



# What is my yield gap? Maximising Water Productivity on Irrigated Dairy Farms

## 1. What is the project about?

This project will demonstrate and trial dairy irrigation technologies and management strategies including new technologies on commercial farms across Australia.

Working with farmers, researchers and agronomists the project has established 10 farmer led 'optimised irrigation sites' on dairy farms in SA, WA, Victoria and NSW. Each site reference group is tailoring the technologies demonstrated to local interests, with the focus being on the 'yield gap'. The yield that could be achieved if the system is 'optimised'.

Project sites are located near Dandalup, Mount Compass, Mount Gambier, Mepunga East, Tatura, Maffra, Yarram, Tocal, Jelgowry and Casino



## 2. Why do irrigators need to know about it?

Optimised dairy irrigation sites provide an opportunity for irrigators to check their operating practices against good practice, see new irrigation technologies in action and discuss possible technologies for their farm with the agronomic team supporting the sites.

Previous on farm research demonstrated variable rate irrigation can achieve productivity gains of 30% and found autonomous irrigation is feasible for dairy and has potential for wider application.

Cross sector bus tours to visit other agricultural industry irrigation farms and regions are a key feature of the project. These tours are open to all interested farmers and service providers.



## 3. How will the research benefit irrigators?

Optimised dairy irrigation farms established under Smarter Irrigation for Profit Phase 1 found most operators were not getting the basics right. Conducting annual system checks including pumps, getting the start-up time right and avoiding the 'green drought' increased productivity by 40% on some farms.

On-farm audits of energy efficiency and irrigation uniformity (checking irrigation systems are performing as they were designed to) found big variations in efficiencies – even with recently installed systems. Energy savings of up to \$20,000/pivot were identified.

## 4. Key results to date

**For further information or project progress updates, contact:**

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