

Gippsland dairy farmer in top 100 nationwide for milk quality



For Gippsland dairy farmer Leo van den Broek, producing the best quality milk is one of the most rewarding parts of being a dairy farmer.

The Tinamba dairy farmer has just been announced as one of the top 100 farmers nationwide, and a winner of a Dairy Australia 2019 Milk Quality Award.

After five years of milking on his 96-acre, 107-cow dairy farm, Leo takes pride in supplying high quality milk to Australian consumers.

'We supply milk to everyday Australians, so you've got to supply the best milk you can,' Leo said.

Following a season of high input costs for farmers nationwide, Leo sees improving milk quality as an easy way to stay on top of expenses.

'You have to be in the premium system now,' Leo said.

'You might not get a lot extra for it – but it's still extra. It's something you can do that doesn't cost you anything extra but makes a difference to your bottom line.'

Leo uses a well-established system on his farm to prevent and treat mastitis, reducing his bulk milk cell count (BMCC) to earn a premium for his milk.

'I use the same systems day in, day out – I just try to do the best I can,' he said.

Teat spraying forms an important part of Leo's daily routine to reduce bacterial numbers on teat skin after milking, keep teat skin healthy, and reduce risk of new infections by up to 50 per cent.

Every cow is teat sprayed after milking, using a pre-mixed iodine base teat spray. 'I'm very fussy with teat spraying,' Leo said.

'I like to see it running off the teats when I teat spray.'

The entire herd receives blanket dry cow treatment using a Juraclox dry cow antibiotic, with teat sealing for every animal. 'I do it myself, and I'm very fussy about how I do it,' Leo said.

Leo scrubs and disinfects teat ends with cotton balls soaked in alcohol to remove dirt and bacteria prior to teat sealing. With just four cases of mastitis last year, Leo was able to keep his BMCC low through early detection and treatment.

If a cow develops clinical mastitis, Leo treats the quarters affected using an Orbenin lactating cow antibiotic.

In the dairy, hygiene comes first, and teat cup liners are changed twice each season, in October and February.

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.