

# My Life on a Dairy Farm



*Catchment Champion*

Talei Holm

Finley High School



## *Creative Catchment Kids*

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. [www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html](http://www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html)

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## *Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre*

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. [www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)

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## *Murray Darling Association*

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. [www.mda.asn.au](http://www.mda.asn.au)

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Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. [www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

# My Life on a Dairy Farm

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School: Finley High School

## *Catchment Champions*

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



**Catchment Management Authority**  
Murray



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



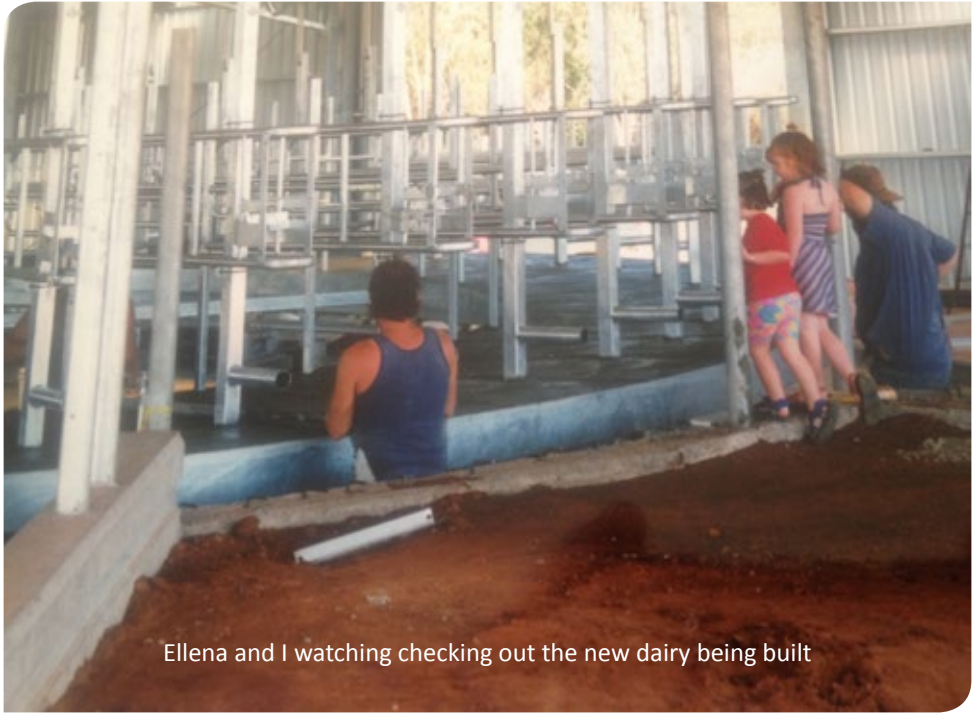
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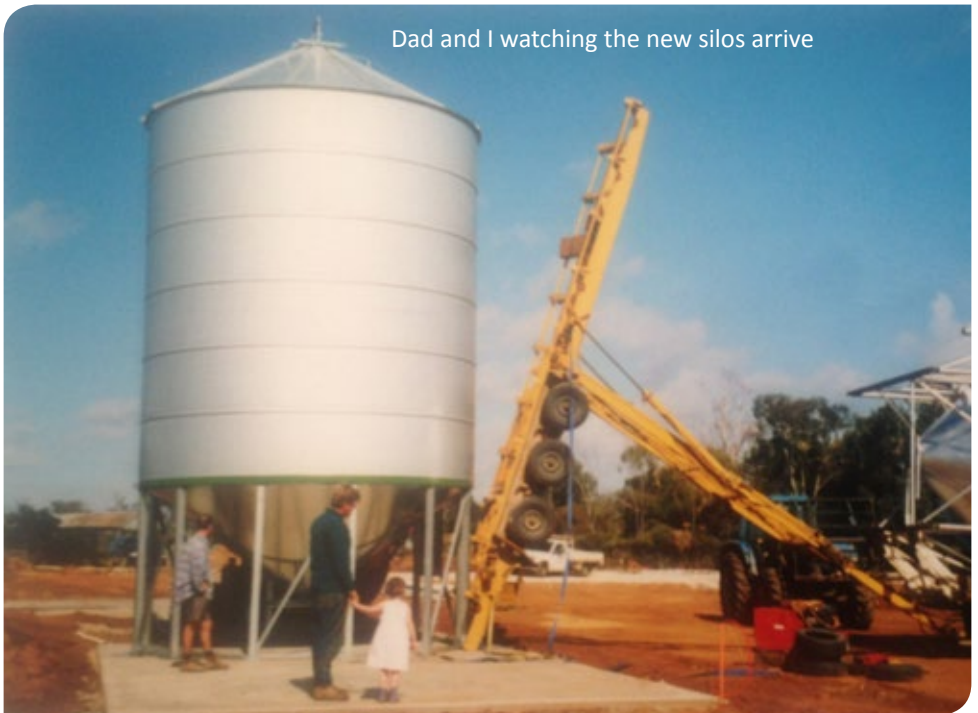
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All my life I, Talei Holm, have lived on a dairy farm just outside the town of Finley near the Victorian border. The farm is milking about 650 Holstein and Jersey dairy cattle on a 54 stand rotary dairy.

