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Dairy Cattle Feedpad Guidelines

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Installing or Upgrading a Feedpad?

F Freedom to develop your own stock feeding program while acknowledging your community and environmental responsibilities.

E Establish and manage a sustainable feedpad system.

E Environmental considerations - the impact of your farm management decisions.

D Design well and reap the rewards - do it once, do it right.

P Planning decisions - seeking the right advice

A Approvals from relevant authorities - such formalities ensure consistency throughout the region.

D Doubtful? Read the Guidelines, be informed - make your own decision.

1.2 Would a Feedpad Enhance My Operation?

Feedpads are generally established to provide efficiency in supplementary feeding with the aim of increasing milk production.

However, if well constructed, operated and maintained a feedpad can provide much more on an ongoing basis.

- An area for supplementary feeding prior to milking
- Significantly reduced pugging of paddocks, therefore less pasture renovation
- Prevention of heat stress, provision of shade
- Wet weather shelter
- Reduced feet problems

The size and complexity of your feedpad depends entirely on you and your operation. The value of a feedpad should be viewed in relation to your other dairy production activities - milking, stock movement, calving and the associated supplementary feeding requirements.

A feedpad does not by definition have to be expensive. However, it does need to be efficient, sustainable and relevant to your stock numbers and any potential growth in your herd. This includes dealing with output as well - waste, odours, noise, visual pollution, etc. Attitudes of neighbours and proximity to environmentally sensitive areas also need to be considered. These issues can all be dealt with quite readily, but can't be ignored.

In all, there are considerable efficiencies and financial gains to be had from installing a feedpad. The outcome can be better use of existing land and water resources and reduction in pasture damage. A feedpad also provides the opportunity to deliver specialised feeding programs.

If you believe the installation of a feedpad may enhance your operation, or if you already operate a feedpad and simply wish to check best practice guidelines, we urge you to read the Dairy Cattle Feedpad Guidelines for the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

This document provides best practice guidelines for all aspects relating to incorporating a feedpad into your operation. It covers regulatory requirements, farm planning, feedpad design, construction, operation, maintenance and management, as well as offering a range of attached appendices containing specific information.

Any points that require clarification should be done so with the authors. It is important not to be overwhelmed by regulations and the requirements of authorities. Remember that the goal of installing and managing a viable feedpad is quite achievable. This document will show you how.