



# Cool Cows Newsletter Grab

For immediate release: 21 October 2010

Two versions:

[Short version – 330 words](#)

[Long version – 550 words](#)

## Head: Beat the heat (short version 330 words)

Alternative headline: Go on alert for heat stress

With the weather warming up, dairy farmers are being urged to put their farm's heat stress action plan into effect.

Dairy Australia's Cool Cows program leader, Dr Steve Little, said cows needed time to adjust to hot weather. They can be seriously affected by hot spells early in the season.

“Last year we had a warm, humid spell in early November that caused significant falls in milk production and herd fertility in South Australia and Victoria,” Dr Little said.

The Cool Cows *Weather Forecaster* can help you beat the heat this summer. This web-based tool provides up to date ‘heat load’ information specific to each dairy region over the months when heat stress risk occurs.

In hot weather, cow comfort is affected by a combination of temperature, humidity and the length and severity of conditions.

The Weather Forecaster expresses Bureau of Meteorology forecasts in cow comfort terms, using the Temperature Humidity Index (THI).

“You can use the Weather Forecaster to keep an eye on how your cows are coping and to see when days of heat stress risk are forecast for your area,” he said.

“Cool Cows also offers a free alert service that will send you an email whenever the weather forecast for your area indicates cows will be subject to high or extreme heat stress in the next few days.”

For little or no cost, you can reduce the impact of heat stress on your herd by:

- providing access to shade and cool drinking water at all times, even if this means changing the paddock rotation;
- sprinkling cows with water in the dairy yard before afternoon milking (and before morning milking if needed);
- wetting concrete in dairy yard for an hour before cows arrive;
- changing milking times so cows are not walking to the dairy in the afternoon heat; and
- altering mating management and nutrition.

For more information visit [www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au) or [www.coolcows.com.au](http://www.coolcows.com.au) or contact Steve Little 0400 004 841 email [slittle@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:slittle@dairyaustralia.com.au).

Grains2Milk is one of many examples of the dairy services levy at work. For more information on this project and other levy investments visit the Dairy Australia website [www.dairyaustralia.com](http://www.dairyaustralia.com)

## ENDS



**Caption:** The Cool Cows Weather Forecaster tool alerts you to when to activate heat stress management practices, such as running sprinklers in the dairy yard.

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:

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## Long version (550 words)

### Head: Beat the heat (550 words)

Alternative headline: Go on alert for heat stress

With the weather warming up, it's time for dairy farmers to go on alert and prepare for managing heat stress in their herds.

The Cool Cows *Weather Forecaster* is a great tool to help you beat the heat this summer.

This web-based tool provides up to date 'heat load' information specific to each dairy region.

Dairy Australia's Cool Cows program leader, Dr Steve Little, said the Weather Forecaster tool is active again and would continue this season until the end of March 2011.

Following its popularity in the past two summers, the Weather Forecaster tool has been further expanded, this summer providing weather data for 37 locations, covering all dairy regions.

"Cows feel hot before we do. They start to be affected once the temperature rises above 25 degrees Celcius. Feed intake drops, then milk production falls and that's when it affects your hip pocket," Dr Little said.

However, when it comes to hot weather and cow comfort, daily temperatures only tell part of the story. Humidity, along with the length and severity of weather conditions are important factors which determine heat load.

The Weather Forecaster expresses Bureau of Meteorology forecasts in cow comfort terms, using the Temperature Humidity Index (THI).

"You can use the Weather Forecaster to keep an eye on how your cows are coping and to see when days of heat stress risk are forecast for your area," he said.

“Cool Cows also offers a free alert service that will send you an email whenever the weather forecast for your area indicates cows will be subject to high or extreme heat stress in the next few days.”

With warmer weather approaching, it's time to put your heat stress management plan into action. For little or no cost, you can reduce the impact of heat stress on your herd by:

- providing access to shade and cool drinking water at all times, even if this means changing the paddock rotation;
- sprinkling cows with water in the dairy yard before afternoon milking (and before morning milking if needed);
- wetting concrete in dairy yard for an hour before cows arrive;
- changing milking times so cows are not walking to the dairy in the afternoon heat; and.
- altering mating management and nutrition.

“Every dairy yard in Australia should be fitted with sprinklers to provide cows with evaporative cooling. It can be set up very cheaply. As well as keeping your cows cool, it will keep the flies away,” Dr Little said.

“In very hot weather it may be hardly worth sending cows down the paddock. Instead consider feeding high quality forage or a partial mixed ration on a loafing paddock or feed pad close to the dairy with access to shade and sprinklers. Give the cows the best paddocks for grazing overnight when it's cooler.”

Dr Little warned dairy farmers not to leave it too late to put their farm's heat stress action plan into effect. Hot spells can occur as early as November.

“Last year we had a hot spell in early November that caused significant falls in milk production and herd fertility in South Australia and Victoria,” Dr Little said.

“Cow can be seriously affected by these hot spells early in the season. Like us, cows need time to adjust to hot weather.”

*For more information visit [www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au) or [www.coolcows.com.au](http://www.coolcows.com.au) contact Steve Little 0400 004 841 email [slittle@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:slittle@dairyaustralia.com.au) .*

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**ENDS**

**Photo:** use same photo and caption as for short version

## 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.