



A Partnership for Sustainable and Profitable Dairy Farming in Western Australia

ENVIRONMENTAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE GUIDELINES





FOREWORD

DairyCatch is an industry-led initiative that is working with farmers to develop and implement best management practice for environmentally sustainable dairying. The Geopraphe Catchment Council coordinated the project in partnership with Western Dairy and the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA). The Project Reference Group involved dairy farmers, milk processors, local government (Busselton Shire), Harvey Water, WA Farmers, the Water Corporation, the Department of Environment and Dairy Australia.

The preparation of environmental best management practice guidelines (BMPs) are a key output of the DairyCatch program. For the broader Dairy Industry, these guidelines are the credentials needed to demonstrate it has procedures and practices in place as a responsible environmental manager and community member. The industry also sees the development of BMPs as a critical step towards self-regulation in the face of increasing public awareness that may lead to greater environmental licensing.

The BMP development process was based on that advocated by DAFWA. Relevant scientific methodology and technical data used to develop these BMPs sources include:

- BMP data collected in the course of the Busselton Environmental Improvement Initiative and relevant BMPs developed elsewhere
- Water quality and other data currently held by the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Department of Environment and the Water Corporation
- BMP principles developed by Dairy Australia, and
- Expert opinion

The BMP development process was initiated with an objective assessment of the environmental risks posed by current dairy farming systems. This assessment involved the analyses of the physical environment in which dairy farms are situated and the principles underpinning practices within those farming systems. The results were used to identify areas of environmental sensitivity and those farm practices that posed the greatest environmental threat. The BMP development process has included:



- Examination of a variety of BMPs that address dairy effluent management, nutrient management and water use efficiency by means of a comprehensive literature review, catchment tours and practice assessments on the project's monitor farms
- Maintaining an awareness of BMP performance on those farms engaged in the planning and implementation grants scheme
- Documenting and extending a series on industry-endorsed BMPs for WA dairies

These guidelines have been written by DAFWA and have been subjected to a rigorous and robust review process by members of the Project Team, the Reference Group and other public and private specialists. Publishing these guidelines on the DAFWA website will ensure their currency and cost-effective distribution. They will be constantly updated as new information comes to hand. Further, they can be accessed and downloaded from any computer connected to the internet. Hard copies of any or all of these guidelines and any of the Department's other publications cited can be sent out on request by contacting your local DAFWA office.

I commend these guidelines to you.

Lorelle Fry
CHAIRPERSON, DAIRYCATCH REFERENCE GROUP





Around the time these guidelines were sent to the publisher, responsibility for ecological and water resource protection was divided by the State Government. As of 1 July 2006, the Department of Water (in place of the Water and Rivers Commission) has been assigned responsibility for the policy, planning, investigation, allocation, protection and salinity management and conservation of the State's water resources (primarily for human water uses). Details of the Department, its operation and contacts can be found at website www.water.wa.gov.au.

The newly established Department of Environment and Conservation (in place of DoE) is expected to administer environmental regulation functions under the Environmental Protection Act 1986, air quality, waste management, contaminated sites, conservation wetlands, aquatic science, pollution response together with the former functions of CALM. Details of the Department, its operation and contacts can be found at website www.dec.wa.gov.au.

The sites www.wrc.wa.gov.au & www.doe.wa.gov.au probably now have a very limited remaining life on the web.

There are presently functions shared between DOW and DEC on protection of waterways, land drainage and aquatic science.

The DOW web page <http://www.drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au> offers useful guidance on water resource management and protection practices, select Publications>Water Quality Protection notes then either scroll or click > to access relevant notes.

The Australian Government's National Water Quality Management Strategy series provides useful information on water quality criteria especially in the Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality 2000. The series is a useful toolset to underpin National Resource Management initiatives in the SW Region. To access the document series, use the webpage <http://www.deh.gov.au/water/quality/nwqms> or contact the Australian Water Association in Perth.

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