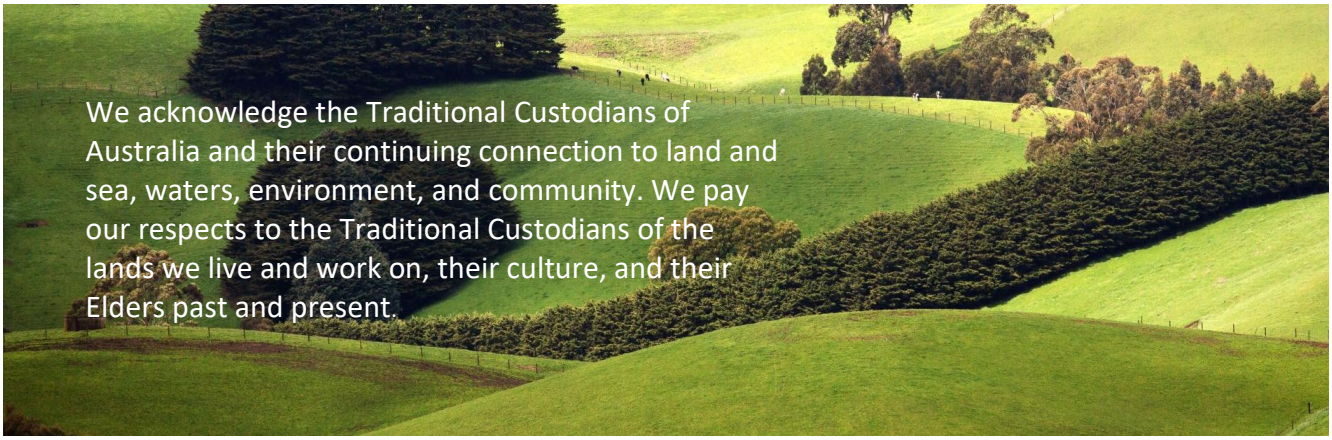
DataGene
Solutions for Herd Development

ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2025-26

JUNE 2025

DataGene Limited

Table of contents



Introduction

DataGene is an organisation owned by the Australian dairy industry, with its founding members including Dairy Australia, Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), and the National Herd Improvement Association (NHIA). As of June 2025, DataGene's membership is 28 members, encompassing herd testing centres, genetics suppliers, genetic service providers, data service providers, and breed associations.

This Annual Operating Plan outlines DataGene's planned operations, activities, and corporate expenditure for the 2025-26 period. The organisation's initiatives are guided by the Strategic Priorities set out in its five-year Business Plan (FY2025-2029). Please note that the financial information included in this plan is accurate as of the publication date.

This AOP builds on the strong foundations laid in 2024–25, particularly through two cornerstone initiatives: the National Breeding Objective (NBO) Review and the DataConnect project.

The NBO Review represents an 18-month process that has actively engaged stakeholders to shape the future of herd improvement in Australia. Through hundreds of industry interactions, we have co-developed recommendations to refine the three breeding indices - ensuring they remain aligned with evolving farm systems, market demands, and sustainability goals. These updated indices will be released in December 2025 and mark an important step forward in delivering genetic progress that reflects the needs of farmers and the broader industry.

The DataConnect project is transforming the way data flows within the dairy sector. By improving data connectivity across systems and organisations, DataConnect supports better decision-making on farms and enhances the reliability of tools like breeding values. To date, it has integrated close to one million new records and enabled the delivery of more accurate, farm-relevant insights - such as the Fertility Focus Report (FFR) and Mastitis Focus Report (MFR). This AOP commits to further accelerating this work by expanding data integration and access.

Together, these initiatives exemplify our commitment to turning science into impact - enabling farmers to make more informed decisions, driving continuous improvement, and ensuring our tools and technologies keep pace with the changing needs of the dairy sector.

Our Vision

Enabling farmers and industry to maximise profit through data-driven decisions.

Our Mission

DataGene delivers world-class genetic evaluation, software, and decision-making tools to enable Australian farmers to improve their herd and maximise their profit through data-driven decisions and innovative industry services.

Our Values

1. COMMITMENT TO CLIENTS - We work towards shared and innovative outcomes for members and stakeholders.
2. DIRECT, OPEN & HONEST COMMUNICATION - We depend on genuine and sustained stakeholder engagement.
3. INCLUSIVE - We are genuinely inclusive and value farmer and member involvement in governance and oversight functions.
4. INNOVATIVE - We aim to be creative and innovative in our products and services.
5. ENGAGEMENT WITH EMPLOYEES - We treat our people with respect, support them in their development and value their contribution to our success.

6. INTEGRITY & ETHICAL VALUES - We apply best-practice corporate governance and financial management principles.

Focus Areas for 2025-26

DataGene's Business Plan for 2025-2029 outlines 13 strategic priorities across five key pillars, guiding its efforts over the next five financial years. These priorities were shaped through collaboration with industry partners and stakeholders, aiming to build on DataGene's strong foundation. Our goal is to empower dairy farmers to adopt the latest science, technology and tools, fostering a resilient, innovative, and collaborative agricultural sector that thrives now and in the future.

