



Cool Cows Newsletter Grab

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Head: Plan before you plant (# 360 words)

In the peak of summer, many dairy farmers wish they had more trees in paddocks to provide shade and reduce heat stress risk to their herds. But it's never too late.

Dairy Australia's Cool Cows program leader, Dr Steve Little, said trees in paddocks and along laneways can cut radiant heat in half, or more.

"Shade is the most effective way to reduce radiant heat load, and trees are the cheapest form of shade. They have the added bonus of enhancing biodiversity and absorbing carbon," Dr Little said.

Trees involve considerable labour to plant, take several years to grow, and are relatively permanent so it's worth a little planning to get it right from the start.

The three key things to consider in the planning phase are: a staggered planting, farm layout and species selection.

A staggered approach, such as planting about 20% of the farm each year over five years, will make the project less daunting and allow you to learn from experience.

"In the early years, you can juggle the paddock rotations in hot weather, so that the cows spend the hottest days in shady paddocks," Dr Little said.

Next, before planting commences, assess the farm layout, particularly the direction of paddocks.

"Paddocks that run north to south lengthwise are ideal. Trees planted on the long sides will allow cows to access shade all day; simply by spending the morning in the eastern side of the paddock and moving to the western side in the afternoon."

Be careful if paddocks run east-west lengthwise. If tall, dense trees are planted on the north and south fence-lines, they may block too much sun in the winter creating problems with pugging and pasture growth.

When selecting which species to plant, look at what thrives naturally in your local area. If planting a single row of trees, consider a combination of species (trees and lower shrubs) to produce an upper and lower storey, which will have the added benefit of providing shelter from wind and rain.

Trees in paddocks and along laneways is just one of several cooling infrastructure options available for dairy farms. To find out more, visit www.coolcows.com.au.

For more information contact Steve Little 0400 004 841 email 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
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Caption: Planting trees for shade is an effective and cheap way to keep cows cool in the hot months.

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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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.