

Trusted staff essential for high milk quality, says WestVic dairy farmer

For western Victorian dairy farmers Jakob and Wiebke Franzenburg, the way they treat their land, livestock and team members is the key to success.

The owners, directors and operators of Ballangeich Run have been announced as 2019 winners of Dairy Australia's Milk Quality Awards, recognising their outstanding milk quality based on bulk milk cell count (BMCC).

The award places them in the top 100 farms in the nation for milk quality, after a 2018/19 season in which they milked 1,300 cows on 1068 ha, producing 12 million litres of milk.

Ballangeich Run is one of 53 dairy farms in western Victoria to have placed in the top 100 nationwide for milk quality this year.

The Franzenburgs migrated to Australia from Germany in early 2003 after searching for the best place in the world to produce dairy.

They have had to meet many challenges since coming to Australia and found that farming in western Victoria can be very different to Europe, with no challenge as significant as finding enough suitable labour to run their farming operation.

'We are heavily influenced by operating in a global market, especially here in Australia,' Wiebke said.

'While there are differences in the way dairy farms are operated, to be competitive on the world stage, the basic principles remain the same – producing a large quantity of a superior quality product by taking the best of care of our animals, our land and our people.'

'There are a thousand factors that come together to achieve milk quality like this,' Wiebke said.

'It starts with calving and extends to preparing your dry cows for calving, their diet, the milking routine, their hygiene and many, many other factors.

'It also comes down to the people who handle your cows.'



Jakob and Wiebke believe that milk quality comes down to sound management and cannot be attributed to any single technique.

While they are pleased to receive their Milk Quality Award, Jakob and Wiebke believe the most satisfaction comes from doing the right thing for their herd and knowing their cows are happy.

Jakob and Wiebke currently employ 15 staff on their farm who each have distinct roles.

The most important part is finding good staff to ensure you achieve high milk quality, Wiebke said. The milker is as important as the manager – even if the management is terrific, the end result depends on how well the milker performs the job. The hardest thing in the dairy industry is to find and retain good staff.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Dairy farmers can access a range of resources to improve milk quality and prevent mastitis from Dairy Australia at: dairyaustralia.com.au/mastitis.

More information on Cups On Cups Off courses can be found by contacting Dairy Australia's Regional Development Programs in each dairy region.