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ii. Purpose

Dairy effluent is described as a potential point source of nutrient pollution for waterways and mismanagement of it risks impacting the environment. Environmental legislation in all Australian States and Territories has set a minimum standard that dairies must comply with to prevent nutrient pollution leaving the farm boundaries. Compliance with such legislation requires that the dairy industry have access to up-to-date and validated technical information about options for effectively managing its effluent.

The Australian dairy industry has changed dramatically since deregulation in 2000, with increased average herd size and increased intensity of use in supporting areas around the dairy. The increased volumes of effluent and solids generated must be considered in effluent and manure management plans.

The dairy industry is truly a national industry with most dairy companies sourcing milk from more than one State. Although recommendations for best practices for effluent management within each State will be influenced by regulatory requirements, recommendations on the technical aspects of effluent management for dairy farmers are applicable across State borders.

The Effluent and Manure Management Database for the Australian Dairy Industry is a repository of reliable and scientifically validated technical information on dairy effluent management adaptable to all dairying regions in Australia. The database outlines the principles for effective effluent management, performance based design criteria for components of effluent containment and reuse systems, and appropriate management principles for optimal operation of each design.

The database not only provides the technical information required for on farm effluent management designs but also the technical base to support National, State and Regional regulations on dairy effluent management, technical and farmer based extension programs, and educational material on dairy effluent management.

The audience for the database is primarily persons and groups who give advice to farmers, produce extension material for farmers, or design equipment for effluent management, and as a dairy specific technical basis for regulation. While the information presented is therefore by design technical in nature, not explanatory, it is expected that some farmers will also be able to use the database.

To ensure that the information presented is valid and relevant, the database has been reviewed by a committee of technical experts representing each State. For the benefit of the user, where the information presented can be referenced, a hyperlink to the database entry is provided at its first citation; subsequent citations in a chapter are not hyperlinked to avoid unnecessary clutter. The database entry will, where possible, have an additional hyperlink to any associated internet content.

Finally, as new research and information is continually being developed, it is intended that the Effluent and Manure Management Database for the Australian Dairy Industry will be up-dated on a regular basis.

iii. Table of contents:

Element 1 - Collection and conveyance

1.1	Physical, biological and chemical components of effluent and manure	1
	Physical—solids	1
	Biological oxygen demand (BOD)	2
	Chemical oxygen demand (COD)	3
	Nutrient content and distribution by manure particle size	3
	References	4
1.2	Characteristics of effluent and manure	5
	Rates of faeces and urine production	5
	Minimising excreted nutrients	6
	Proportion of daily manure output collected	6
	Water use in dairies	7
	Stormwater	10
	Typical raw effluent analysis	10
	References	10
1.3	Yard washdown	12
	Fixed high-pressure systems	12
	Hand-held hoses	13
	Safety considerations	14
	References	14
1.4	Floodwash systems	16
	Design criteria	16
	Floodwash system configurations	18
	Floodwash systems and the effluent system	20
	References	21
1.5	Sump design	22
	Sump configuration	23
	Sumps and pumps	23
	References	24
1.6	Pipes	25
	Gravity conveyance in pipes	25
	Pressurised conveyance	26
	Types of pipe and fittings	27
	Pipe cover, alignment and protection	27
	References	29

Element 2 - Treatment and storage

2.1	Solid–liquid separation systems	30
	Why install a solids separation system?	30
	Types of solids separation systems	30
	Gravity sedimentation systems	31
	Mechanical separation systems	35
	Performance measures	36
	References	39
2.2	Direct application systems	41
	Direct distribution versus storage	41
	Regional soil and groundwater considerations	42
	Management of daily application systems	42
	Risk of contaminant movement off-site	42
	Management plans and monitoring	43
	Farm nutrient loss index	43
	References	44
2.3	Anaerobic, aerobic and facultative ponds	45
	Storage versus treatment	45
	Settlement and biological treatment processes	45
	Anaerobic ponds	46
	Aerobic ponds	50
	Facultative ponds	50
	Treatment pond performance	51
	'Typical' characteristics of effluent	52
	Pond management	52
	References	54
2.4	Pond site investigation	56
	Initial siting	56
	Soil assessment	57
	Groundwater	59
	Final pond site suitability assessment	60
	References	60
2.5	Pond design and construction	61
	Pond design and specifications	61
	Pond construction	63
	Pond monitoring	65
	References	66
2.6	Effluent storage requirement	67
	Developing a water budget	67

