

SE News
HD **Dairy** farms run hot
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DAIRY farms are hot property, with investors and locals snapping up multiple properties in blue-ribbon farming country.

A Gippsland trucking contractor has bought five neighbouring **dairy** farms at Nambrok in the Macalister Irrigation District, paying about \$13 **million** for 700 hectares.

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In western Victoria, ACE Farming has confirmed it wants more local properties after purchasing large-scale farms at Heywood and Terang.

This comes as southwest **dairy** farmers are expecting **Chinese**-backed Linear Capital to pay deposits on Friday for up to 50 farms.

The Weekly Times understands the Gippsland property haul averaged about \$18,525 a hectare and was bought by locals Lachlan Wigg and Patrick Gray from Ag Spread and will be share-farmed by Stratford farmer Matthew Gault.

A Murray Goulburn supplier, Mr Gault is believed to have bought a property neighbouring the five farms.

The new owners declined to comment.

Dairy farmer Dale Scott, who'd had his property on the market for 12 months, was pleased to sell to locals.

ACE Farming founder Jeremy Bayard said his **company**'s purchase of the 1000-1100-cow Heywood property, Melro, and the 900-cow McKinnon's **dairy** at Terang were backed by offshore institutions.

Melro farm, owned by Macquarie **Group**, was believed to have **sold** for \$6-\$8 **million**.

ACE Farming has 18 **dairy** operations milking about 11,000 cows, including near Cobram bought earlier this year.

Mr Bayard said he was in talks about expanding into north and western Victoria. "If you take a forensic view and look at the **dairy** industry in the Western District, there is not a lot of sales," he said. "There are neighbour to neighbour sales but not a lot of corporates." Mr Bayard said farms prices discussed by "new comers" to the industry was "out of kilter" with the way **dairy** farms were traditionally valued and had encouraged "unrealistic" property value expectations.

Many southwest Victorian **dairy** farmers negotiating with Linear Capital are understood to be expecting deposits for their properties this Friday.

Linear Capital wants to purchase farms, believed to be about 50, as well as build processing plants. Linear Capital managing director Troy Harper would not comment on specific details.

CO mryglb : Murray Goulburn Co-operative Company Limited

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