This Annual Operating Plan describes the specific areas within these priorities that will be completed in 2025-26. The key focuses areas within each pillar for 2025-26 are called out below. The two most important work areas are the implementation of the NBO Review results and new breeding values (Survival ABV and Calf Vitality ABV, both a result of work at DairyBio) and continued focus on enabling better farm decisions through connecting new sources of data through DataConnect.

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES Business Plan 2025-29	KEY FOCUS AREAS DataGene AOP 2025-26
Make efficient decisions using data	• DataVat provides seamless transmission of data between on-farm systems, DataGene, and industry data users. • DataVat becomes the industry reporting platform for sustainability metrics. • We work with Dairy Australia, milk processors, animal health sector, and others on improved data collection and analytics. • We develop new reports, tools, and resources to help make the best whole-farm decisions.	• Complete DataVat/Centralised Data Repository (CDR) rebuild Phase 1 • 500 new farms connected through DataConnect • Connect at least one iDDEN (International Dairy Data Exchange Network) data source • Increase user numbers for DataVat, HerdData and the DataGene website by 20%.
Improve sustainability and animal performance through R&D and herd improvement	• We deliver world best practice genetic evaluations. • We collect herd performance data to grow Australia's largest dairy dataset. • We assist with development of high value ABVs. • We promote the use of genomic testing.	• Implement and rollout the NBO Review results. • Deliver updated Survival ABV and new calf-related ABV • Ginfo farmers are engaged and deliver 15,000 genotypes and 9,000 Linear Type Evaluations (LTEs) to the reference population • 50,000 heifers genomically tested.
Capture and promote the value from herd improvement	• We promote the use of independent, validated and science-backed indexes and ABVs. • We effectively communicate the value proposition of data-informed decisions.	• RDPs have a genetics and data-based activity on their plan • Large herds use only Good Bulls and the proportion of genomic testing increases
Diversified and improved service offerings	• We are a leader in the coordination, development and maintenance of software and data services. • We collaborate with stakeholders in livestock and other agricultural sectors to deliver services. • We work with herd recording centres to rapidly adopt technology and services.	• Deliver two external projects • Deliver the Forage Value Index (FVI) • HerdData has 200 users

STRATEGIC PILLAR	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES Business Plan 2025-29	KEY FOCUS AREAS DataGene AOP 2025-26
Efficiently deliver our services	• We apply best-practice corporate governance and financial management. • We have the right capability and processes to innovate and deliver value. • We sustain effective stakeholder and employee engagement. • We develop and maintain appropriate IT infrastructure, and policies.	• Maintain engagement through Standing Committees • Review compliance with National Farmers Federation (NFF) Farm Data Code • External security audit completed

Partnerships and Collaboration

DataGene works closely with a diverse network of strategic partners, end-users, customers, and stakeholders to drive innovation for farmers and industry. Our collaborations are crucial for delivering value across the sector.

Dairy farmers

- **Funding and Support:** Contribute through dairy farmer levies paid to Dairy Australia.
- **Tools and Products:** Use resources like the Good Bulls App, Genetic Progress Report, DataVat, and HerdPlatform, and purchase products like Genomic Breeding Values.
- **Engagement:** A key audience for DataGene's extension, communication, and marketing efforts.
- **Data Contribution:** Supply essential data for genetic evaluations, research, and industry development.

Service providers

- **Tool Utilisation:** Use breeding values and tools such as the Good Bulls App, Genetic Progress Report, DataVat, HerdPlatform and Centre.
- **Collaboration:** Work with DataGene on projects and initiatives.
- **Market Engagement:** Engage with our communication and marketing activities and purchase services like breeding values and software.
- **Data Pipeline:** Contribute valuable data to DataVat, supporting the industry's data ecosystem.

Industry partners

- **Dairy Australia (DA):** As a founding member and primary funder, Dairy Australia collaborates closely with DataGene on strategically important projects such as DataConnect as well as software solutions like the Fertility and Mastitis Focus Reports.
- **Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF):** Advocates for herd improvement and their involvement ensures that DataGene's priorities are well aligned with the broader dairy farming community.
- **National Herd Improvement Association (NHIA):** A founding member, with many of its members also direct members of DataGene. Our work also extends to non-NHIA members, including major collaborators like Zoetis, Neogen, Easy Dairy, and Apiam, key contributors to product development and data pipelines.
- **Agriculture Victoria:** Acts as a client, data user, and research partner, particularly through its work with DairyBio.
- **Other Collaborators:** We work with the Gardiner Dairy Foundation on specific projects and partner with the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) on IT development. Additionally, we provide services to industries like the Cotton Rural Development Corporation (CRDC) and the Australian Genetic and Breeding Unit (AGBU).

International collaborators

- **Interbull** is a vital partner to deliver accurate breeding values to the Australian industry.
- **International Dairy Data Exchange Network (iDDEN)** will become an important link between the Centralised Data Repository (CDR) and other dairy data sources.
- **Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB)** is a valuable partner and customer for software development.
- **International Committee on Animal Recording (ICAR)** provides standards, guidelines, and networks to shape services.
- **TMA Solutions** (DataGene's IT service partner in Vietnam) work closely with DataGene staff on developing and maintaining systems and tools for DataGene's use and for development of other products for customers.
- **International genetic evaluation units** such as those in the US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland are important current and future partners for collaboration on delivering new and improved genetic evaluation tools as well as management tools.

