



# A TOOL TO SELECT PROFITABLE PASTURE VARIETIES

## HELPING YOU SELECT THE BEST PERENNIAL RYEGRASS CULTIVARS FOR YOUR DAIRY FARM

### Better pastures, better profitability

Australian dairy farmers invest more than \$100 million renovating pastures each year. Perennial ryegrass accounts for almost 80 per cent of this investment. Until recently, there has been no easy way of assessing the agronomic performance or potential economic benefit of different cultivars for use in dairy production.

The Forage Value Index (FVI) is a recently developed tool that helps Australian dairy farmers and their advisors to make more informed decisions when selecting perennial ryegrass cultivars. It provides an accurate, reliable and independent assessment of the potential economic value of perennial ryegrass cultivars in different dairy regions of southeast Australia. The selection of better performing cultivars will help to increase pasture productivity at key times of the year and ultimately, improve farm profitability.

### Green equals success

The FVI is calculated by multiplying the Performance Value of each cultivar (i.e. total kilograms dry matter produced per hectare per season) by its Economic Value (i.e. the estimated value of this extra production per season).

### Forage Value Index = Performance Value x Economic Value

Performance Values (PV) are determined by industry assessed trial data (see below). Economic Values (EV) are determined by economic analysis of 'case study' farms in four different dairying regions in southeast Australia and the seasonal value of the pasture grown. The PV is expressed as a percentage change relative to the long established 'Victorian' perennial ryegrass cultivar.

The FVI for each cultivar is expressed as a colour, whereby those cultivars with the same colour are not significantly different to each other. The green colour indicates those cultivars that have performed the best in each region and have the most potential to contribute to operating profit.

### Accessing the information

The FVI information allows users to rank cultivars according to their region and user nominated attributes (e.g. seasonal yields, ploidy, heading date, endophyte). The number of trials where the data for each cultivar has been evaluated is also included to provide some idea of the robustness of the data for each variety. The FVI can be accessed on the Dairy Australia website.

### Independent local data

FVI ratings are calculated annually using independent industry variety trial data. To be included in the FVI database, each cultivar must have data from at least three three-year trials that have been conducted using strict industry protocols. Additional trial data, regional performance data, new cultivars, new traits and other pasture and forage species will be added over time. Only cultivars listed in the Australian Seed Federation Pasture Seed Database ([asf.asn.au/seeds/pasture-seed-database](http://asf.asn.au/seeds/pasture-seed-database)) and confirmed as a 'variety' are used in the FVI.

### An industry initiative

The FVI was developed as a partnership between several industry associations and government bodies as part of a wider strategy to increase the productivity and profitability of Australian dairy farms. They include Dairy Australia, Agriculture Victoria, DairyNZ, the Australian Seed Federation and Meat and Livestock Australia.

To find out more information visit [dairyaustralia.com.au/FVI](http://dairyaustralia.com.au/FVI)