In 2000, my dad built the rotary dairy, upgrading from the 12 stand double-up herringbone. The new dairy included a special room for my older sister, Ellena, and I to stay in while our parents milked.

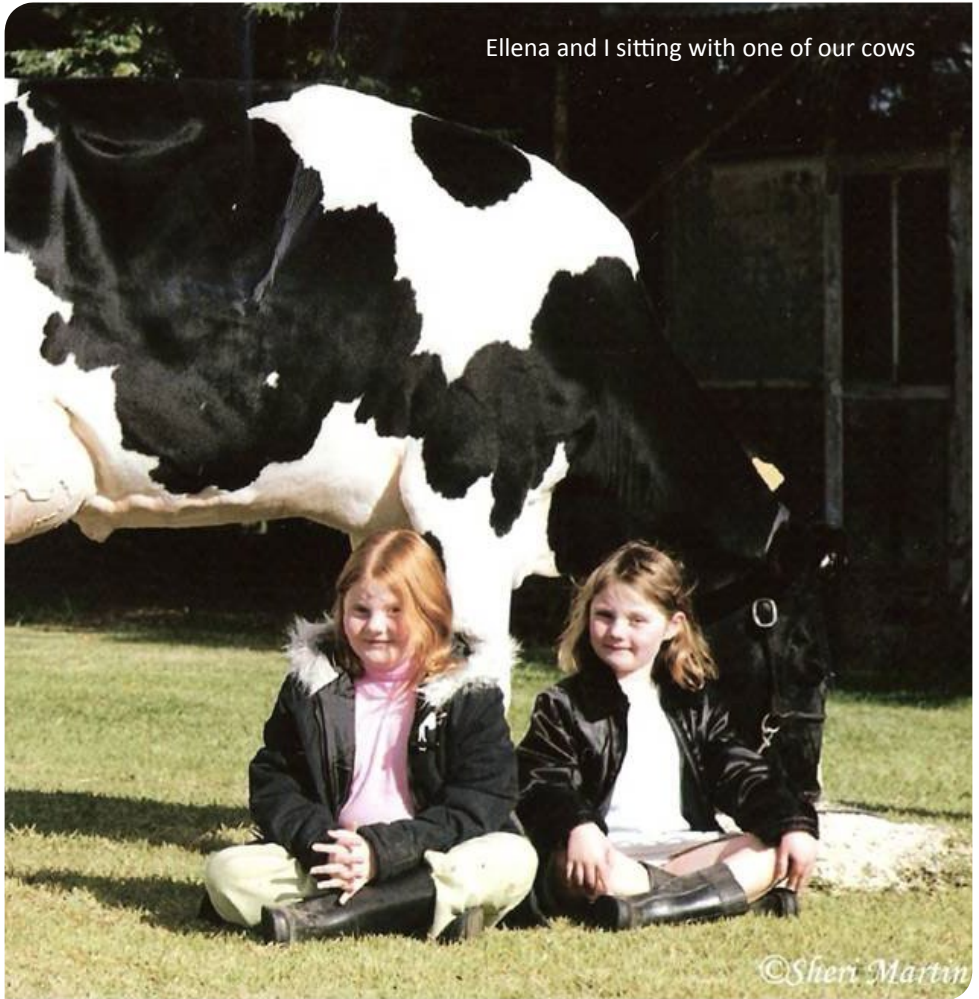


Ellena and I watching checking out the new dairy being built



Dad and I watching the new silos arrive

Ellena and I sitting with one of our cows



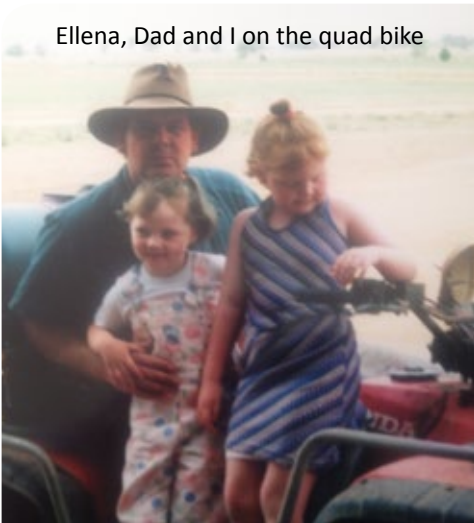
A farm is the best place to grow up, it gives you the opportunity to have space and freedom. For pocket money I would help mum feed the calves. When I started year 7, my friend and I started our annual camp. We would steal one of the 'paddock basher' Ute's and go to one of our back paddocks on a camping trip.

Two-week old calves in the rings

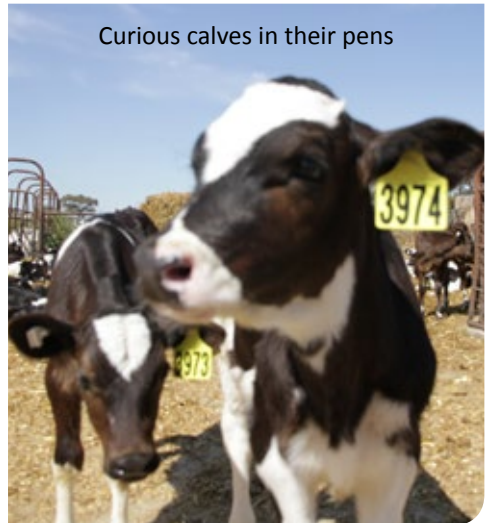


Although there is little or no access to shopping or public transport, there is still always something to do. I have been promoted to tractor work and milking, while still helping out with the calves. People in the country like playing in the local football or netball league, helping out on the farm or going out to the Chinese restaurant with friends.

