

SE DAIR
HD On-farm **dairy** venture kicks Fleurieu goals
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BARRY Clarke has many reasons to be thankful for being part of the **dairy** industry.

Dairying has given him a profitable career and a job he enjoys and it has helped to prolong a football career into his 50s.

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While most men Barry's age are thinking about low-impact sports, every second Sunday the SA dairyfarmer and **milk** processor dusts off his old football boots and lines up in the local super-rules competition.

And it does not end there. Three times this year he has helped his old team Myponga-Sellicks when they've been short on numbers in the **B**-grade division, adding to his remarkable record of more than 550 A-grade games until he was 47 and 100 **B**-grade since then.

"I never got many injuries and I think dairying was probably part of that," Barry said.

"As I got older I got stiff and sore but you have to get out of bed and **milk** the cows, walk around, climb up and down the steps and carry buckets of **milk**. It made me better. I had to move around and get rid of that stiffness and soreness.

"I **m** sure it helped more than sitting around on the couch all day."

Barry's **dairy** career has been equally impressive.

Ten years ago an off-the-cuff remark while on holiday with local farming mates led to a successful **business** partnership between Barry and his wife Merridie, Geoff and Louise Hutchinson, and Chris and Karen Royans.

"We were at Geoff's place at Wallaroo and there was a general conversation about the lousy **milk** prices and high input costs and as a throwaway line I said to Geoff we ought to bottle and sell our own **milk**.

"Geoff rang me back on the Monday morning and said he'd given Chris a ring and we should have a crack."

They did have a crack and two years later the first bottles rolled off the production line.

A decade after that first discussion, the Fleurieu **Milk Company** continues to thrive. The partners own three farms that supply **milk** for the processing plant and have recently added a new supplier to the mix and increased production to process **milk** Monday to Friday and make yoghurt on Mondays and Thursdays.

The **business** has been built around a successful domestic market. It is also getting Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service accreditation for potential exports.

"We've had enquiries from **China**, Singapore and **Hong Kong**, and because the farms are growing and we've taken on another **milk** supplier, we're interested in having a look but I wouldn't want export to be any more than 20 per cent of our income," Mr Clarke said.

"There's still a good domestic market for us. People obviously like the product."

He describes the products as fresh from the cow and pasteurised and packaged on the farm.

"We don't do anything to standardise it," Mt Clarke said. "At different times of the year it will taste a bit different" that's just the way it is.

"The people who **buy** it like to know where it comes from and that we treat our calves and cows well."

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