



Newsletter Grab from Grains2Milk

For immediate release: **December 2008**

(280 words)

Head: Free e-mail warning when cows risk heat stress

Dairy farmers can now receive a free e-mail alert service warning them of when their cows are at risk of heat stress.

A first for the dairy industry, the email alert and a district weather forecasting tool are accessible through the *Cool Cows* website, a Dairy Australia initiative to help dairy farmers deal with heat stress in their herds.

Farmers who subscribe to the alert service will automatically receive an email when the forecasted weather conditions for their area put their herds at risk of high to severe heat stress.

Dairy Australia's Grains2Milk program leader Dr Steve Little said the two major factors that contribute to a cow's 'heat load' are temperature and humidity.

The Temperature Humidity Index (THI) is a simple indicator of the risk of heat stress.

The alert will prompt dairy farmers to take action in the week ahead to keep their cows cool and reduce the effects of heat stress which include a drop in milk production, reduced herd fertility and lower milk protein and fat tests. Heat stress can also trigger live weight losses and animal health problems.

"Farmers can also use the new Weather Forecaster tool on the *Cool Cows* website to see THI, temperature and humidity levels forecast for the coming week and recorded over the past week," Dr Little said.

"The heat load information is specific to sites in all dairy regions in Australia. It helps farmers prepare for any potential 'melt down' events," said Dr Little.

The email alert and weather forecasting tool are two examples of the wealth of information and interactive resources available on the *Cool Cows* website.

Cool Cows resources have been developed with funding from Dairy Australia and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.



For more information visit www.coolcows.com.au or www.dairyaustralia.com.au.

ENDS

Image: Web screen image – home page. Click on the following link to receive a high res image by automatic email:

grains2milk_emailalert4heatstress@monkscom.com.au

Caption: Dairy farmers can register on the *Cool Cows* website to receive email alerts when there area's weather forecast puts the herd at risk of heat stress.

About Grains2Milk (background information for media)

The Grains2milk program provides dairy farmers with the training, resources and support they need to make better decisions about using grains and concentrates in their businesses. The program is funded by dairy farmers through Dairy Australia.

Media contact: This media release has been issued by Monks Communication on behalf of Grains2Milk.

Contact Monks Communication for inquiries about photos and interviews or to have your contact details removed or updated on our distribution list:

Lee-Ann Monks ph (07) 5450 0946 mob 0419 349 244 email: mediareleases@monkscom.com.au

Note: we are in a poor reception area for mobile phones. Try the landline first.