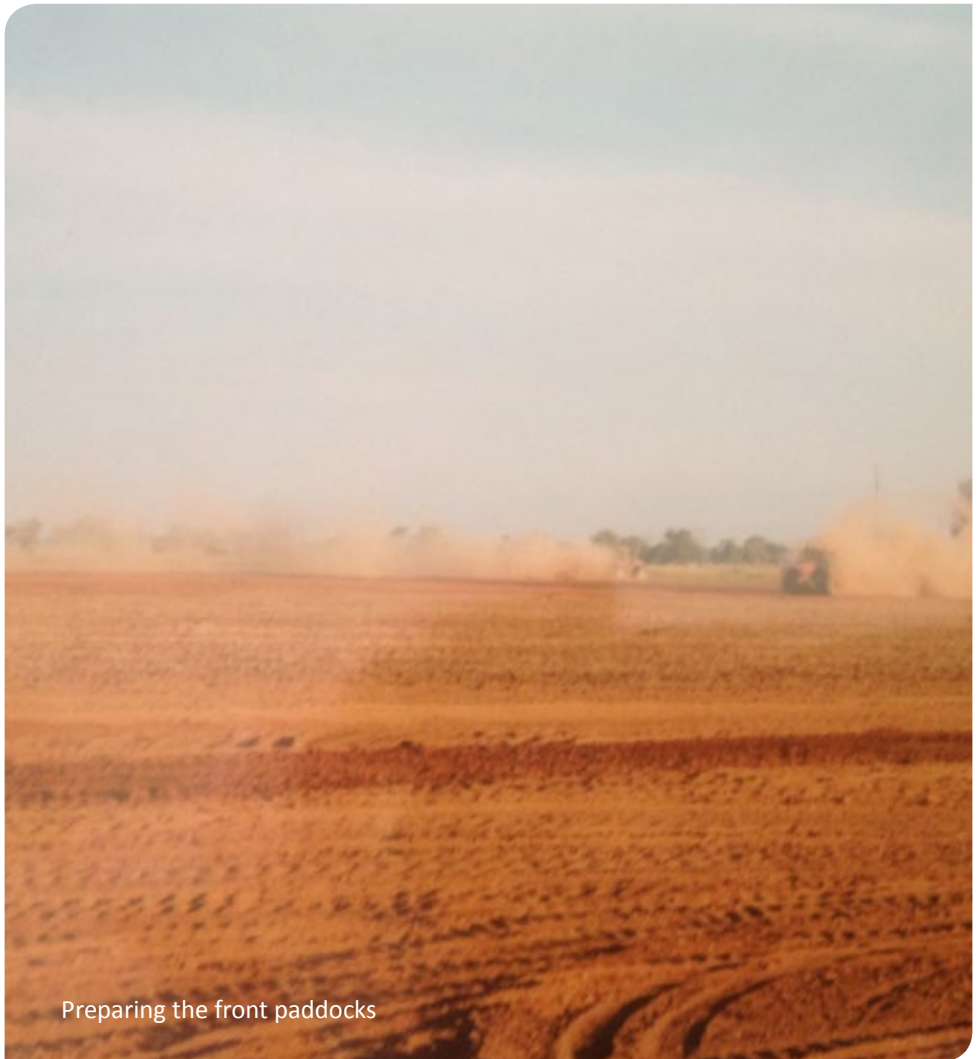
Ellena, Dad and I on the quad bike



Curious calves in their pens



When I was growing up I didn't really know there was a drought on, it was all I could really remember. Money was tight, and there wasn't a lot of feed for the cows, which was hard for Dad because before the drought we were growing 80% of the feed, and during the drought we were buying almost all the feed.



