



WOODLANDS
DAIRY

*A Family
Business*

Woodlands Dairy Newsletter

2026

April Edition
Volume 64



message from the CEO



Helen McDougall

CEO

Faith Message from the CEO

Isaiah 41:10

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand".

The year 2026 began with major challenges. Our region experienced drought and fires that heavily affected both farmers and Eastern Cape communities. The ongoing spread of Foot and Mouth disease across South Africa is causing significant harm to the industry, though we hope the national vaccination campaign - despite its delay - will help contain it. In addition, turbulence within one of our major retailers is indirectly impacting our business. Thankfully, as we've expanded, we've continued to diversify and reduce these risks as much as possible. Finally, while the conflict in the Middle East is distant from South Africa, it will likely have serious economic consequences here; we hope for a swift resolution to the situation.

Our First Choice brand continues to perform well and gain momentum in new categories and channels. We look forward to further innovation launches during the year, which are always exciting.

The factory is operating smoothly without significant issues. Although water supply has been tenuous during the drought, it currently appears stable and we are encountering fewer challenges with power supply, which is beneficial for ongoing operations.

Over the past year, we've witnessed significant advances across various business initiatives. This is promising because each project contributes to our operational efficiency, helping to counterbalance increasing expenses. Since earning profits in this sector is still challenging, it's essential that we consistently review and carefully manage our expenditures.

If we keep collaborating, innovating and dedicating ourselves to our common goals, I believe we'll achieve another successful year. Let's maintain this momentum and teamwork as we continue advancing Woodlands Dairy Group.

Comments

COMPANY NEWS

- Woodlands Dairy Staff Townhall
- Producers MPO AGM 2025

MARKETING

- Spykos Campaign
- Share Your Cheesy Moments Digital Campaign
- High Protein Relaunch and Product Extension
- Checkers Milki Campaign 2025
- High Protein Competition
- New Velvet Milkshake

EVENTS

- Working World Expo
- Bayradiology Standard Bank Charity Golf Day
- 23rd Annual First Choice Race 2026
- First Choice High Protein at the ECC Fitness Challenge
- First Choice High Protein at the RBC 3Rivers Enduro
- Sampling Cheddar and Gouda

LEISURE

- Easter Egg Chocolate Amasi Cake

CSI

- Woodlands Dairy's support for Sakhe Family Care
- Woodlands Dairy supports Early Childhood Development
- Lelethu Ikhaya Daycare
- CSI Projects for 2026
- Woodlands Dairy "pays it forward" with Recycled Backpacks
- World Read Aloud Day

SUSTAINABILITY

- Is Green Energy Clean Energy?
- Rivers, the Veins between our Landscape

DEPARTMENT NEWS

- A look back to 2025
- Employee of the Year - Finance Department
- Valentines Day

EMPLOYEE NEWS

- Congratulations to Justus & Faren Human
- Marzanne & Erich welcome their little one

company NEWS

KICKING OFF 2026: WOODLANDS DAIRY STAFF TOWNHALL

We started 2026 with a Staff Townhall to align teams on production targets, sales goals, operational priorities and safety standards. The session provided an opportunity for management to share the company's strategic goals, review 2025 business performance and provide updates on current production, sales and new product developments.

Safety and quality were reinforced as key priorities, while staff were encouraged to collaborate across

departments to reduce downtime, improve productivity and drive sales growth. Regional teams also joined via Microsoft Teams, ensuring that all locations were part of the discussion and aligned on the year's objectives. The Townhall set the tone for a productive year ahead, emphasising teamwork, accountability and a shared commitment to achieving Woodlands Dairy's goals in 2026.



PRODUCERS MPO AGM 2025: THREE DAYS OF UPDATES, INSIGHTS AND RECOGNITION

The Producers MPO AGM took place over three days toward the end of 2025, bringing together farmers from Humansdorp, Alexandria, Cradock and Golden Valley for an informative and worthwhile gathering.

Producers received historic and market-related updates, giving helpful insight into how the dairy industry has developed over time and what lies ahead. Updates from Woodlands Dairy covered key business matters, along with marketing initiatives and product development plans aimed at creating more opportunities and adding value.

