

Request for Proposal

CalfWays: Greenfield Cooperative Calf Rearing Facility
Feasibility Study & Business Case

Project Sponsor

GARDINER 
FOUNDATION



Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction 2**
 - 1.1. The Opportunity2
 - 1.2. Purpose of this Request for Proposal2
 - 1.3. Response Instructions2
 - 1.4. Timetable3
 - 1.5. Submission & Enquiries.....3
 - 1.6. Responding to the RFP3
 - 1.7. Treatment of Information.....3
- 2. Business Requirements 4**
 - 2.1. About Dairy Australia4
 - 2.2. Project Background and Objective4
 - 2.3. Project Scope5
- 3. Evaluation Criteria..... 7**
 - 3.1. Business Requirements8
- 4. Attachments 8**

1. Introduction

1.1. The Opportunity

The Australian dairy and beef industries face ongoing challenges in creating economically viable and scalable pathways for non-replacement dairy calves. Many dairy producers, particularly smaller and land-constrained businesses, are unable to achieve the scale, infrastructure, labour capacity, or consistency required to rear calves to meet the needs of downstream beef supply chains. This can result in fragmented calf-rearing systems, inconsistent animal quality, limited market certainty, duplicated infrastructure investment, and reduced value capture across the supply chain.

Through previous CalfWays initiatives, industry stakeholders identified a potential opportunity to improve supply chain coordination through a cooperative, hub-and-spoke calf-rearing model. A regional calf-rearing facility could aggregate calves from multiple farms, apply consistent welfare, biosecurity and production standards, provide access to specialised calf-rearing expertise, and deliver a more reliable supply of fit-for-purpose cattle to the beef sector.

However, significant uncertainty remains regarding the technical feasibility, commercial viability, financial sustainability, governance arrangements, workforce requirements, and investment readiness of such a model in the Australian context. Gardiner Foundation and the CalfWays collaboration (DA & MLA) are seeking an experienced consultant to undertake an independent feasibility study and business case to determine whether a greenfield cooperative calf-rearing facility represents a viable, scalable and investable opportunity capable of supporting long-term industry growth and stronger beef-from-dairy supply chains

1.2. Purpose of this Request for Proposal

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to:

- invite each Respondent to submit a fully costed proposal,
- provide Respondents with general information to assist in the preparation and lodgement of proposals,
- detail the project background, objective, and business requirements,
- disclose the Evaluation Criteria which will be used to evaluate proposals, and
- detail the proposal requirements to be provided by Respondents in order to satisfy the Evaluation Criteria.

1.3. Response Instructions

Late responses will not be accepted.

Dairy Australia may at its discretion choose to ask additional questions or conduct interviews with Respondents. While Respondents will have the opportunity to present on their solution and the solution's adherence to the stated business requirements, all written responses should be full and complete with no dependency on the presentation for context.

The issuing of this document or the submission of a response in no way obligates Dairy Australia to proceed. Dairy Australia reserves the right to not proceed with this project. Respondents should not make a submission under any other understanding or condition.

1.4. Timetable

Milestones	Date
RFP Issued	September 25 th 2026
Closing date for RFP response	October 16 th 2026
Preferred vendor selected	October 28 th 2026
Preferred implementation start date	November 2 nd 2026

1.5. Submission & Enquiries

Respondent must direct all requests for clarification and/or additional information to below contact, preferably by email.

Name	Dr Bec Barnewall
Position	CalfWays Co-Innovation Lead
Email	calfways@dairyaustralia.com.au
Phone	0447 817 123

1.6. Responding to the RFP

Vendors must email the following response items by closing date as per timetable to the first point of contact at Dairy Australia:

- Adherence to Business Requirements,
- Project costing breakdown,
- Proposed approach to delivering the project - scope outlined in section 2.3
- Vendor organisational profile and / or experience,
- Review and acceptance of the Service Agreement Template terms, or completion of the Table of Departures outlining any proposed amendments and supporting rationale,
- Any additional information to assist on evaluating the response,
- Ability to deliver in timeframe

1.7. Treatment of Information

The following rules apply to the treatment of information exchanged between Dairy Australia and the vendor:

- All information provided by Dairy Australia to the Vendor shall remain the property of Dairy Australia and the Vendor must respect the confidentiality of this information. A Vendor shall not use any of the information in this Request for any purpose other than the preparation of its Proposal submission.