Operating Environment

Industry

The dairy industry is the nation's third largest rural industry and a key sector of the agricultural economy[1]. The value of milk produced on Australian dairy farms is expected to be $5.5 billion in 2024-25[2]. Sixty-eight percent of milk was consumed domestically with the remainder exported to key markets in China, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Dairy Australia forecasts a slight drop (<1%) in national milk production to 8.3 billion litres in 2024-25. While output had been ahead during the season, drier conditions, reduced incomes and longer-term challenges around labour and farm exits will likely constrain further growth. The outlook for Australia's milk production in the 2025-26 season presents a complex picture, with forecasts varying across different sources. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) anticipates a slight decline in production during this period, attributing it to ongoing challenges within the dairy industry. Despite this expected decrease, ABARES projects a 4% increase in farmgate milk prices, suggesting that higher prices may offset the reduced production volume[2]. However, opening prices for the 2025-26 season have been lower than anticipated and the ongoing drought and floods have affected sentiment. The profitability of dairy farm businesses was strong in 2023-24, but operating costs remain high[3]. Operating costs are likely to continue to be high in 2025-26. In this environment, ongoing improvements to productivity and innovations that contribute to farm margins are critical.

Australian dairy cow numbers grew slightly to 1.330 million cows in 2023-24, representing a 3.1% increase from 2022-23[1]. In the 2023-24 financial year, Australia exported 58,079 dairy heifers. This represents a significant decrease from the 110,407 head exported in 2022-23. The majority of these exports were destined for Asian markets, with China being the largest importer, receiving 52,719 head. To the end of March 2025, less than 19,000 cattle were exported to China.

In 2023-24, there were 3,889 registered dairy farms operating in Australia[4], a 6.6% decrease in farm numbers from the previous year. 1,426 herds participated in herd testing in 2023-24 representing total cow numbers of 392,483. This equates to 29.5% of all cows being herd tested.

Financial

A new five-year Funding Agreement with Dairy Australia (2023-24 to 2028-29) was agreed in December 2023. This is the second Annual Operating Plan under this new agreement.

Budgeting for 2024-25 reflected a significant focus on the DataConnect project - which had a consequence of reduced external projects in 2024-25 and 2025-2026. The objective in this budget process was to control expenditure to deliver as close as possible to a break-even Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization (EBITDA), whilst maintaining a healthy Balance Sheet, and the continuation of prudent cash reserves. While we continue to invest in DataConnect, our EBITDA is forecast to be slightly positive in 2025-26.

These outcomes are based around budgeted income from Dairy Australia in accordance with the Funding Agreement, ongoing fees for genetic service, centre services and contracted project work for a variety of organisations. In the forecast income, adjustments have been made that acknowledge the lack of export heifer and female genomic testing that is expected to continue in 2025-26, as well as a decline in revenue from rationalisation amongst existing customers. The expenditure budget has been contained, with the major investment being staff salaries to deliver these goals whilst maintaining cash reserves at an adequate level. Expenditure control has been a strong focus as activities to improve organisational efficiency are ongoing. Cash

[1] Dairy Australia (2024) InFocus 2024
[2] ABARES (2025) Agricultural Commodities Report March 2025
[3] Dairy Australia (2024) Situation and Outlook December 2024
[4] DataGene (2024) Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Report 2024

reserves are held to enable the company to successfully weather the cyclical nature of agriculture and to fund the future redevelopment of major pieces of infrastructure.

As always, actual performance compared to budget will be reviewed regularly throughout the year to ensure delivery of the financial goals. Should there be any shortfall in expected revenue during the year this will be mitigated by changes to expenditure which would be instituted by the Leadership Team in a timely manner. In addition, all expenditure is tightly controlled and options for operational efficiencies investigated.

Annual Operating Plan 2025-26

The key deliverables outlined in the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) are classified as MUST DO, SHOULD DO, or COULD DO based on the criteria detailed in Table 6. While we aim to achieve all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in 2025-26, some are ambitious stretch targets intended to drive significant improvements.

Items marked with an * and shown in italics indicate capital investments that are not included in the current budget. These will be evaluated through individual investment decision papers presented to the Board for approval.

Deliverable prioritisation

1	Highest priority and key deliverables ('MUST DO')	• A non-negotiable requirement to meet business needs. • Critical to the current delivery timeframe for the project or organisation to be a success.
2	Medium priority and secondary deliverables ('SHOULD DO')	• Should have this requirement, if possible, but project or organisational success does not rely on it. • Important but not necessary for delivery in the current delivery timeframe. • They are often not as time-critical or there may be another way to satisfy the requirement so that it can be held back until a future delivery timeframe.
3	Lower priority and will be delivered if resources allow ('COULD DO')	• Could have this requirement if it does not affect anything else in the project or organisation. • Desirable but not necessary, e.g., could improve the user experience or customer satisfaction for little development cost. • These will typically be included if time and resources permit.