The programme also included sustainability information, alongside important producer-related updates for 2025, helping farmers prepare for the year

ahead and stay aligned with industry expectations. A highlight of the AGM was the presentation of the Quality Awards, recognising producers for consistent high standards and dedication to quality. A special 20-year supply acknowledgement was also made, celebrating two decades of loyal partnership — a proud milestone and a great example of the strong relationships within the producer community.

Thank you to all the farmers who attended over the three days and contributed to making the AGM a success. It was great to connect, share knowledge and celebrate achievements. Here's to building on this momentum in 2026.



Back (left to right): Brett Puttergill, Hendrik Coomhans, Hercules Venter, Rudy Nel, John Walker and Neil Wilke receiving awards from Christo Du Plessis.

marketing NEWS

FIRST CHOICE HAILS POWER CUP CAMPAIGN WINNERS.

First Choice has wrapped up its "Power Up with Power Cup" campaign, rewarding consumers and retail partners. Ten winners each received a R10 000 prize which they used for various family experiences in their areas. These included stays at various hotels, including Sun City and game drives.

Sales and merchandising teams were recognised for driving sales and displays. Multisave Uitenhage topped sales, winning R50 000 in free stock. Individual awards:

- R10 000 – Ramon Naidoo (Sales Representative)
- R2 000 – Toni Thobela (Merchandiser)
- R2 000 – Ettienne Vas (Merchandiser)
- R2 000 – Anda Tyaliti (Merchandiser)

The campaign showcased teamwork for engaging experiences and growth. Congratulations to all!



SPYKOS CAMPAIGN RETAIL ELEMENT

The campaign was met with a very positive response, driving strong shopper engagement and high levels of interaction across all wholesale stores. The promotional strategy, built around the exclusive First Choice branded lunchboxes, clearly connected with the target audience by tapping into both practical benefits and emotional purchase motivations. Consequently, the campaign increased product visibility stimulated higher in-store traffic, participation and notably improved brand recall among consumers. In addition to delivering strong short-term results, the campaign successfully fulfilled its key objectives by reinforcing First Choice's position as a brand that offers both value and excitement to shoppers. It has also established a solid platform for continued growth, creating opportunities for future

promotional activity and supporting the development of long-term brand momentum within the highly competitive cheese category.



SHARE YOUR CHEESY MOMENTS DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

First Choice's "Share Your Cheesy Moments" campaign successfully transformed everyday meals into memorable, joy-filled experiences, positioning the brand at the heart of family connection and feel-good moments. By inviting consumers to snap and share their cheesiest occasions, whether a gooey braibroodjie, a beachside snack, or a perfectly stretchy pizza slice, the campaign strengthened brand equity through authentic emotional resonance. The lifestyle-focused prize further deepened loyalty by rewarding consumers in a way that aligns with the brand's warm, celebratory identity.

The campaign's impact extended well beyond engagement, delivering a remarkable 21.4% sales increase and widespread growth across nearly all pack sizes. This strong performance highlights not only smart strategy and execution, but also a genuine, market-wide embrace of the brand message. Ultimately, the campaign didn't just boost sales, it solidified First Choice as the

cheese that completes every moment worth sharing, reinforcing long-term consumer affinity and setting a powerful benchmark for future brand activity.



HIGH PROTEIN: RELAUNCH AND PRODUCT EXTENSION

We are excited to introduce High Protein Balance 15g, a new addition to our protein range, designed for everyday balance and great taste. Packed with 15g of protein for easy daily nutrition, this convenient format makes it simple to include in your daily routine.

HP Balance 15g comes in three delicious flavours Cream, Chocolate Hazelnut and Strawberry, so you can choose the one that suits your lifestyle.

The new High Protein Balance 15g range will be available online at Takealot, as well as in retail and independent stores and will be supported by in-store campaigns.

HIGH PROTEIN



CHECKERS MILKI CAMPAIGN 2025

We delivered a highly successful campaign across Checkers' Top 50 Flavoured Milk Category stores from October to December, offering shoppers the chance to win 1 of 3 Milki Home Combos valued at over R8 000. Supported by bold in-store category banners, the campaign drove strong shelf impact, boosted sales performance and accelerated social media growth across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok strengthening Milki's connection with consumers on multiple touch points.