- Vendors are to submit documents in response to this RFP on the basis that Dairy Australia may use and retain the information in those documents for evaluation purposes. Dairy Australia will treat all information provided in a proposal submission as confidential and will not use or disclose it other than for purposes related to the evaluation of the proposal.
- When submitting confidential material to Dairy Australia, the vendor must clearly mark it as such.
- No references to Dairy Australia can be made by the vendor in any literature, promotional material, brochures, or sales presentation without written consent.
- This RFP must not be forwarded to third parties for evaluation or for any other purpose without the express written consent of Dairy Australia.

2. Business Requirements

2.1. About Dairy Australia

Dairy Australia (DA) is a not-for-profit organisation that is the national services body for the Australian dairy industry.

Dairy Australia's purpose is to support the profitability and sustainability of dairy farming by working closely with dairy farmers and other important stakeholders to understand their needs and shape its investment priorities. Dairy Australia provides practical tools, services and advice to assist farming operations and the dairy supply chain. Its investments in innovation are focused on increasing farm productivity and the global competitiveness of the Australian dairy industry.

Dairy Australia's structure comprises a head office in Melbourne which supports on the ground delivery of services by eight regional teams located in dairy regions across the country. In addition, Dairy Australia works closely with a wide range of industry, government and research organisations to advance the interests of dairy farmers.

2.2. Project Background and Objective

The Australian dairy and beef industries are increasingly seeking scalable pathways to improve outcomes for non-replacement dairy calves while creating value across the supply chain.

Through the CalfWays initiative, Dairy Australia and Gardiner Foundation are seeking to assess the feasibility of establishing a cooperative calf rearing facility that could aggregate calves, support consistent supply, improve access to specialised calf rearing expertise, and strengthen beef from dairy supply chains.

This project will investigate the viability of a greenfield cooperative calf rearing facility, including technical, commercial, financial, governance and operational considerations, to determine whether the concept is investment ready and capable of progressing to implementation. The project will also evaluate the ability of the proposed model to support workforce development, regional capability, and long-term sustainable industry growth.

Initial stakeholder consultation has identified the Macalister Irrigation District (Gippsland) and the Corangamite and Moyne shire regions (Western Victoria) as potentially suitable locations for consideration. However, the consultant may identify and assess additional regions where supported by evidence.

The successful consultant will be required to:

- Proposed methodology for assessing and comparing potential regions and selecting a preferred location
- Assess the technical, commercial and financial feasibility of a cooperative calf rearing facility.
- Evaluate capital requirements, operating costs and potential revenue streams.
- Assess investment readiness and identify pathways for co-investment.
- Evaluate governance and ownership models.
- Assess the viability of a hub-and-spoke operating model.
- Identify opportunities, risks and constraints associated with implementation.
- Develop a robust business case to support future investment decisions.

2.3. Project Scope

The consultant will undertake a comprehensive feasibility assessment of a proposed cooperative calf rearing facility, designed to assess the technical, commercial and financial viability of the concept and determine its readiness for future investment and implementation. The assessment should provide sufficient evidence to support decision-making by Dairy Australia, Gardiner Foundation and potential delivery partners.

Site, Workforce and Stakeholder Assessment

The consultant will undertake a staged regional assessment to identify a suitable location for a cooperative calf-rearing facility. This will include a high-level assessment of shortlisted regions, considering factors such as dairy calf supply, proximity to downstream markets, workforce availability, infrastructure, stakeholder alignment and potential growth opportunities.

Initial regions for consideration include the Macalister Irrigation District (Gippsland) and the Corangamite and Moyne shire regions (Western Victoria). The consultant may recommend consideration of additional regions, where supported by evidence.

The consultant will present findings from the regional assessment and work with project sponsors to select a preferred region for detailed investigation.

Following selection of the preferred region, the consultant will undertake a more detailed regional suitability assessment including planning, regulatory and biosecurity considerations. The study should also evaluate workforce requirements, skills-development opportunities and stakeholder perspectives through targeted consultation with industry participants and potential partners.