Strategic Priorities - Projects

Strategic Pillar 1 – Make efficient decisions using data:

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
1.1 DataConnect provides seamless transmission of data between on-farm systems, DataGene and industry data users via DataVat	1.1.1 Expand the acquisition of data from a range of industry participants through the DataConnect project.	Redevelop CDR/DataVat: build, test and release upgraded CDR/DataVat Phase 1.	30-Jun-26	DataVat is redeveloped in line with project plan, with a focus on data security as it relates to user access rights.	1
		Through DataConnect link Ginfo, other farmers and large suppliers.	30-Jun-26	80% of Ginfo farmers connected. 500 other farms connected and contributing health events. >40% of large suppliers connected.	1
	1.1.2 Continue integration of the iDDEN data exchange hub with international equipment manufacturers and the CDR.	Continue to work with iDDEN technical committee in preparedness to connect when they are ready. This includes fast tracking opportunities with services that are currently connected to the IDDEN API.	30-Jun-26	At least one additional data source is connected, through iDDEN.	1
	1.1.3 Support industry partners to develop APIs, tools, resources, and analysis that leverage the data for the benefit of farmers.	Identify and connect additional data sources from data audit project.	30-Jun-26	At least two additional data sources connected.	1
		Extend the CDR schema to accommodate new data fields, as informed by DataConnect activity.	30-Jun-26	CDR schema is updated, and new data fields are available to store data such as vat records.	3
1.2 DataVat becomes the industry reporting platform for sustainability metrics	1.2.1 Integrate disparate data sources to enable industry report sustainability metrics and demonstrate progress.	Explore possible uses of new data coming from DataConnect and follow up on opportunities with immediate potential.	15-Dec-25	Options paper is prepared that describes short-term opportunities to use new data streams in genetic evaluation.	2
	1.2.2 Collaborate with industry stakeholders to develop and maintain appropriate metrics.	No focused activity in this AOP.			
1.3 DataGene works with Dairy Australia, milk processors, animal health	1.3.1 Leverage greater value from combining data from different sources.	Implement agreed recommendations from audit.	30-Jun-26	Recommendations are prioritised and implemented as agreed with industry.	2

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
sector, and others on improved data collection and analytics		Collaborate with DA to improve efficient data collection and leverage usage for farmers.	30-Jun-26	DataGene is contributing to an increase in the efficiency of service delivery to farmers through at least one collaborative activity with DA, such as Dairybase and/or Carbon Calculator.	2
	1.3.2 Cooperate with milk processors, industry regulators, animal health sector and others to collect, analyse, and manage industry data through DataVat.	See 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.2.1 where additional data are connected, and the use of this data is explored.			
1.4 DataGene develops new reports, tools, and resources to help make the best whole-farm decisions	1.4.1 Support and enhance existing decision support tools created and managed by DataGene.	Maintain communication/extension with users of DataVat, HerdData and the website, including any necessary training required in use of Good Bulls App, HerdPlatform, CDR and DataVat.	30-Jun-26	>20% total increase in the number of users interacting with the following: • DataVat • HerdData • HerdPlatform • DataGene website • Good Bulls App	1
		The use of DataVat, HerdData, HerdPlatform, Selective Dry Cow Tool, MIR conception tool, CDR, Mastitis Focus Report, Fertility Focus Report, Genetics Progress Report, DataGene website are routinely monitored.	1-Aug-25	Metrics and monitoring process are established.	1
	1.4.2 Partner with members to develop and support their tools.	Initiate communication/extension with farmers to promote the use of Mastitis Focus Report and Fertility Focus Report in collaboration with DA.	30-Jun-26	>20% increase in the number of people using • Mastitis Focus Report • Fertility Focus Report	2
		Support Zoetis connections.	30-Jun-26	Efficiency improvements for data exchange with Zoetis are complete.	1
	1.4.3 Support industry partners to develop tools, resources and analysis that leverage DataVat for the benefit of farmers.	Support provided to advisors and farmers on use of DataVat.	30-Jun-26	DataVat support available to all herds connected through DataConnect as well as existing herds.	1
		Real-time and on-line support sessions are reported, using presentation metric reporting system.	30-Jun-26	The number of real-time and on-line support sessions are monitored.	2

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
		Provide access and training on DataVat to non-Ginfo herds that are part of research projects from DairyBio if required.	30-Jun-26	Training delivered if required.	2
	1.4.4 Develop additional tools where there is clear industry good and market failure.	No focused activity in this AOP.			