NEW VELVET MILKSHAKE INSTANT INDULGENCE IN EVERY SIP

Introducing First Choice Velvet Milkshake, a luxuriously thick and creamy ready-to-drink milkshake made with rich full cream milk. Designed for those moments when you want a little indulgence. Velvet MILKSHAKE delivers a velvety smooth taste experience in three classic flavours: Strawberry, Chocolate and Vanilla.

Perfect for a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, a sweet treat on the go, or a weekend spoil, Velvet Milkshake offers premium taste, conveniently. Whether enjoyed as a quick mood booster or a delicious dessert alternative, Velvet Milkshake transforms everyday moments into something special.

The new Velvet Milkshake is available exclusively at Checkers stores nationwide and at First Choice Dairy Shops, making it easy for consumers to grab a rich, satisfying treat whenever the craving strikes. It's creamy, flavourful and perfectly suited to busy lifestyles where people want a quick escape in a bottle.

Chill. Sip. Escape.



STAND A CHANCE TO
WIN
1 OF 3 ULTIMATE FIT KITS,
EACH WORTH
R11 000



HOW TO ENTER
BUY ANY 250ML HIGH PROTEIN RECOVERY. SCAN THE QR CODE. KEEP YOUR TILL SLIP SAFE!

NEW LOOK
IMPROVED RECIPE



PUSH PAST POSSIBLE

We successfully launched the new High Protein Recovery drink (21g) with an improved recipe and bold new pack design through the Recover Stronger campaign in Pick n Pay's Top 50 Flavoured Milk Category stores nationwide. Running from 20 October to 14 December 2025, the campaign offered shoppers the chance to win 1 of 3 Ultimate Fit Kits worth R11 000 each.

Strong in-store visibility, led by impactful category banners, ensured standout shelf presence and clearly communicated the product's enhanced recovery benefits. The campaign was also extended to Checkers, supported by wobblers to boost on-shelf visibility and shopper engagement.

Overall, the campaign marked a key milestone for the brand, introducing a more powerful recovery solution and strengthening consumer connection at the point of purchase.

VelvetTM MILKSHAKE



*instant
indulgence*



NEW

- ✓ Rich & Creamy with Full Cream Milk
- ✓ 3 Classic Flavours
- ✓ Velvety Smooth
- ✓ Chill. Sip. Escape

events

NEWS

WOODLANDS DAIRY ENGAGES YOUTH AT THE WORKING WORLD EXPO

Woodlands Dairy recently participated in the Working World Expo, connecting with Grade 12 students and unemployed youth to highlight career opportunities within the dairy and FMCG sectors.

Our team showcased the company's learnerships and skills development programs, offering insights into potential career paths and providing guidance for those entering the workforce. Representatives from Quality & Assurance, Services, Finance, HR, Procurement, Health & Safety and Marketing were on hand to engage

directly with attendees, answer questions and share their experiences.

The initiative enabled us to connect with future talent, reinforce our commitment to youth empowerment and strengthen Woodlands Dairy's reputation as a socially responsible employer. The expo also provided valuable exposure for the brand, showcasing our dedication to community development and creating opportunities for the next generation.



9TH ANNUAL BAYRADIOLOGY STANDARD BANK CHARITY GOLF DAY

The 9th Annual Bayradiology Standard Bank Charity Golf Day was a great success despite windy conditions and scattered showers. The day was filled with laughter, strong competition and an incredible atmosphere on the course.

High Protein Recovery proudly sponsored a tee, showcasing our refreshed brand look and launching the new 27g High Protein MAX, which was very well received by attendees.

The event raised an exceptional R216 000 - funds that will directly support Cataract Surgery at Provincial Hospital, helping restore sight and improve the quality of life for patients in our community.



23RD ANNUAL FIRST CHOICE RACE KICKS OFF 2026

The 23rd Annual First Choice Race took place on Saturday, 3 January 2026 at Victory Christian School in Jeffreys Bay and was, once again, a huge success.

