we currently have. New director Craig Bennett from Western Victoria has now had a few months to settle into his role and we look forward to what he has to bring to the table. We are continually working to make sure that Hico has a strong future and that it is providing the level of service that shareholders and customers are satisfied with.

Our General Manager Michael Lee and his team are working hard and have been strengthened with the addition of Daniel Espinosa to the role of Farm Services Manager who I am sure he will be seeking to get across the business and hit the ground running. Daniel is responsible for the Herd Testing and Livestock Services departments.

Again I wish all shareholders and customers a prosperous 2019 and I make myself available to discuss future board opportunities with shareholders. I can be contacted on 0421 030 475.

Regards,

Ross Anderson

Liquid Nitrogen (LN2) Run

One of the many services Hico offers is called the "Liquid Nitrogen Run". Every 8 weeks we visit farms that have a semen tank on farm and top it up with nitrogen. One run takes two weeks and is done with the LN2 truck which is rotated between the Maffra Branch for two weeks, there is a spare week spare to get the truck from Maffra to Korumburra and then the run at Korumburra starts and also goes for two weeks. Each LN2 run is co ordinated via a LN2 Refill Calendar which is updated as farms begin and conclude AI.

The amount of farms Hico services varies a lot throughout the year, during peak season we service close to 200 farms and drop as low as 50 farms in off peak time.

Before the run starts at each branch, every customer recorded in the system as being on the run has a letter sent to them informing them of the upcoming LN2 run and they are asked to call the Hico office if they do not require liquid nitrogen for whatever reason, this is the responsibility of the customer. If the Hico LN2 operator checks the level of the AI tank and deems the tank requires a top up to ensure the safety of the semen in the tank then the tank gets topped up, this is the responsibility of Hico. If you have an AI tank on farm please make the appropriate people aware of what a Liquid Nitrogen Run is and to keep an eye out for the notification letter in the mail, if we do not hear from you your tank will be topped up.

Hico 2018 Insemination Season.

Written by Cody Gair, SWG Farm Services Supervisor

Recently Hico carried out a survey to check up the view our customers have about our Artificial Insemination (AI) service. South West Gippsland (SWG) received back over 100 responses which was phenomenal and provided the ability for us to understand areas we need to improve.



The feedback was very positive. We asked farmers to rate us from 1 poor to 5 excellent on a number of areas. The overall average we were given by our customers on this survey was 4.7, which makes us feel very pleased that we are on the right track. But we could also identify a few the areas that need improving.

After reviewing the information from the survey, we are working on improving our communication with the farmers. Good communication is key for both, the farm business and our business. This will lead to better time management and improved organisation and efficiency, so we both can reach our objectives. The better we communicate with our farmers in planning ahead of the mating season, the better the mating outcomes can be.

All our farmers are valued customers and we are looking forward to improving our services constantly, so that we add real value to our customers business.

Farewell Dennis Butler.

Dennis Butler has retired after 27 years as an A.I. Technician at Maffra. Dennis was farewelled from Hico in December 2018. Since moving to Indonesia to live, Dennis has been coming back to Maffra for the A.I. spring seasons. He was presented with a gift by Michael Lee and later sent us a thank you note as he was quite emotional at the time of his farewell.

He wanted to thank Stewart McRae, Sales Manager Ron Cook and Board Chairman Robert Noble as well as past and present staff for giving him a home and a career. Until he came to Maffra he had not found work that he really enjoyed. The Herd Improvement allowed him to be innovative making him more proficient with his A.I. work. He said that staff at the Herd Improvement were and still are a "special breed" as when anyone needed help, someone was always ready to step up and help out.

Dennis had many and varied jobs prior to working Maffra Herd Improvement, Gippsland Herd Improvement and then Herd Improvement Co-operative Australia. Although he said that he particularly enjoyed his time working at Maffra Herd Improvement, he would not have stayed 27 years at the Herd Improvement if he had not been happy working there.

He wished to thank the farmers of the Macalister Irrigation District who he had done AI for and felt lucky to have worked for them as he had such a great life in the area.

When June comes in 2019 he knows that he will be aching to come back to Maffra, but also knows that his body can't do the work anymore.

He wished to thank everyone as he will miss them.

Meet Hico Director Craig Bennett.

Craig joined the Hico Board in October 2018. Craig and wife Sophie purchased their dairy farm located at Simpson in 2007. Craig milks 320 Holstein cows that are registered under the Dellyn stud prefix.

Craig has an Advanced Diploma in Farm Business Management and has gained experience as leader of the local Cooriemungle Discussion Group as well as being on a milk processors farm advisory committee. Craig was an early adopter of herd testing believing it an invaluable asset in improving your herd performance and farm profitability.



Congratulations to both Cain Boyd (herd test courier driver) & Chris Wakefield (herd tester) for 10yrs service at Hico.



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Meet Daniel Espinosa – Farm Services Manager

Daniel is originally from Colombia and has a strong livestock background, specifically dairy and studied Vet Science in Colombia. After finishing his degree he worked in various sales roles across the dairy industry before joining a nutritional products business in his first management role. Daniel then had the opportunity to move to Australia to take on a PhD in research at La Trobe University. After completing his PhD he joined Reid Stockfeeds where he managed ration formulations and nutritional advice.



Phil Morter retires.

Phil Morter retired at the end of the Spring joining period in South West Gippsland after working as an A.I. Technician at the Herd Improvement for more than 10 years. A farewell for Phil is being planned for early in the year so we can thank him for all his efforts over that time.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 25th 2019

WestVic Dairy - Employer of Choice workshops
Cobden 10.30am and Warnambool 6.30pm

February 26th and 27th 2019

Gipps Dairy - Taking your business to the next level - Ellinbank

March 13th 2019

Calf Rearing and Dairy Hygiene presented by Daviesway and Dasco - Bair's Otogo Hotel, Leongatha 7pm - Food and refreshments provided

March 17th and 18th 2019

Relay for Life - Hico Korumburra will attend in support of Tim King.

March 19th and 20th 2019

Herd 19 Conference - Bendigo

April 8th 2019

DataGene proof release



**HERD IMPROVEMENT
CO-OPERATIVE AUSTRALIA LTD**

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