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NEWS FROM THE TASMANIAN INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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\$7.6m to drive Tasmanian dairy farm profitability

A \$7.6 million partnership between the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) and Dairy Australia will deliver targeted dairy productivity research and extension services, helping to drive Tasmanian dairy farm profitability and sustainability.

TIA Director Professor Holger Meinke said the new five-year agreement with Dairy Australia signifies a long-term funding commitment for dairy-specific research, development and extension (RD&E) through the TIA Dairy Centre.

“Dairy is Tasmania’s biggest agricultural industry and is worth more than \$1 billion per year post farm gate to the Tasmanian economy,” Professor Meinke said.

“The industry has grown by 34 per cent over the past decade and research and innovation are crucial if we are to see the sector to continue to grow profitably and sustainably.

“Dairy Australia and TIA, through the joint venture between the Tasmanian Government and University of Tasmania, have a long and successful history of shared investment in RD&E over several decades and remain committed to promoting economic and environmentally sustainable growth in the sector.”

Dairy Australia Managing Director Ian Halliday said the funding agreement will see the TIA Dairy Centre focus on areas that will deliver the greatest overall benefits for the Tasmanian dairy industry within the national dairy strategic plan *Dairy Moving Forward*.

“This agreement utilises the expertise of the TIA Dairy Centre in addressing high-level objectives for improved feedbase performance in Tasmania’s pasture-based dairy systems,” he said.

“At the core of this new program are farmers, who will directly contribute to research direction and the building skills and knowledge across the state.”

TIA Dairy Centre Leader, Dr Richard Rawnsley, said the first project to begin within this funding agreement was the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project called Dairy on PAR.

“A key part of the new project Dairy on PAR is that it integrates the RD&E of the Dairy Centre for the first time in a major project,” Dr Rawnsley said.

“Dairy on PAR has the objectives to improve feedbase performance in pasture-based dairy systems by increasing home-grown feed production and consumption, increasing milk

response to concentrate feeding and growing industry skills, knowledge and confidence in business analysis and understanding of risk.

“A Dairy on PAR group has been formed consisting of leading Tasmanian dairy farmers, a consultant, agronomist, milk supply officer and TIA research and extension staff.

“The group will focus on the question of how to continue to increase home-grown forage consumption, with a target to increase the number of Tasmanian dairy farmers achieving home-grown forage consumption target of 1 tonne DM/ha/100 mm water received.

“The Dairy on PAR group will also prioritise and design on-farm research activities that will contribute towards this target.”

The Dairy on PAR project incorporates a range of other activities including:

- Dairy cow nutrition research;
- Robotic milking systems focus farm and discussion group;
- Dairy benchmarking and Dairy Business of the Year Awards;
- Business groups
- On-farm discussion groups.

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

Dairy Australia is the national services body for the Australian dairy industry. The company acts as the collective investment arm of the industry, investing in essential research, development, extension and industry services with the goal of making dairy farms more profitable.

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