We were thrilled to see record numbers in all three categories: the 15km main race, the 5km fun run and the 60m Milki Moo Dash for children under nine. This event has grown into one of the region's top sporting highlights, uniting our community in celebration of health, fitness and fun. It's the ideal way to kick off the year on a fitness note. Post-festive season, many use it to reset, refocus and get back on track - a brilliant motivator for health goals. A standout moment was Melikhaya Frans winning the men's race for a

tenth straight year, showcasing incredible discipline, consistency and talent. Such feats inspire veterans and newcomers alike, embodying the race's spirit of excellence and perseverance. Runners refuelled with First Choice High Protein Recovery, whilst the little ones enjoyed First Choice Milki, keeping everyone energised and smiling.

The First Choice Race is now a cherished Kouga District tradition, championing health, fitness and community. We are proud that Woodlands Dairy hosts an event that unites people, promotes healthy habits and starts the year so positively.



HIGH PROTEIN RECOVERY AT THE ECC FITNESS CHALLENGE

The ECC Annual Fitness Challenge in Gqeberha brought athletes of all levels together for a day celebrating endurance, athleticism and community spirit. From novice participants to seasoned competitors, the event showcased determination, teamwork and a shared passion for fitness. Woodlands Dairy was proud to support athletes throughout the day with First Choice High Protein, helping them refuel and recover their muscles for peak performance. The launch of our new 27g High Protein MAX was a highlight, receiving excellent

feedback from participants eager for high-quality, performance-focused nutrition. Beyond performance, the event highlighted the critical role of nutrition, wellness and recovery in achieving fitness goals. First Choice continues to reinforce its commitment as a trusted partner for active, healthy lifestyles, supporting athletes both on and off the course. The ECC challenge was more than a competition — it was a celebration of fitness, resilience and community and First Choice was thrilled to be part of it.



HIGH PROTEIN AT THE RBC 3RIVERS ENDURO

The RBC 3Rivers Enduro, held on 16 November 2025 at 3Rivers Trails, Crossways Farm Village, Thornhill, was a highlight on the Eastern Cape mountain biking calendar. The race welcomed athletes of all levels, offering two exciting challenges:

- the Lite Enduro (3 stages) and
- the Full Enduro (6 stages).

Woodlands Dairy was proud to support the event with High Protein as an official sponsor, providing participants with essential nutrition and recovery solutions. Our recovery drinks were available throughout the race,

helping athletes refuel, recover and perform at their best. The day was a celebration of endurance, skill and community spirit, showcasing the determination and passion of every rider. Woodlands Dairy continues to reinforce its commitment to supporting active lifestyles, ensuring athletes have the fuel they need with High Protein to achieve peak performance.

This partnership highlights the role of proper nutrition in sports and strengthens High Protein's presence as a trusted partner for athletes across South Africa.



SAMPLING CHEDDAR & GOUDA AT PICK N PAY OTTERY

The Cheddar and Gouda sampling was received extremely well by consumers. Overall response was very positive, with participants highlighting how much they enjoyed the taste of every flavour offered.

The Cheddar was praised for its rich, sharp and well-balanced flavour profile, while the Gouda stood out for its smooth, creamy texture and slightly sweet, nutty

notes. Consumers commented that both varieties were flavourful without being overpowering, making them appealing to a wide range of tastes.

Many participants expressed interest in purchasing after sampling, noting the high quality and satisfying taste experience.

The sampling successfully generated strong engagement and positive brand perception.



leisure

NEWS

Our guest - TV presenter and cookbook author Marinda Engelbrecht - prefers using First Choice Amasi when baking this delicious Easter inspired Chocolate Cake.

