



Welcome to the October 2019 Newsletter.

I hope this message finds all customers and shareholders alike enjoying their spring. We have experienced a variety of conditions in all of our service regions. From all reports the Western Districts and South and West Gippsland have had a good amount of rain post winter while Maffra and East Gippsland still find themselves considerably drier than we would like at this stage. The tough year last year is still hanging over some of our farmers and we are hoping that Mother Nature will play her part and provide some more favourable conditions and give our farmers the opportunity to grow as much home grown feed as possible.



With a return to some good milk prices we are optimistic for better returns for our farmers and ask that you will continue to support our co op, for those of you joining for spring calving I hope that you have had an opportunity to purchase semen through Hico. I encourage all of you that don't herd test, to consider getting in touch with our team to have a chat about the value in capturing individual cow data, it is more than just cell count, fat and protein.

Our 11th Annual General Meeting was held in late September in South Gippsland at Djinta Djinta winery. It was good to see a few shareholders in attendance but I would again like to encourage more of you to consider attending in the future. At the meeting John Ryan was elected to the Board taking over the position formerly held by Stewart McRae. John had previously been an independent director on the Board since April 2018 following a 6 month period as a trainee director. Stewart McRae has moved to independent director position to allow John to take on this 3 year term. I welcome shareholders who may be interested in attending Board meetings in a trainee director role to make contact with me on 0421 030 475.

Regards,

Ross Anderson

## STAFF MILESTONES. - Sue Gows 30 Years

23rd of October marks a 30 year anniversary for Sue Gow as an employee of South Gippsland Herd Improvement, Gippsland Herd Improvement and Hico.

After a background in computer programming for companies in the South Eastern suburbs my family moved to Kongwak in 1989. Computer programming was still in its infancy then and positions were scarce in the country so I successfully applied for the position of Data Processor at SGHI. Prior to the 1st merger when SGHI became GHI and the company grew substantially I was Office Manager/Data Processor. As the mergers and company acquisitions continued I have retained my role as Data Processor.

During these 30 years my primary role has entailed data entry for all aspects of herd recording – creating animals, calvings, dry offs, terminations, health and calving events, preg testing results and user lists. In the early days all information supplied to me was either verbally via the phone or as hard copy mailed or faxed to the office. With the advances in technology farmers now have access to on farm programs, Smartphones and interaction with our database via the web where data is transferred electronically. I use this data together with data from our laboratory to process herd test results which provide my farmers with the information they need to enable them to make informed management decisions. This information is available in a number of formats – hard copy reports, pdf reports, SMS HCC data and files for on farm programs.

I liaise with breed societies, farm consultants, vets and bull companies and provide data for analysis to these organisations on behalf of my farmers. I work with other DPC's in staff training and transferring of herds and individual animals between centres and am a member of DataGene's Data Governance committee.

In January 2012 I was presented with a Meritorious Service Award from NHIA – in appreciation and recognition of outstanding service to the Australian Herd Improvement Industry. I was very honoured to receive such a prestigious award.

My hobby is social line-dancing which has given me the opportunity to travel extensively nationally and internationally.

The team at Hico would like to congratulate Sue on reaching this milestone! We would like to show our appreciation for her continued support and dedication to Hico as well as the impact and contributions that she has had on the Australian Dairy Industry.



# YDN Heat Detection Night Review

19th September saw Hico present at the Young Dairy Network West Heat Detection Night, with over 60 people in attendance. It is estimated that every missed heat will cost a dairy farmer \$200, therefore it is critically important to ensure that your cows have the best possibility of cycling when you start your mating start date enabling for a tight joining period. Below are some opportunities for you to improve your reproductive performance on farm.

**1. PRE MATING HEAT DETECTION** – Detecting heat prior to MSD allows cycling of animals to be observed, monitored and recorded to ensure that all animals are cycling before MSD and if not early intervention can be made. Industry recommendation is given to start detecting heats 30 days prior to MSD.

**Data** – Collection of data on calving dates and pre mating heats allows monitoring of animals for more informed dates of cycling for your herd.

**Time** – Animals are more likely to show signs of heat late at night and in the early hours of the morning, this is also correlated with the coolest times of the day.

**Place** – Signs of heat are more likely to be shown in their most natural environment, therefore deeming paddock heat detection the best option for optimal results. This is in comparison to times of being milked, yarded and on surfaces such as concrete where cows are less likely to present signs of heat.

