

Ease the squeeze on dairy shed power costs

Rising power prices are hitting Australian dairy farmers from all sides. An anticipated 50–70 per cent rise in energy costs in 2017–18 for dairy processors could shave 1¢ per litre off the farmgate milk price if passed on, while farmers at the same time are facing up to 20 per cent increases in their shed tariffs.

A few simple steps could save farmers thousands on their power bills now, while more savings are possible with government assistance to improve on-farm energy efficiency.

What can I do?

- › Check your tariff and service charge – the dairy should be on a business tariff, not linked to your home with its residential tariff.
- › Check if your supplier is offering you the best deal
- › Check offers, rates and service charges from other suppliers

In Victoria, visit Victorian Energy Compare (victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-compare) to compare your current electricity, gas and solar rates against other offers.

You can make significant savings by changing your energy plan. The site also gives you information on how to switch retailers as well as what concessions and rebates are available to help manage your energy costs. Before you get started, you'll need to request your smart meter file, or electricity usage file, from your current power company. Some companies have online portals for this.

Dairy farmers in other States can go to the federal Energy Made Easy website energymadeeasy.gov.au to find the right offer for their business.

Grants for energy assessments

Energy assessment grants are available in Victoria, NSW and South Australia, and for all States through the federal Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

With dairy farms being power intensive businesses, the energy assessment grants are a great way for farmers to cut their power bills.

Victoria

Sustainability Victoria's Boosting Productivity grant application process has been simplified, with a new two-page registration form all that's needed to kick-start the process.

Grants up to \$2000 and \$15,000 (covering 50 per cent of the cost) are available to help businesses carry out an energy assessment, and identify and put in place energy improvements, plus a \$3000 implementation bonus.

Grants are available to businesses with less than 200 full time employees, spending more than \$20,000 a year on energy bills.

More details can be found at sustainability.vic.gov.au/energy-assessment-grants via the application page.



NSW

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage's Energy Efficiency for Your Business program can connect you to an energy specialist to identify energy savings opportunities, and access funding for your project, including the Energy Savings Scheme.

More details can be found at environment.nsw.gov.au/business/efficient-agribusiness-irrigation.htm.

South Australia

South Australia's Energy Productivity Program is available to businesses that use more than 160MWh of electricity each year. The program has two components:

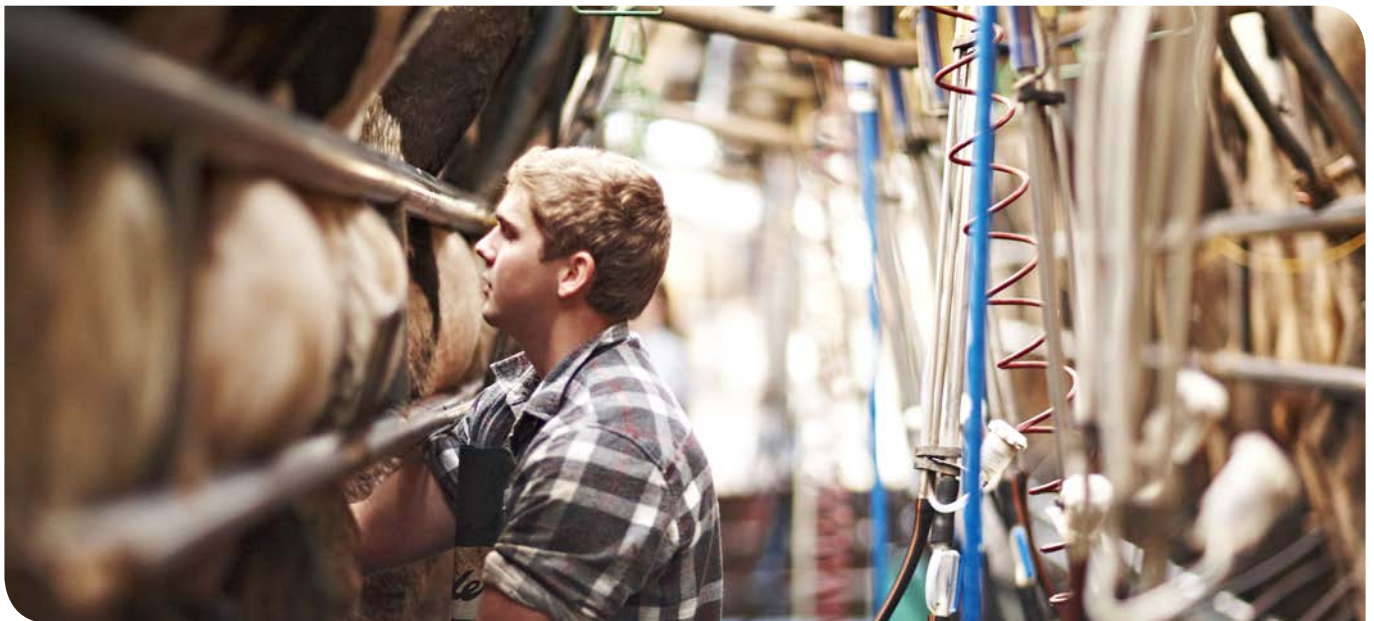
Energy Productivity Audit Grant Program – grants of 75 per cent of the cost of a Level 2 energy audit, up to \$15,000, for businesses to engage an external energy auditor; and,

Energy Productivity Implementation Grant Program – grants to implement the recommendations of the audits conducted through the Energy Productivity Audit Grant Program.

More details can be found at dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-business-and-the-community/energy-efficiency/south-australian-energy-productivity-program.

National

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) offers low-cost finance for energy efficient equipment, renewable energy and low emissions projects on farms. More details can be found at cefc.com.au/where-we-invest/asset-finance.aspx.



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