EASTER EGG CHOCOLATE AMASI CAKE

INGREDIENTS

For the Cake:

- 2 C cake flour
- ¾ C cocoa powder
- 2 C white sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 C oil (sunflower or canola)
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1½ C First Choice Full Cream Amasi
- ½ C boiling water

For the Buttercream:

- 250g First Choice Butter, room temperature
- ½ C cocoa powder, sifted
- 3½ - 4 C icing sugar, sifted
- 2-3 Tbsp First Choice Cream or Full Cream Milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- A pinch of salt
- Optional: 100g dark chocolate, melted & cooled



DIRECTIONS

For the Cake:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease and line two 20cm round cake tins.
2. In a large bowl, sift together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Stir in sugar.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk oil, eggs and First Choice Full Cream Amasi until smooth.
4. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
5. Add boiling water and mix gently. The batter will be thin - this ensures a moist crumb.
6. Divide evenly between tins.
7. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.
8. Cool in tins for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

For the Buttercream:

9. Beat the butter on medium-high speed for 4 minutes.
10. Add sifted cocoa powder and beat until fully incorporated.
11. Gradually add icing sugar, one cup at a time, beating well between additions.
12. Add vanilla, salt and 2 Tbsp First Choice Cream. Beat on high for 3-5 minutes, until light and fluffy.
13. Optional: Fold in melted dark chocolate for an ultra-luxurious finish.
14. Adjust consistency with additional cream if needed.

Assemble:

15. Level cake layers if preferred.
16. Spread a generous layer of buttercream between layers.
17. Cover the outside of the cake.
18. Decorate with Easter eggs and fresh flowers.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: WOODLANDS DAIRY'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR SAKHE FAMILY CARE

In 2025, we continued to build on our commitment to community upliftment by strengthening our partnership with the Sakhe Family Care Development Centre.



This year, Woodlands Dairy proudly provided stationery and general essentials to support the various campaigns they run throughout the year. These resources play a key role in helping Sakhe deliver impactful programmes - from educational workshops to skills development initiatives - ensuring their team can focus on creating meaningful change in our communities.

By supporting these day-to-day needs, we're not only easing operational pressures but also helping the centre reach more beneficiaries and extend its positive influence across the region.

We're grateful for this ongoing partnership and remain committed to empowering initiatives that uplift, educate and build stronger, more resilient communities.

WOODLANDS DAIRY SUPPORTS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Woodlands Dairy continues to make a meaningful impact on early childhood development through ongoing support of Kate van der Merwe Crèche. Over 2024 and 2025, the company has invested in improving learning environments, providing educational toys and supporting staff to enhance classroom experiences. These contributions help stimulate child development, strengthen educator capacity and create a nurturing space where young learners can grow and thrive.

Through initiatives like this, Woodlands Dairy demonstrates its ongoing commitment to community upliftment and the nurturing of young minds, ensuring a positive and lasting impact on the next generation.



WOODLANDS DAIRY STRENGTHENS SUPPORT FOR LELETHU IKHAYA DAYCARE

Woodlands Dairy continues to demonstrate its commitment to community care and social responsibility by strengthening ongoing support for Lelethu Ikhaya Daycare, a centre dedicated to providing care and early education for children. Recently, Woodlands Dairy donated a water tank to ensure clean and reliable water for the daycare. This vital contribution supports hygiene, meal preparation and daily activities, helping to maintain a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn and grow.

The donation reflects Woodlands Dairy's ongoing dedication to uplifting communities and investing in initiatives that make a real difference in the lives of children and families. By supporting Lelethu Ikhaya Daycare, Woodlands Dairy continues to play an active role in fostering healthier, happier and more resilient communities.



WOODLANDS DAIRY TO SUPPORT 18 CSI PROJECTS IN 2026

In 2026, Woodlands Dairy is proud to continue its commitment to community development by supporting 18 CSI projects across the Kouga region. The company's focus areas include education, health, infrastructure and feeding vulnerable communities, ensuring a positive impact on those who need it most.

The projects supported this year include:

- Bet-El Revival Centre
- Masikhathalelaneni
- J-Bay Recycling Project
- Kate van der Merwe Crèche
- Joykids International
- Ithemba Family Support Centre
- Shekinah Soup Kitchen
- Sakhe Singamadoda
- Sewende Laan Soup Kitchen
- Angel's Day Care Centre
- 7th Heaven Children's Haven
- J-Bay Educare Centre
- Child Welfare Humansdorp
- Care 4 U Support
- Healthy Mom and Baby Clinic
- Lelethu Ikhaya Daycare
- Madiba Bay Crèche
- Oyster Bay Healing Centre

Through these initiatives, Woodlands Dairy continues to uplift communities, empower children and families and contribute to sustainable social development, reinforcing the company's role as a responsible and caring corporate citizen.