Feasibility and Business Case Assessment

The consultant will assess the viability of establishing a greenfield cooperative calf rearing facility, including the identification of key drivers of success, risks, assumptions and implementation considerations. The assessment should consider facility design requirements, operational & biosecurity considerations and the broader role of the facility within a sustainable beef-from-dairy supply chain.

Commercial and Financial Analysis

The consultant will develop a detailed commercial and financial assessment of the proposed facility. This should include capital and operating cost estimates, revenue opportunities, investment requirements, sensitivity analysis and an assessment of long-term financial sustainability. The analysis should identify potential business models and provide recommendations regarding preferred pathways for future investment.

Governance, Ownership and Operating Models

The consultant will evaluate potential governance structures, ownership arrangements and operating models. This should include consideration of cooperative and alternative structures, stakeholder roles, risk allocation and decision-making processes necessary to support successful implementation.

The study should also identify which findings are location-specific and which are broadly transferable to support future assessment of similar facilities in other dairy production regions across Australia.

Out of Scope

The project will not progress beyond the feasibility assessment and business case development phase. Activities such as land acquisition, detailed engineering design, facility construction, operational management of a calf rearing facility, final investment negotiations, permit approvals, and the implementation of training or extension programs are specifically excluded from the scope of this study.

3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of Proposals will be based on the information provided by Respondents in their Proposals completed in accordance with this RFP. This information may be supplemented by additional material submitted with Proposals, as well as material provided in response to requests for clarification from Dairy Australia.

The evaluation of Proposals will be conducted by determining which Proposal achieves the overall best value for money by taking into account a range of considerations, including the adherence of meeting business requirements stated, service delivery, and implementation and the extent to which it meets the project objectives.

Dairy Australia will also consider the following factors in its evaluation:

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Adherence to Business Requirements	Ability of the Respondent to demonstrate the ability to meet the specified business requirements.	20%
Price	The rates that the Respondent will charge DA as a maximum rate for services. This must include all costs over the duration of the contract and any ongoing operating costs.	10%
Relevant experience	Previous experience of the respondent needs to be assessed in relation to the fields of expertise required to achieve the intended outcomes of the project. Recent experience is more valuable than historic experience.	20%
Management skills and systems	The availability within the Respondent's organisation of personnel with appropriate management skills together with effective management systems and methods appropriate to the successful management of the project.	10%
Technical skills	The competence of key management, professional and technical personnel that the Respondent proposes to employ on the project needs to be assessed with particular emphasis on the skills and experience in technical areas comparable to the project.	15%
Methodology	The procedures or innovative methods the Respondent proposes to use to achieve the specified end results, or the special processes detailed in tender documents.	20%
Other	Industry networks & stakeholder engagement capability.	5%

3.1. Business Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate their capability to deliver a comprehensive feasibility study and investment-ready business case for a proposed cooperative calf rearing facility by June 30, 2027.

Proposal should be submitted with a maximum total value of \$70,000.

Respondents must demonstrate their ability to deliver:

- Project Inception Report
- Regional screening & high-level assessment
- Feasibility Assessment
- Financial Model
- Investment-Ready Business Case
- Assessment of the transferability of the proposed model to other Australian dairy regions.
- Final Reports (internal and de-identified external versions) and Industry briefing presentation.
- Proposal Requirements

Respondents must provide:

- A full costed out quote including a proposed methodology and workplan.
- Details of key personnel and their roles.
- Examples of comparable projects completed within the last five years.
- At least two client referees.
- A detailed fee proposal and budget breakdown.
- Any assumptions, limitations or exclusions.

4. Attachments

- Service Agreement – template Dairy Australia.pdf
- Table of Departures to Contract template – Dairy Australia

CalfWays



1800 004 377
calfways.com.au

Acknowledgement and support

CalfWays, the dairy industry's roadmap to more sustainable calf management has been developed by Dairy Australia with the assistance of Schuster Consulting Group. Through the course of the development, more than 150 stakeholders from the dairy and beef industries were consulted on key challenges to improving surplus calf management and the opportunities surplus calves presented to both industries. An advisory committee, comprised of dairy farmers, dairy processors and representatives from the red meat and livestock industry, assisted in the development of the roadmap. Dairy Australia and Schuster Consulting Group gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by these stakeholders and their support in the development and implementation of CalfWays.

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