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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.

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