

Seven rules for milking success

by Liza Burger

Anton Gilfillan is a respected designer of milk parlours, milking and farming equipment, and dairy processing factories. He is involved in local projects aimed at developing milk producers or small capacity producers and processors.

Of his most successful and well-known projects include the design, manufacture and distribution of milk shop cooling tanks usually seen at shops selling milk, juice or amasi on tap. Anton's seven rules for successful dairying are:

1. Know how to start

Right at the start the newcomer should ask himself how he plans to start his dairy. Do you have enough land, infrastructure or money for infrastructure? Do you have enough milk-producing, healthy animals to keep the business going?

2. Follow the right feed programme

Are you going to feed your cows extra roughage and concentrate or will you rely on naturally available feed only? The cost of feed is also a very important factor, however small it may be.

3. Choose the right breed

Next, the dairyman should identify the cattle breed most suited for his needs, circumstances and budget. Learn how to buy from auctions, raise calves and use artificial insemination.

4. Choose the right equipment

The need for the correct equipment is essential. Building a milk shed, installing a cooling tank and setting up farm infrastructure should be done correctly from the start.

5. Know how to market your products

Good marketing of your product could mean great success for the dairy farmer. Many dairymen lack this knowledge and fail to make provision for this aspect of dairying.

6. Choose a suitable management system

Choosing the right management system for feed, employees, inoculation, milking and financial records is very important. This will determine much of your daily work programme.

7. Make the right choices

Any dairyman must have a love for farming. Make sure that the choices you make are informed ones. Do not be afraid to consult your mentors. Spend your money wisely. 