



## Managing wet soils: what off-paddock system?

David Hopkins, Colac

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*This Note aims to help you select an appropriate off-paddock method for cows on your farm during wet periods. It provides a flow chart to identify important decision points..*

Wet soils have been a problem for dairyfarmers in southern Victoria ever since dairying began over a century ago. Dairyfarms have traditionally been situated in high rainfall areas so that the longer growing season can be used to best effect for the milking herd.

There are two basic ways to overcome the problem of wet soils.

1. Improve soil drainage characteristics so that the removal of excess water is speeded up (eg. sub-surface drainage).
2. Avoid intensive grazing of paddocks when soils are wet and pugging damage is likely.

Never-the-less, a combination of the two strategies may be needed simultaneously during or immediately after wet periods.

The attached flow chart allows you to select an appropriate method for your circumstances. But, remember that what suits you may not be the most applicable to your neighbour.

Details of different methods are provided in Agriculture Note AG0955: *Managing wet soils: feedpads and stand-off areas.*

The Water Act (1989) provides guidance for the management of waterways and swamps. Before considering draining a wet area you should contact your local Catchment Management Authority for advice, as a permit may be required.

Addition information may be obtained from members of the dairy extension team at:

Colac, Ellinbank, Warrnambool.



*Figure 1. Cows on a sandbank*



*Figure 2. Cows on limestone pad*

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Appendix 1

