

DairyBase Q&As

What is DairyBase?

DairyBase is a new web-based tool developed by Dairy Australia which aims to:

- › Provide dairy farmers with a tool to enable them to measure their annual business performance and compare their business – against others and themselves over time.
- › Provide dairy farmers, service providers and industry with a national database of Dairy Farm Monitor project (DFMP) data and other datasets from other Dairy Australia funded activities consultants and other service providers.
- › Standardise terminology used in physical and financial reporting within the dairy industry and to ensure consistency in calculations and terminology to describe Farm Business Performance.

DairyBase will allow farmers and their advisors to have a better understanding of their business so they can identify:

- › Opportunities to improve their business
- › The strengths and weaknesses of the business
- › What decisions can be made to reach goals and targets

DairyBase is NOT a cash flow tool - it is a tool that provides an annual assessment of farm performance based on real data entered by farmers and or their advisors.

Why use DairyBase?

DairyBase is a free web-based tool which will equip dairy farmers to better understand the physical performance of their farm – Cows, Feed, Labour and link it to the financial performance – Cash, Profit, Wealth. DairyBase will provide the industry with access to a national database of accurate physical and financial information.

Dairy farmers will be able to measure their business performance over time providing the evidence and measures needed for budgeting and planning

Dairy farmers will be able to compare themselves against the Dairy Farm Monitor Project (DFMP) industry data

DFMP data will be able to be filtered based on a range of factors, such as farm size, region, feed input level and other farm system drivers allowing a 'like for like' comparison.



When will DairyBase be available?

DairyBase will 'go live' on 25 May 2015.

How much does DairyBase cost to use?

DairyBase is a free tool provided by Dairy Australia for dairy farmers and advisors.

How do I access DairyBase?

Dairy Australia has created a website dairybase.com.au which will include:

- › The DairyBase Login
- › DairyBase User Guides
- › Contact details for further support if needed
- › Farm Business Management information and resources
- › News and snapshot data derived from DairyBase analysis and research.

What will I see when I first log in?

When you first log in to DairyBase you will be asked for information that will establish you as a user and provide the information needed to allow you to securely access DairyBase. This is only required on the first occasion.

A 'how to get on to DairyBase' guide will be provided at dairybase.com.au

What kind of device and web browser can I access DairyBase from?

DairyBase is a web based tool that you can access from your computer, laptop or tablet. DairyBase works well on Google Chrome for Windows computers and Safari on Apple computers. Alternatively, DairyBase will work on the latest Internet Explorer Browser version (IE 11) and the latest Firefox version (35.0.0).



How easy is DairyBase to use?

DairyBase is straightforward for people with a reasonable level of computer skills who are used to working with on-line tools. It provides a user friendly web-based interface for data entry, data editing and report generation. An Excel data entry spreadsheet is under development and will also be available.

DairyBase includes two key sections:

- › Physical data: Land, Livestock, Milk Production, Feed, Fertiliser, Water, Labour
- › Financial data: Income, Variable Costs, Overhead Costs, Finance and Capital Costs, Assets and Liabilities

I'm worried about privacy around my personal information, can you reassure me it's safe?

Yes, user privacy and data security has been a primary objective of the DairyBase development and is assured. The following points are relevant to the question of privacy and security.

- › No private user data will be made available through the DairyBase website – all benchmarks will be based on Dairy Farm Monitor data
- › All data entry, retrieval and reporting will be done behind a secure login
- › There is no private user or farm information kept in the DairyBase database (name, address, and other detail identifying users or farm location will be kept in a secure database "Salesforce" controlled by Dairy Australia)
- › Users can set the privacy levels of their Farm Datasets to:
 - Completely private (no access to any unapproved person)
 - Private but available for use in industry data aggregation (farm benchmarks)
 - Available for use in Dairy Australia approved research projects
- › Users control who has access to the farm data sets they have created
- › Farm owners control who can see and assign farm data to their farm.

What information do I need before I begin?

You need your farm financial information, your profit and loss from your cashbook and your farm physical information such as land area, cow numbers, milk production, irrigated water costs and feed quantities used/purchased and costs.

How long does DairyBase take to complete?

Like all things, the more prepared you are, the quicker it is. If you have a full set of data to enter it should take one to two hours. However, you do not need to have a complete set of data to get started and you will be able to see some results if only partial information is available.

Can I complete a DairyBase analysis by myself or do I need expert help to input the information?

Anyone can enter the data into DairyBase, Although you might work with your advisor or other support to work with DairyBase. You can also give permission for your farm advisor or accountant to upload your data into DairyBase.

Is there any training or support available to learn how to use DairyBase?

Yes, Dairy Australia has been working with Regional Development Programs in all regions to provide the capability in each region to support farmers. Over the coming months there will be information provided to farmers, and also to discussion groups.

If you want help you can contact your Regional Development Program to look for support activities in your region. Contact details for Regional Development Programs can be found at dairybase.com.au where you can also find the DairyBase User Guide.

Can I enter my data retrospectively?

Yes, you can enter historical data.

I've done similar analysis in the past, can I take my data across from those analyses?

We are working toward being able to do that. If you have been a part of the Dairy Farm Monitor Project or Queensland dairy Accounting Scheme your data will be part of DairyBase.

I'm entering the data myself and I'm having trouble what can I do?

Go to dairybase.com.au – it will have options for support available in your region.

So, I've entered my data what happens then?

The DairyBase program allows you to develop reports based on your farm information. It will allow you to compare your own performance over time. You can also select various parameters to compare your farm versus other operations.

DairyBase gives you the questions that should be asked about your business and equips you to gather the evidence needed to find answers.

Should I benchmark?

Benchmarking against other farms is a way of getting a better understanding of your business, however, benchmarking is always limited by the fact that every farm operation and farmer is different, not to mention the conditions different farms are operating with.

Are there resources to support DairyBase?

Yes there are a number of resources on dairybase.com.au

What is the best time of the year to complete DairyBase?

The best time is when you are planning for the next season. For many farmers this is June or July given it is a time when farm financial information is being finalised in many cases. Good data collection throughout the year will help make this an easy process.

Why should I choose DairyBase over another benchmarking tool?

It's free and easy to use, flexible, offers a database of past and present data, gives instant results and is a new industry standard. It also provides the chance to compare against Dairy Farm Monitor Project data, which provides very high quality data.

Is Taking Stock still available?

Taking Stock was a process of review that included a tool for collecting farm performance information. DairyBase follows the same principles as Taking Stock but offers better reporting and gives better levels of insight into the business. While it will not be further upgraded you can still access and use the Taking Stock tool at dairyaustralia.com.au

What if my internet connection is slow?

Internet speeds can be an issue in regional areas, and has been considered in the design of DairyBase. An excel data entry spreadsheet will be available although you won't be able to do the reporting.

Where do I go for more information?

Visit dairybase.com.au or contact your Regional Development Program – their contact details are provided on the DairyBase web site.