Strategic Pillar 2 – Improve sustainability and animal performance through R&D and herd improvement:

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
2.1 DataGene delivers world best practice genetic evaluations	2.1.1 National Breeding Objective review outcomes are implemented.	Genetics companies and genomic service providers receive sample files that show the results of NBO, base change, survival, and intermediate optimum type trait expression.	30-Sep-25	Customers receive early information related to the upcoming changes.	1
		Report on a test run that includes results of NBO, base change, survival, and intermediate optimum type trait expression.	11-Nov-25	NBO updates are delivered according to project plan.	1
		First routine and public releases are complete that include results of NBO, base change, survival, and intermediate optimum type trait expression.	Routine 18-Nov-25 Public 2-Dec-25	NBO updates are delivered according to project plan.	1
		NBO comms and extension plan is implemented.	December 2025 and ongoing	Stakeholders understand the relevant updates.	1
	2.1.2 Maintain a focus on dairy genetic evaluation, specifically Australian Breeding Values, indices and the services to farmers and genetics companies.	Maintain and improve delivery of core products by maintaining databases, workflows, improving processes and continue to automate the genomic pipeline.	Ongoing	The genetic evaluation run time declines, relative to the number of animals.	1
		Weekly routine and public runs delivered on time.	Weekly	Routine and public runs delivered on time.	1

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
	2.1.3 Deploy new breeding values to industry as they are developed by DairyBio	Release new Survival ABV Note: this activity is linked with 2.1.1	First routine release 18-11-25 Public 2-Dec-25	Survival updates are delivered according to project plan.	1
		Implement new expression of intermediate optimum type traits. Note: this activity is linked with 2.1.1	First routine release 18-11-25 Public 2-Dec-25	Type trait updates are delivered according to project plan.	1
	2.1.4 Independent validation of proprietary products to ensure Australian farmers can make informed herd decisions.	No focused activity in this AOP.			
	2.1.5 Review existing traits to ensure reliability is maximised.	Investigate ABV movement in young bulls	15-Dec-25	Options paper for Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee (GESC) with potential solutions for mitigation of movements in young bulls are identified.	1
	2.1.6 Calculate Forage Value Index.	Calculation of the Forage Value Index (FVI).	31-Jan-26	Breeding values and index delivered for three types of pasture and the various regions.	1
2.2 DataGene collects herd performance data to grow Australia's largest dairy dataset	2.2.1 Establish the routine recording of methane and feed efficiency phenotypes.	Work with DairyBio on the routine recording of methane and feed efficiency phenotypes.	30-Jun-26	A plan is in place for collection, storage, and reporting methane and feed efficiency phenotypes.	2
	2.2.2 Maintain the Ginfo reference population and continue to collect performance and genomic information for improved ABV reliability.	Collection of performance and genomic information for improved ABV reliability. Understand the hurdles facing Ginfo herds for genotyping all heifer calves.	30-Jun-26	15,000 genotypes through Ginfo. 9,000 Linear Type Evaluations. Reliability is maintained/increased.	1
		Annual personal contact with each Ginfo farmer.	30-Jun-26	Ginfo farmers are engaged, and the completeness of their records is rising.	1
	2.2.3 Data is collected from cows and herds that are diverse in their breed, region, and production system.	Introduce a reporting metric.	30-Jun-26	Report on Ginfo diversity in the Annual Update.	2
	2.2.4 Explore the use of new phenotypes of farmer interest particularly for animal health traits and sustainability reporting,	No focused activity in this AOP.			

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
	including antimicrobial stewardship metrics.				
2.3 DataGene assists with development of high value ABVs	2.3.1 Promote use of the Sustainability Index and tools that contribute to Australia's Dairy Sustainability Framework, and particularly those related to antibiotic stewardship, methane emissions and surplus calf pathways.	Communicate to industry stakeholders about the ways DataGene (tools etc) contributes to industry sustainability.	30-Jun-26	Industry stakeholders are aware of the ways breeding contributes to key sustainability issues. Sustainability Index is included in NBO communication activities.	2
	2.3.2 Implement calf vitality from DairyBio.	Prepare new calf ABVs for implementation.	30-Apr-26	Calf ABVs are agreed and released.	1
	2.3.3 Release Methane ABV.	No focused activity in this AOP.			
2.4 DataGene promotes the use of genomic testing	2.4.1 Work with collaborators, especially Dairy Australia and genomic service providers, to continue to drive the uptake of heifer genomic testing.	Engage and influence genetics companies, genomic service providers and farmers to increase the number of heifers tested.	30-Jun-26	Target: 50,000 heifers tested.	2
		Engagement activities to reduce the number of foreign-only, female genomic tests.	30-Jun-26		1
		Promote heifer genomic validation study results.	30-Jun-26		1
		Implement a system to use genomic breed % to determine breed of evaluation.	30-Jun-26	Increase the percentage of heifers that receive a result by reducing cases of unknown breed.	2
	2.4.2 Assist industry in developing necessary tools to integrate genomic information into mating programs, particularly inbreeding.	No focused activity in this AOP.			

