



Rivers of milk to flow

South-west sets 3bn litre target

By **TERRY SIM**

A GOAL of three billion litres of milk by the year 2020 has been proposed in the south-west dairy industry's draft strategic plan released at the Victorian Dairy Conference in Warrnambool yesterday.

WestVic Dairy executive officer Mike Weise said the draft plan — *Down The Track* — had been mailed to farmers a week ago and feedback was being invited.

The three billion litres of milk goal represented a 50 per cent increase in production from a 3.7 per cent annually compounding increase for the next 11 years, he said. "It gives us a destination to go to. If you have somewhere to go to, you know what you are aiming to do," Mr Weise said.

The goal was achievable and the region had doubled milk production between 1989 and 1999, he said.

"So we've got a track record of creating this kind of increase in the past."

The report also outlined strategies to achieve the goal within the seven "pillars" of the industry — people, natural resources, infrastructure, capital, markets, production base, human resources and knowledge.

To achieve the 2020 production goal, Mr Weise said the industry needed the very best people, good quality land and water, a supportive

community, the ability to handle climate change risks, good transport systems, good sources of capital, access to best on-farm and processor technology, good power, knowledge and communication. "We also need to be able to sustain our current markets and find new ones."

Mr Weise said WestVic Dairy had spoken to 700

people in the *Down The Track* process.

"A lot of commentators are saying this is the most thorough strategic planning process they've seen," he

said. The conference was opened by a DVD presentation of the Minister for Agriculture Joe Helper and included presentations from leading Australian and New Zealand industry researchers and analysts.

Farmers attended sessions on markets, automatic milking systems, profitable feeding, pasture and fodder research, and corporate farming.

The conference continues in the Warrnambool Entertainment Centre today with a health theme and sessions on sustainable farm families, heart disease, diabetes, capacity building and virtual farm tours.

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**WestVic Dairy executive officer
Mike Weise**