WOODLANDS DAIRY "PAYS IT FORWARD" WITH RECYCLED BACKPACKS

Woodlands Dairy is proud to launch an innovative project that gives our old truck tarpaulins a second life. Instead of ending up in landfill, these durable materials are being repurposed into strong, weather-resistant backpacks for children in our communities. This initiative is more than just recycling – it supports sustainability, creates jobs and helps learners carry their school supplies as part of our ongoing CSI programmes. What started as a small idea is already making a big impact: every backpack represents less waste and more opportunity for a child to learn and thrive.

We recently had the privilege of gifting the boys at ACVV Khayaletu Child and Youth Care Centre with durable school backpacks. Khayaletu provides a safe, supportive home for up to 35 boys aged roughly 6

to 21 years who have been removed from dangerous environments, offering them care and structured support to grow into responsible, functioning members of society. The centre focuses on education, life skills, sports and therapeutic programmes - giving these young men the tools they need to succeed both in and beyond school.

Seeing the joy on their faces as they received backpacks that will serve them every school day, was incredibly rewarding. This initiative not only supports learners with practical supplies but also reflects our shared values of sustainability, community care and making a real difference in young lives.

"For the Good of All" isn't just a slogan - it's how we show up for our communities, one backpack at a time.





CELEBRATING WORLD READ ALOUD DAY

To mark World Read Aloud Day, Woodlands Dairy visited Graslaagte Primary School and Kruisfontein Primary School to promote literacy and inspire a love of reading among learners. Educators also joined the sessions, helping to create a supportive and enthusiastic environment that nurtured curiosity and fostered a passion for reading.

This initiative reflects Woodlands Dairy's ongoing commitment to community development and education, empowering young learners with the skills and inspiration they need to grow and thrive.

sustainability NEWS

IS GREEN ENERGY, CLEAN ENERGY?

Keeping the lights on has driven a rapid expansion of alternative energy sources. Technologies such as wind, solar and hydrogen have emerged as critical solutions to South Africa's energy challenges. These renewable sources, often referred to as green energy, promise cleaner power and greater energy security. But an important question remains: how green are these alternatives really?

According to Eskom's 2023 report, grid electricity carries a carbon footprint of approximately 940 gCO₂e per kWh. By comparison, solar power produces around 41 gCO₂e per kWh over its full lifecycle. Most of this footprint - about 60-70% - occurs during raw material extraction, manufacturing, transport and installation. The remainder comes from operation, maintenance and end-of-life disposal. This highlights an important truth: green energy is clean when it's running, but like anything we build, it has an environmental footprint. Solar panels, wind turbines and batteries all require materials and manufacturing, while biomass and biogas systems depend on responsible sourcing and good management. These impacts are real - but crucially, they are largely once-off.

That's where renewable energy clearly wins. Unlike fossil fuels, which release pollution every time they are burned, renewable systems generate very low emissions during daily operation. Over their lifetime, they typically offset their initial carbon footprint many times over.

So, is green energy perfectly clean? No. Is it far cleaner than fossil fuels? Without question. Woodlands Dairy relies predominantly on renewable energy sources for our day-to-day operations with



Biomass, biogas and solar contributing around 70 % of our overall energy requirements. The sustainability journey is not about perfection, but about progress. By combining renewable energy with efficiency, proper maintenance and smarter resource use, we can significantly reduce emissions, lower long-term costs and build a more resilient energy system.

Research shows that globally the cost of solar PV has decreased by around 90% since 2009, making it one of the cheapest forms of energy in history. With this rapid growth comes responsibility - particularly around end-of-life management. Solar waste includes panels, inverters, batteries, frames and cables and recycling remains, according to DESCO electronic recyclers, costly and complex. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) indicated that an estimated 78 million tonnes of solar panels and solar components worldwide will reach the end of their useful life by 2025. Rather than a setback, this challenge presents a powerful opportunity. The scale of renewable energy

deployment creates space for innovation, new industries, improved recycling technologies and job creation. With the right systems in place, today's waste challenge can become tomorrow's circular economy success.