Strategic Pillar 3 – Capture and promote the value from herd improvement:

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
3.1 DataGene promotes the use of independent, validated and science-backed indexes and ABVs	3.1.1 Work closely with stakeholders on common messaging regarding the value and integrity of herd improvement, indexes, and ABVs.	2025-26 Comms, Marketing and Extension plan drafted.	31-Jul-25	Agreed Comms, Marketing and Extension plan.	1
		2025-26 Comms, Marketing and Extension plan implemented with a focus on the value and integrity of herd improvement, indexes, and ABVs.	30-Jun-26	Continued delivery of Comms, Marketing and Extension Plan.	1
		Continued implementation of extension strategy targeting bull selection.	30-Jun-26	Integration of DataGene NBO results into company marketing materials. Evidence of Balanced Performance Index (BPI) use continues to increase, based on DA survey. Ongoing increase in reseller use of BPI.	1
	3.1.2 Work closely with the Regional Development Programs (RDPs) and Dairy Australia to develop resources and activities that improve on-farm genetic selection and herd management practices.	Implement work with Regional Development Programs (RDPs) based on 2025-26 Comms, Marketing and Extension Plan.	30-Jun-26	Every RDP has genetic and data-based activity on their plan.	2
		Implement large herds extension and communications plan.	30-Jun-26	Large herds use only Good Bulls and the proportion of genomic testing in large herds is rising.	1
3.2 DataGene effectively communicates the value proposition of data-informed decisions	3.2.1 Engage a wider section of the dairy industry including finance, milk companies, veterinarians and on farm consultants to communicate the value proposition of data-informed decisions, including herd testing.	Release and promote the Mastitis App with Dairy Australia.	30-Jun-26	150 downloads of the Mastitis App.	2

Strategic Pillar 4 – Diversified and improved service offerings:

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
4.1 DataGene is a leader in the coordination, development and maintenance of software and data services	4.1.1 Leverage expertise and capacity to provide software and strategy services to the agriculture sector.	Undertake 2 new external projects.	30-Jun-26	Sign and start two new projects.	1
	4.1.2 Support and enhance the functionality of DataGene infrastructure, including GESNP, Centre, CDR, and DataVat.	Maintain and support DataVat.	30-Jun-26	DataVat uptime is 99.5%.	1
		Speed up genomic blending.	30-Jun-26	Genetic evaluation run time is reduced by one day.	2
		Update Good Bulls App to accommodate calf traits.	15-Apr-26	Good Bulls App is updated.	1
		Maintain Good Bulls App. Including any updates to text that are required from NBO.	30-Jun-26	Good Bulls App is functional and updated with each release.	1
	4.1.3 Support and enhance the functionality of HerdData.	Maintain HerdData App and add additional functionality as required by industry. Promote redeveloped HerdData App to industry.	30-Jun-26	HerdData is functional and has 200 users.	1
4.2 DataGene collaborates with stakeholders in livestock and other agricultural sectors to deliver services	4.2.1 Lead a discussion on closer collaboration with the red meat industry for efficient genetic evaluation and data services in the Australian livestock industry.	No focused activity in this AOP.			
	4.2.2 Contribute to improving dairy industry IT and data services in close collaboration with Dairy Australia.	Collaborate with Dairy Australia on providing efficient and cost-effective IT services.	15-Dec-25	Paper on how IT services could be more efficiently utilised, and a path forward agreed.	2
	4.2.3 Ongoing calculation of the Forage Value Index (FVI) for Dairy Australia and Agriculture Victoria.	See 2.1.6.			
4.3 DataGene works with herd recording centres to	4.3.1 Actively explore opportunities with herd recording centres to provide	Support the use of HerdPlatform by herd test centres and farmers.	30-Jun-26	> 500 farmers and service providers are using HerdPlatform. Use of MIR Conception is increasing.	2

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
rapidly adopt technology and services	innovative and valuable services to their clients.			Use of selective dry cow therapy tool is increasing.	
		Transition Centre software to web-services linked to CDR.	15-Dec-25	FFR and MFR have moved to CDR.	1
		Aligning with herd test centre changing requirements for delivery of herd testing and inventory software.		Work with herd recording centres to transition to modern inventory software.	2

Strategic Pillar 5 – Efficiently deliver our services:

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
5.1 DataGene applies best-practice corporate governance and financial management	5.1.1 Enable new sources of revenue by collaborating with existing and new customers.	See 4.1.1			
		Review of agreements with genomic service providers and genetics companies and enter revised agreements as required.	31-Mar-26	Reviews completed and new agreements signed.	1
	5.1.2 Apply best-practice governance and financial management through robust oversight by the DataGene Board.	Board nomination and selection process.	30-Nov-25	A professional selection process results in the election of two directors at the AGM.	1
5.2 DataGene has the right capability and processes to innovate and deliver value	5.2.1 Maintain the capability and the capacity to innovate and deliver impactful industry projects.	Development and training needs assessment.	30-Jun-26	Development and training needs assessed and acted upon, as required.	2
		Staff undertake farm visits.	30-Jun-26	All staff can visit with farmers and herd improvement organisations to understand the range of data uses.	2
		Explore ways to encourage innovation by staff.	31-Oct-25	Hack Day	2
		Develop and implement Artificial Intelligence services across DataGene.	30-Jun-26	At least one service has Artificial Intelligence component that provides tangible improvement on cost or productivity.	1