**Signs of heat** – Your cardinal sign of heat is standing to be mounted, which is the only sign shown at ovulation.

**2. POTENTIAL FACTORS AFFECTING ANOESTRUS ANIMALS (True non Cyclers)**  
**Calving dates** – Cows that are calved after 6 weeks of the calving period will have a decreased likelihood of resuming cycling by the next mating start date. This is due to a decreased interval between calving and MSD to allow that animal to recycle.

**Young animals or poorly reared heifers** – Young animals have an increased interval until their first heat, this is further amplified if the animal is not nutritionally ready to cycle. It is said that if no intervention is conducted submission rates can decrease by 10%.

**Body Condition Score** - Targets are set for a cows body condition score at calving to be between 4.5 and 5.5 with no more than 15% of your cows sitting either side of this.

**Animal Health** – Abnormal calving's such as difficult calving's and twins all increasing the return to cycle time. Other health factors such as uterine infections and cystic animals have similar effects.

**Breed** - Increased susceptibility is seen in Holstein breeds compared with that of Jersey and crossbred animals.

### 3. NUTRITION

Transition cow management should not only be done 3-4 weeks prior to calving but also 3-4 weeks post calving. Transition cow management post calving minimises the negative energy balance.

### 4. DATA IS KEY

#### Herd testing

- i. Fat : Protein ratio in milk - This should be analysed both on the individual and herd level to provide potential indications of metabolic issues.
- ii. Lactation curve - Understanding the peak and persistence of the lactation curve

#### Fertility Focus report

This report allows you to compare year on year reproductive performance of your herd confidently with benchmarks set for industry averages alongside ranking to allow you to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

### 5. OPTIMAL TIME FOR AI SUCCESS

Standing heat occurs for 6-12hrs. The interval from standing heat to ovulation is seen to be 24-32hrs, and the ovum that is released has a fertilise life of 8-12 hrs. Therefore the ideal time for AI is said to be 12-16hrs after the onset of standing heat.

### 6. HEAT SYNCHRONISATION

Synchronisation of your animals has numerous benefits, including but not limited to: increased efficiency of heat detection, reduced calving interval variation, decreases of culling due to reproductive issues, concentration of labour, and improvements in overall reproductive performance. For more information on how we can implement this into your herd contact your local Hico sales rep.

#### For additional resources see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brTRLjuVKGg>  
<https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/heatdetection>  
<https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/-/media/dairyaustralia/documents/farm/animal-care/fertility/heat-detection/heat-detection-from-the-incalf-book.pdf>

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**Have you got feedback?  
Please email us at [info@hico.com.au](mailto:info@hico.com.au)**

## Another Hico Milestone – Robert Harrison 45 Years

In 1974 Robert started working for South Gippsland Artificial Breeders. During his 45 years of service Roberts's main role has consisted of AI technician whilst also taking up liquid nitrogen deliveries.

In this time it has been estimated that Robert has conducted 186,403 inseminations. We would like to congratulate him on his tremendous efforts and continued commitment and contributions to Hico.



## Dairy Expo Competition Winner

We would like to congratulate Kim Kirkus from Tarwin Lower on winning the Hico \$250 voucher from our competition run at the Saputo Dairy Expo this year.

**All customers now have the opportunity to allow for electronic receipt of invoices through emails.**

**If you wish to make these changes to your account please email [accounts@hico.com.au](mailto:accounts@hico.com.au)**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Farm Business Analysis - 3 Days

29 Oct, 11 Nov, 5 Dec. 10am-2:30pm all days  
Location: Yarram Country Club  
RSVP 5624 3900 [info@gippsdairy.com.au](mailto:info@gippsdairy.com.au)

### Farm Business Fundamentals – 2 day course

13th & 20th November  
Facilitated by Matt Harms  
RSVP to Libby on 0407 595 187 or [libby@gippsdairy.com.au](mailto:libby@gippsdairy.com.au)

### YDN West - Barefoot Bowls and BBQ

21st November  
Warragul Bowling Club, 7pm  
RSVP to Kathryn 5624 3900 or [katherine@gippsdairy.com.au](mailto:katherine@gippsdairy.com.au)

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:

### Gippsland Community Leadership Program Scholarships

There are currently two dairy Scholarships available  
Applications close November 8th.  
Visit [www.gclp.asn.au](http://www.gclp.asn.au) for more details



HERD IMPROVEMENT  
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