Green energy isn't a silver bullet, but it remains one of the strongest tools we have to make better choices, every day. Water supply from boreholes also depends on a stable electricity supply to power the pumps and filtration systems. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain a reliable power source to avoid any disruptions to water extraction. Furthermore, ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the boreholes are necessary to ensure long-term sustainability. This includes assessing the longevity of the boreholes, ensuring water quality remains consistent and addressing any potential issues before they affect the dairy's production capabilities.

The drought conditions in Humansdorp underscored the importance of alternative water sources, particularly for industries like dairy that rely heavily on a consistent water supply. Boreholes have proven to be a reliable solution, but they come with the responsibility of careful management, regular maintenance and continuous monitoring.

By taking the necessary steps to ensure the water quality and quantity from our boreholes, we can confidently continue to produce high-quality dairy products while minimising our reliance on municipal water sources. Through these efforts, Woodlands Dairy is not only securing its own operations but also contributing to the broader water conservation efforts in the region.

RIVERS, THE VEINS BETWEEN OUR LANDSCAPE

At Fairfield Dairy, we are committed to sustainable production that safeguards natural resources, advances environmental stewardship and strengthens long-term resilience across our value chain. Central to this commitment is the responsible use and protection of fresh-water sources. This is due to recognising that water availability and quality play a critical role in maintaining both product integrity and environmental sustainability.

As we observe the International Day of Action for Rivers, we are reminded that rivers are the veins of our landscape connecting ecosystems, communities and industries. In KwaZulu-Natal, particularly in Howick, water systems such as the uMngeni River and Midmar Dam play a vital role in supporting community wellbeing, agricultural production and



Figure 1: Umngeni river

regional economic activity. Protecting these water resources through efficient water management, responsible wastewater disposal and collaboration across our supply chain is not only an environmental responsibility, but a practical step toward achieving our sustainability objectives.

The uMngeni River (Fig. 1) is one of KwaZulu-Natal's most significant water systems, that is central to domestic water supply, recreation and farming, particularly the region's pasture-based dairy industry. Dams such as Midmar and Albert Falls help balance water availability by storing water in the rainy season and maintaining supply during drier periods. However, increasing water demand, land-use changes and climate variability continue to place pressure on these systems. These challenges highlight why the International Day of Action for Rivers remains so important. It calls attention to the need for responsible management of the water sources we depend on every day.

Understanding the challenges: Climate change is altering rainfall patterns in increasingly unpredictable ways. In KwaZulu-Natal, more frequent and intense rainfall events have resulted in destructive floods that damage infrastructure, erode fertile soils and transport pollutants into rivers and fresh waterways. The 2022 KZN floods severely impacted rivers and dams by overwhelming infrastructure, causing widespread contamination and causing massive overflow, leading to over 450 deaths and R17-billion in damages. In contrast, large parts of the Eastern Cape continue to endure prolonged droughts, characterised by critically low dam levels, persistent water shortages and mounting pressure on rural communities and agricultural systems. Major water supply systems, such as those serving the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro have struggled to recover, with combined storage often dropping below 40%. Although these provinces experience opposite climatic extremes, both scenarios highlight the growing vulnerability of our water resources under a changing climate.

Anthropogenic factors play a huge role in the deterioration of river health. The uMngeni River has faced repeated pollution incidents, often linked to negligence and inadequate infrastructure management. Reports have documented sewage contamination, plastic waste accumulation, illegal dumping and in severe cases, industrial and chemical discharges. Rivers are not only sources of fresh water; but are essential ecological systems that regulate floods, buffer storm impacts and provide habitat

for aquatic biodiversity. Rivers sustain wetlands by supplying continuous flows that support natural purification processes. However, dam construction, pollution and river channelisation have significantly disrupted these natural functions, leading to reduced biodiversity, compromised ecosystem integrity and a diminished capacity to deliver critical ecosystem services.