Strategic Priority	Objective	Activity	Completion Date	2025-26 Target / Outcome	Priority
	5.2.2 Maintain a robust and repeatable delivery framework for internal and external application.	Process to ensure staff awareness, training, and application of the DataGene Delivery Framework.	30-Jun-26	Staff are applying DataGene Delivery Framework in all projects.	1
5.3 DataGene sustains effective stakeholder and employee engagement	5.3.1 Foster collaboration with industry stakeholders through established Standing Committees and other meeting opportunities.	Hold a minimum of two meetings of the Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee.	30-Jun-26	Two meetings of GESC held.	1
		Hold a minimum of two meetings of the Data Access and Standards Standing Committee.	30-Jun-26	Two meetings of DASSC held.	1
		Hold a minimum of two meetings of the Herd Test Centre Committee.	30-Jun-26	Two meetings of HTCC held.	1
	5.3.2 Strive to be an employer of choice.	Review of policies for compliance, according to the agreed schedule.	30-Jun-26	Policies are updated, communicated, and implemented.	1
5.4 DataGene develops and maintains appropriate IT infrastructure, and policies	5.4.1 Maintain a robust data governance framework through the Data Access and Standards Group.	Evaluate the benefit of complying with NFF Farm Data Code	15-Dec-25	Paper describing benefit/cost of compliance and outlining any steps towards compliance.	1
		Initiate steps towards compliance with NFF Farm Data Code.	30-Jun-26	NFF Farm Data Code certification considered, and compliance assessed.	2
	5.4.2 Undertake regular system penetration testing and security audits.	Mitigate risks identified during the previous security audit and pass a new audit.	30-Jun-26	Risks mitigated and audit passed.	1
		Maintain Business Continuity Plan.	30-Jun-26	Business Continuity Plan reviewed by Leadership Group, annually.	1
		Maintain Disaster Recovery Plan.	30-Jun-26	Disaster Recovery Plan maintained and tested.	1

2025-26 Financials

The financial outlook has been prepared using the following assumptions:

- The industry continues to operate as 'business as usual.'
- No additional project income has been assumed other than already contracted work.
- Workforce changes that are currently known and strong staff retention otherwise.
- Ongoing maintenance and refinement of GESNP, CDR and DataVat will continue to occur.
- No export heifer activity.

The outlook for DataGene's financial performance in 2025-26 indicates a decrease in project income as no uncontracted work has been assumed in the budget. The Dairy Australia Funding Agreement remains critical to the operations of the business and accounts for 57% of total income. The major expenditure is on salaries which accounts for 51% of DataGene's total expenditure. Software development costs have decreased due to the reduced project work. Depreciation and amortisation on the significant investment in IT infrastructure continue to be a major expense line. The 2025-26 budget framework will deliver a small EBITDA[5] surplus and maintain a fiscally sound cash position.

Income Statement

Budgeted income is at a lower level compared to the forecast previous financial year, due to not including uncontracted projects in the budget. Expenditure on salaries account for 51% of the total expenditure as we endeavour to maintain the strong skillsets we have built over previous years. Software development expenses have decreased from the previous year due to the projected decrease in project activity. All expenses will be tightly controlled. This budget framework will deliver a small EBITDA surplus impacted by continued investment into the National Breeding Objective review and DataConnect.

Revenue sources

DataGene has four primary sources of revenue, and its goal remains to maintain diversified income streams:

- Core funding from Dairy Australia via the current Funding Agreement which runs to 30 June 2029.
- Semen companies, genomic service providers and farmers paying for genetic evaluation services.
- Herd improvement companies paying for Centre and other related software.
- Customers paying for projects delivering improved software, tools, reports, and/or services.

The final dot point, Business Development Services, generate revenue through major and minor development and consulting projects, such as with the Council of Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB) and Wageningen University. These projects require a mixture of existing staff skills and experience, such as stakeholder engagement, IT and change management, and offshore development resources which DataGene then project manages.

Genetic evaluation services income budget of $1.1 million comprises service fees associated with ABV(g), pre-determined access fees, new calf testing, NASIS registrations and workabilities.

[5] Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization

Expenditure

Salaries and associated costs remain the largest expenditure item and equate to 51% of the total expenditure. Additional costs in FY26 relate to the transition to a new Chief Executive Officer and the appointment of an Interim Executive Officer. Consultants' expenditure includes costs incurred for calf testing which will offset revenue for calf testing. Software development captures the costs to maintain GESNP, CDR, and DataVat plus project work undertaken with customers. Ginfo has moved into a maintenance phase following the efforts to deliver an increased number of herds in past financial years. Communications activities remain particularly important. All other expenditure is at similar levels to the previous financial year.

As demonstrated in previous financial years, expenditure will be monitored carefully in line with income and adjusted accordingly to maintain a sound financial position.

Table 1: Income Statement 2025-26

INCOME STATEMENT BUDGET	2025-26 Budget	2024-25 Forecast[6]
TOTAL INCOME	**4,551,500**	**5,140,000**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**4,509,500**	**5,128,000**
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM OPERATIONS	**42,000**	**12,000**
Depreciation & amortisation	**588,000**	**595,000**
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) INC NON-CASH	**(546,000)**	**(583,000)**

As shown in Table 1 above, the budget income statement shows a small EBITDA surplus based on continued expenditure on the National Breeding Objective Review and DataConnect. On a full accrual accounting basis, considering depreciation and amortisation, the bottom line is in a deficit position. Depreciation and amortisation reflect the significant historic investment made into core IT infrastructure to create the genetic evaluation system, the Central Data Repository and DataVat. These core infrastructure pieces underpin DataGene's ability to deliver services to the industry.

