



Landcare hero – decade of change delivers for Clover Hill Dairies

Lynne, Michael and Nick Strong are 7th generation dairy farmers. Their farm, Clover Hill Dairies, is situated on the north-east face of Saddleback Mountain at Jamberoo NSW. Their hard work and dedication won them the Landcare Heroes Primary Producer Award at the NSW Landcare Awards held in Port Macquarie in September.

The deregulation of Australia's dairy industry in 2000 saw a radical management change for the family dairy. Rather than look 'over the fence' or over the Great Dividing Range or the border, the Strong family decided to focus on the resources they had in their own back yard. Realising that proximity to markets is as valuable as proximity to inputs, the Strong family have set about developing a highly efficient dairy system on their small acreage.

In the past six years the herd size has increased from 80 to 210 milking cows and the milk volume has increased from 800,000 L to 2.5 million L per annum. The dairy is recognised as one of Australia's most water efficient milk production systems producing 125,000 L per annum of milk (compared with the industry average of 3500 L) per mega litre of captured water. The herd holds numerous

milk production records and is believed to be the highest producing pasture fed herd in Australia. All of these efficiency gains have been achieved on the same area of land farmed prior to deregulation.

Lynne and her family have also successfully tapped into local networks for both funding and advice. Since 2005, partnerships with Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority/Dairy Industry Group, Landcare Illawarra, Small Farms Network and National Heritage Trust Envirofund, as well as Community Waterwise, Advance Australian Agriculture and the NSW Department of Environment Climate Change & Water has generated more than \$250,000 of funding and they have completed five projects to ensure that productivity gains have minimal impact on the environment while improving energy efficiency.

Clover Hill Dairies regularly host farmer field days and discussion groups, overseas delegations and conference delegates as well as community groups and they provide a range of opportunities for school and university students including traineeships and work experience.

Clover Hill Dairies is the case study for the award winning 'Jet & Emma Farm Management Series Education Program for K to 12' (featured in the No. 49 *Country Web*) published by LandLearn NSW [www.slideshare.net/LandLearnNSW/presentations].

The farm team are passionate industry advocates dedicated to bridging the urban/rural divide and promote programs showcasing the people and places behind the food we eat encouraging students into farming and strengthening ties between the city and country.

'As we increase both the

distance most consumers have from the farm and the level of technology we implement in food production we have to dramatically improve our ability and commitment to build trust with our customers and consumers.

Today consumers want to feel good about the purchases they make; they want food that is produced in a way that is consistent with their own personal values. We believe landcare farming principles meet or exceed consumer expectations and practising landcare farming is doing the right thing by our business, our landscape and customers.

'Winning this award has certainly been the high point of my farming journey and we look forward to representing NSW Primary Producers at the National Awards in 2010', said Lynne.

For more information about the NSW Landcare Awards or to read about other winners, go to <http://nsw.landcareheroes.com>

NATIONAL WOMEN IN DAIRY FORUM

The National Women in Dairy Forum will be held at the RACV Club Melbourne on 24 March 2010. It will be an opportunity to share ideas with dairy women from all over Australia, listen to inspiring speakers, connect with other women industry leaders, be part of designing a national plan for women in the dairy industry and to learn about issues facing the future of the industry in Australia and overseas.

For more information or to register, contact Karen Davies, Genetics Australia on freecall 1800 039 047 or email: kdavies@genaust.com.au