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*TIA is a joint venture of the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government*

## NEWS FROM THE TASMANIAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

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# Media Release

## Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tuesday, 1 December 2015

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### Coping with low summer rainfall

Coping with low summer rainfall will be one of the many topics covered at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture's (TIA) Dairy Centre Open Day tomorrow (**Wednesday, 2 December**).

TIA Dairy Development and Extension Team Leader Lesley Irvine said the day would provide dairy farmers and industry consultants with tips, tools and technologies to assist with decision-making processes to better manage climate variability and minimise the impact, now and in the future.

"There will be information on new technologies to forecast pasture growth and variable rate irrigation technology that have been developed through research being undertaken at TIA," Ms Irvine said.

"We will also be providing practical tips on irrigation management in a dry summer and how to get the best from your irrigation pump and sprinklers."

Guest speakers on the day include Dr Joseph Foley and Dr Alison McCarthy from the National Centre for Engineering in Agriculture who will talk about the future of autonomous control of irrigators and integrating new irrigation scheduling and delivery technologies into good irrigation practice.

TIA is using sensors and autonomous technology to develop a system that not only tells you when to irrigate your pasture, but then goes ahead and does it for you.

Project leader Dr James Hills will talk about the project that aims to automatically irrigate pasture by applying variable volumes of water to the same paddock, which could save farmers time, water and money.

The development of this autonomous system is part of a bigger three year project that is looking at the use of irrigation water in pastures by collecting data on water use, energy use and pasture production from five sites across Tasmania.

Field walks across the TIA Dairy Research Facility will include an overview of a new research project utilising infrared heaters to simulate the high temperatures associated with heat waves.

The trial is part of a project being led by PhD candidate Adam Langworthy to find ways for pasture species to beat the heat over the hot Australian summer.

TIA Dairy Research Facility manager Tom Snare will also lead a walk across the property to provide an overview of management strategies used at the farm.

**The Open Day will be held at the TIA Dairy Research Facility, 124 Nunns Rd, Elliott, from 10.30am – 4pm, Wednesday 2 December 2015. More details [online](#).**

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