

On-farm processing - alternative way to make a dollar

One way dairy farmers can meet the challenge of how to drive their milk dollar further is to take their milk output to the next level and expand operations to not only be the farmer but also the processor. Installing a small on-farm manufacturing plant could dramatically lift the milk dollar value.



A Packo Fullwood batch pasteuriser can help create an on-farm processing plant.

Creating an alternative income stream can be easier than many realise. Farmers can get out that old family cheese recipe and turn the idea of putting a personalised stamp on produce into reality. Only part of the farm's milk output need be processed.

Demand exists for local fare, particularly farm fresh products. Dairy farmers can on-sell to local markets, farmers markets, food festivals or even local restaurants.

Last month Packo Fullwood, Leongatha, Victoria, welcomed its first installation of the heart of milk processing - the batch pasteuriser. On its own it forms a small processing plant, which enables the processing of 'batches' of raw milk into consumption milk, cream, yoghurt, fresh and hard cheeses and other fermented milk products.

The basic function of a pasteuriser is to raise and lower the temperature of milk to kill all pathogenic bacteria. This keeps milk products safe for consumption and improves quality.

Depending on production requirements the batch pasteuriser comes in different volume sizes: 150, 300, 500 and 1000 litres. Special devices can be attached like a cutter and agitator as is the case for hard cheese production. Depending on production requirements full

turnkey mini-dairies with equipment such as continuous flow pasteurisers, fermentation vessels, cheese presses right through to bottling stations can be designed to meet a farmer's individual needs.

Mark Williams of Robertson, NSW, owns a Packo Fullwood batch pasteuriser.

"I was very impressed with Packo's ability to meet my individual requirements. I needed my unit to run on gas in addition to the standard electric," he said.

The advantages for Mr Williams were that the unit not only performs the basic pasteurisation function and makes hard cheese but also acts as a cold storage unit. He continues to receive full after sales service from the Leongatha team.

Mr Williams who owns a mini dairy, intends to use his pasteuriser to blend his own dairy milk with that of local milk supplies to produce unique tasting cheeses.

"I am looking forward to creating different cheese flavours," he said.

The fundamental driver in processing milk on a dairy farm, in co-operative dairies or in small-scale dairy plants, is the added value and increase to the dairy dollar.

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