Residual volumes	72
Managing the effluent storage	72
Sizing collection and diversion structures for storms	74
References	74
2.7 Wetlands	76
Natural wetlands	76
Constructed wetlands	76
Performance of wetlands	78
References	78
2.8 Desludging and pond closure	80
Sludge measurement and characteristics	80
Sludge removal	82
Sludge dewatering	83
Pond closure	85
References	87
2.9 Composting	88
The composting process	88
Composting methods	89
Management and quality control	91
Compost use	93
References	94

Element 3 - Re-use

3.1 Nutrient budgeting	95
Nutrient importation	95
Nutrient distribution	96
Effluent nutrient concentrations	96
Nutrient quantification	97
Nutrient use and export	98
Nutrient budgeting calculations	99
Worked examples	100
Nutrient budgeting computer programs	101
Nutrients and the environment	102
Further research	103
References	104
3.2 Nitrogen	105
Forms of nitrogen and nitrogen cycling	105
Nitrogen in dairy effluent	106
Nitrogen management	108

Monitoring nitrogen	108
References	108
3.3 Phosphorus	110
Phosphorus in dairy effluent	110
Phosphorus management	111
Monitoring phosphorus	113
References	113
3.4 Potassium	115
Potassium in dairy effluent	115
Adverse potassium impacts	115
Potassium management	116
Monitoring potassium	117
References	117
3.5 Trace elements	118
Trace element and contaminant excess	118
Managing trace elements in dairy effluent	120
References	120
3.6 Salinity	121
Minimising salinity	121
Applying effluent to land	122
Salinity budgeting	123
Salinity management and monitoring	125
Example salinity budget calculations	125
References	127
3.7 Sodicity	128
Sodium in dairy effluent	128
Sodium in soils	128
Managing sodicity	129
Monitoring sodicity	130
References	130
3.8 Effluent distribution and irrigation systems	131
Managing effluent for irrigation	131
Systems for land application	131
References	136
3.9 Hydraulic application rate and scheduling	138
Typical values of hydraulic conductivity	138
Soil water-holding capacity	138
Seasonal water demand	139
Scheduling irrigation frequency	140

References	141
3.10 Land application of manure and pond sludge	142
Accumulation and collection of solids	142
Storage of solids	142
Transporting solids	142
Land application	143
Crop use	145
References	145
3.11 Microbial risks	146
Pathogens of relevance to the dairy industry	146
Effects of treatment, storage and reuse on pathogen survival	147
Management practices to reduce risks to stock	147
Aerosols	148
OH&S implications	148
References	149

Element 4 - Laneways, feed pads and feed storage

4.1 Yards and laneways	150
Laneway alignment	150
Drainage	151
Construction	153
Maintenance	154
References	154
4.2 Feedpads, calving pads and loafing pads	155
Principles of waste management	156
Regulations	156
Planning and construction	156
Cleaning and maintenance of pads	161
Checklist	162
References	162
4.3 Feed storage and wastage	163
Types of feedstuffs	163
Transporting feedstuffs	163
Feed management systems	163
Feedstuff spills and losses	164
Storing silage	164
Grain and food-processing by-products	166
References	166

Element 5 - Odour

5 Odour emissions and control	167
Units of measurement—OU	167
Odour generation	167
Separation or buffer distance	168
International approaches to calculating separation distances	170
Dispersion of odours	170
Dispersion modelling	170
Regulatory target criteria	172
Odour control strategies	173
Odour control strategies for ponds	176
Odour control additives	180
References	181

Element 6 - Occupational health and safety

6 Occupational health and safety	185
General OH&S issues on dairy farms	185
Manure gases	185
System design to minimise hazards	186
Checklist of risk controls	186
References	188

Element 7 - Performance monitoring

7 Monitoring and sampling	189
What to monitor?	189
Instrumentation	192
Assessing results and reviewing performance	194
System selection issues	194
References	195

Element 8 - Emerging issues

8.1 Production and beneficial use of methane	196
Types of digesters	196
Biogas yield	198
Beneficial use of biogas	200
Common problems with using biogas	201
Energy budgets for large- to medium-sized dairies	202
Considerations for the overall effluent management system	203
Safety precautions	203

Design criteria and selecting a designer	204
Current research	204
Case studies	204
References	206
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8.2 Greenhouse gas emissions	208
Dairy farming's GHG footprint	208
Generation of GHGs	208
GHG control strategies within manure management	209
Summary of management options for manure treatment and storage	211
GHG control strategies within effluent and manure reuse	212
References	212