



## EPA Victoria Reforms for storage of tyres and management of industrial wastes on-farm

### **What are the changes?**

A new Victorian *Environment Protection Act* and regulations are coming into force 1 July 2021. The new Act and regulations represent a significant change in environmental management across Victoria, with a move from prosecution to prevention of environmental damage.

The centrepiece of the changes is a new General Environmental Duty (GED), which will require all Victorians to take 'all practicable measures' to avoid environmental damage. This will operate in a similar way to current WorkSafe arrangements, which farmers are familiar with.

The EPA Victoria has provided verbal advice that the rollout of the new regulations will be staged, with an initial immediate focus on high-risk industries with a track record of pollution events. This will provide additional time for well-managed sectors, such as dairy, to ensure they are informed of and can comply with the new arrangements.

Further detail on the changes is available on the [EPA website](#).

### **What does this mean for my dairy farm?**

EPA Victoria consultation with industry to develop guidance on implementation of arrangements is ongoing. The key areas of interest for the dairy sector are effluent management, storage of tyres used for fodder production, and compost.

Dairy Australia, along with the United Dairyfarmers' of Victoria (UDV) and Agriculture Victoria, has been working with the EPA to ensure that the new regulations for on-farm environmental management are commensurate with risk, practical, easy to manage, and do not replicate the extensive risk management processes and procedures that farmers already undertake.

The new categorisation of effluent as an 'industrial waste' has raised concerns in the sector. At this stage, the EPA has verbally advised that this classification will not necessarily result in changes to current practice, given the industry's record of managing effluent well. We expect the EPA to publish further advice in recognition of this shortly, which we will communicate with farmers.

It is likely however that some Victorian dairy farms may not be compliant with current or future regulations around use and storage of tyres on-farm. Tyre volumes are presented in 'equivalent passenger units' (EPUs), where an EPU is based on the typical mass of material in a passenger motor vehicle tyre. EPU values are available in Schedule 3 (EPU values table) of the [Environment Protection \(Scheduled Premises and Exemptions\), \(Industrial Waste Resource\) and \(Fees\) Amendment Regulations 2015](#).

Currently, a permit is currently required for storage of more than 5000 EPUs. This 5000 EPU threshold will remain in the new regulations. Arrangements for farms holding and using more than

5000 EPU's are still being developed and it is not yet clear what the elements of a licencing system will be.

UDV, Dairy Australia and EPA Victoria have a verbal agreement to work together towards compliance for storage of tyres across the Victorian industry. This provides the industry with time to work towards a regime that recognises how tyres are used within a dairy farming system and to achieve risk management that demonstrates compliance with EPA requirements.

To help achieve compliance, Dairy Australia has prepared guidance on best-practice management of tyres on farm, which is available in the [Safe use of tyres for fodder conservation on Australian dairy farms](#) factsheet. This document draws together existing advice from materials such as the *Successful Silage Manual*, allowing farmers to review management of tyres in preparation for current and future EPA requirements.

Dairy Australia and UDV aim to ensure that arrangements on the 1 July 2021 reflect current practice as far as possible, by providing data and advice to the EPA as guidelines are developed.

Dairy Australia will be providing a series of training webinars starting in July 2021 to help farmers understand their new responsibilities under the General Environmental Duty, as well as what it means for everyday business on your farm. These will be advertised soon via RDPs and social media channels.

Further advice regarding the new rules, and any changes, will be provided as soon they are confirmed, however, you can contact Megan Hill at [megan.hill@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:megan.hill@dairyaustralia.com.au) should you have any concerns in the meantime.