Our responsibility: Fairfield Dairy is situated close to the Umngeni River and the Midmar Dam. The factory prides itself in the fact that it advocates for sustainable production and operation. This means that every decision that we make in either waste management, establishment of boreholes or even disposing our wastewater is done in a way that freshwater sources are always protected.

Individuals and communities who live next to rivers can contribute meaningfully by using water wisely, preventing litter from entering waterways, supporting river clean-ups and protecting natural vegetation along riverbanks. These everyday actions strengthen the health of our rivers and help safeguard water quality. Farmers and land managers also play a critical role by managing the areas around rivers responsibly, reducing the risk of contaminants reaching waterways. Businesses and industries can contribute by monitoring how they use water, minimising pollution risks and supporting community efforts to protect catchments. Working together ensures that water systems are maintained not only for current needs but for future generations.

WOODLANDS DAIRY | APRIL 2026

As we observe the International Day of Action for Rivers, the contrast between flooding in KwaZulu-Natal and drought in the Eastern Cape offers a powerful reminder of how valuable it is to protect our rivers. By working together, raising awareness and taking responsibility at local and regional levels, we can protect the rivers and dams that sustain our communities, our ecosystems and our collective future.



department NEWS

LOOK BACK 2025 - FINANCE DEPARTMENT

2025 was a tough year for most and the Finance social committee chose **Psalm 18:33** – “*He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; He causes me to stand on the heights*” as theme to end the year.

As we look back on the year, this verse reminded us that God equips us with sure footing, strength and the ability to rise above challenges – just like the steady feet of a deer on rocky heights. We also used Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. His bright red nose might make him the most famous of the herd, but even Rudolph can’t pull Santa’s sleigh alone.

No matter the colour of your “reindeer nose,” the truth remains:

- It takes a team to reach great heights.
- It takes unity to move forward.
- It takes all of us to get the job done well.

This year, each person brought their own strengths, talents and “shine” to the team – and that is what carried us through. Thank you for every effort, every late night, every idea and every moment of teamwork. Here’s to standing on new heights together in the year ahead.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR IN FINANCE DEPARTMENT

In a rare tie, Shalom Stathu and Yolande Strydom both received equal votes from colleagues for Employee of the Year in the Finance Department in 2025.

Yolande joined in May 2023 as Creditors Clerk, efficiently handling thousands of monthly transport invoices and coordinating Woodlands fleet vehicle licences. As office SHE (Safety, Health and Environment) Representative and Stationery Counter Mainstay, she still hit her 2025 targets in just a few months.

Shalom started as a processing clerk in 2020 amid the Covid pandemic, earning promotion to Debtors Clerk in 2023. Her enthusiasm and high performance shone through, including smashing monthly targets in several 2025 months.



CELEBRATING VALENTINE'S DAY

Moving away from our standard Valentine's photo on the outside of our office, the Finance team brought the heart of the celebration right into the office - literally! With the passageway beautifully decorated with floating hearts from the ceiling, the team squeezed 40 people into the narrow space, creating a moment filled with fun, laughter and plenty of shared giggles.

Despite the scorching summer heat, spirits were high and the love was definitely in the air. A big thank-you to everyone for always being prepared to leave their busy desks to help make this day unforgettable!

employee NEWS



HAPPY UNION

Having attended Humansdorp Senior Secondary School together, Justus and Faren Human from Finance never imagined that years later their paths would cross again through a simple prayer for a soulmate.

On 20 February 2026, they were united in marriage – a beautiful love story written by God and guided by His perfect timing.

May the true love you share today grow stronger as you grow old together. Congratulations!



Marzanne, our dedicated Management Cost Accountant and her husband Erich welcomed a healthy, happy and very energetic baby boy, Jesse Daniël, on 2 December 2025.

Weighing a sturdy 3.28kg at birth, little Jesse has already brought immense joy to the family. Both Mum and baby are doing wonderfully well.

As true outdoor enthusiasts, the Ungerers are poised for countless adventures together in the years ahead - from family hikes to sunny picnics under the African sky.

Heartfelt congratulations to Marzanne and Erich!

Online NEWSLETTER

Did you know that you can also read our Newsletter online? Explore what's happening at work, follow live links to videos, discover delicious recipes and so much more!