Preparing the front paddocks



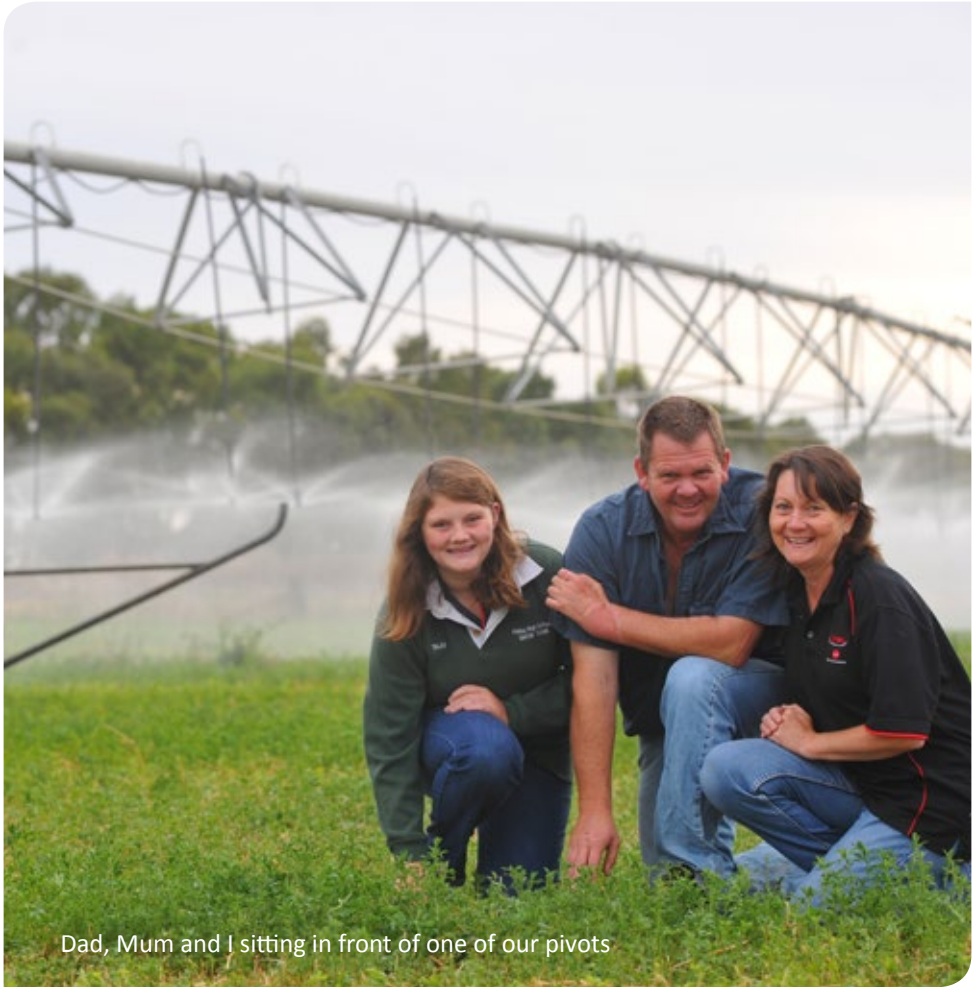


Ellena and I eating watermelon while the heifers graze along the roadside

We had to send cows away on agistment, and we spent many afternoons along the roadsides eating watermelon while the heifers grazed. So really it was quite fun, going to different places with the cows. However, as the drought went on, we saw Dad less and less.



Dad and I walking the cows home from agistment



Dad, Mum and I sitting in front of one of our pivots

I believe that farming does have a very bright future ahead of it, there are many new technologies that we could use to make farming so much easier. Rotary dairy's speed up the milking process, ID in the sheds so you know each cow that walks onto the platform and websites to help control water outlets. Things such as these make farming a much better and time efficient career than previously.



Photos: My great-great grandfather's first milking machine (below) and my great-great grandfather's family (left).



There have been so many changes to farming over the years. Such as my great-great grandfather moving away from milking in buckets to buying their first milking machine.

I think the changes of farming practice in my lifetime include putting the rotary dairy in, buying the JCB telehandler and adjusting the way the farm runs to suit the drought conditions.

I would definitely consider the Agriculture industry as a career because there are so many different departments and jobs, it's not just walking around a paddock all day. Jobs like being a farm manager, part time milker, contract tractor driver, cattle agent or an Agricultural Scientist.

I personally would love to become involved in the dairy goat side of farming and combine that with my hobby of showing animals.

Photos: Me and one of the high school's Poll Dorset lambs, Hermione (right). Filming an interview for a DVD on the Celebration of Agriculture (top right). Me and my steer Haymitch at the 2012 Finley Show (bottom right)







Me being interviewed for a DVD  
on the Celebration of Agriculture

As a high school student, I believe that there are many things schools can do to encourage farming, such as telling students that a career in agriculture isn't just about being a farmer.





Talei Holm

2013 Year 10, Finley High School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative Catchment Kids writing program was showcased at the Seventh World Environmental Education Congress, held in Morocco during June 2013.



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