Balance Sheet and Statement of Cashflow

The cash reserve position in the Balance Sheet at the end of 2025-26 is expected to be around $1 million.

During the year there will be investment into new servers and storage to increase performance of the weekly runs and replace aged servers. Additionally, there will be scheduled laptop replacements. Total expenditure for capital has been budgeted at $116,000 for these purchases.

Table 2: Balance Sheet 2025-26

BALANCE SHEET	Budget 2025/26	Forecast 2024/25
Assets	4,805,500	5,362,500
Liabilities	2,115,500	2,226,000
Net assets	**2,694,000**	**3,136,500**

[6] as at March 2025

Table 3: Cashflow 2025-26

CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	Budget 2025/26	Forecast 2024/25
Cash at beginning of the financial year	1,094,500	1,302,500
Net cash provided by operating activities	-2,000	-12,500
Cash used in investing activities	-86,000	-43,000
Cash at end of the financial year	**1,006,500**	**1,247,000**

Appendix 1: Governance and Management

DataGene Board

DataGene is governed by a seven-member, skills-based Board, with Directors elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) based on their expertise in dairy, herd improvement, finance, and governance. The Board must include at least three Directors with direct experience in dairy farm management.

Directors serve three-year terms, with a maximum of three consecutive terms (nine years total).

A structured rotation process ensures ongoing renewal of skills and experience.

At the November 2024 AGM, two new Directors were elected.

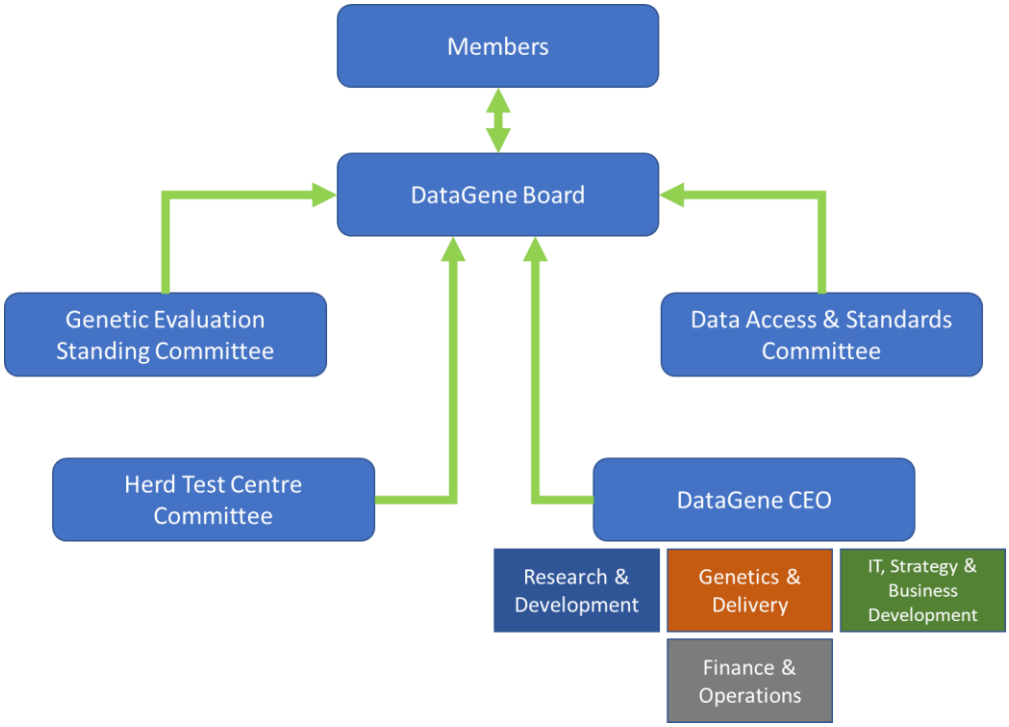
In July 2025, DataGene will conduct an open call for nominations to fill two Board positions up for election at the November 2025 AGM. The Nominations Committee will review applications and select candidates to stand for election.

The Board and Leadership Team will continue their scheduled review of key company policies to ensure alignment with best practices and industry needs. Policies scheduled for review in 2025-26 include, but are not limited to:

- Delegated authorities policy and register
- Acceptable use of technology
- Business travel
- Board diversity
- DataGene diversity
- Diversity policy
- Grievance handling
- Unacceptable behaviour
- Whistle blower
- Infectious disease
- Intellectual property
- Leave
- Safe driving
- Workplace health and safety

DataGene Standing Committees

DataGene's Committee structure consists of the Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee (GESC), the Data Access and Standards Standing Committee (DASSC) and the Herd Test Centre Committee (HTCC).



DataGene's Standing Committees play a key role in shaping the organisation's priorities and program activities. These Committees are not just advisory bodies; they have delegated authority from the DataGene Board to make decisions within their scope. Key aspects of Committee structure and membership are:

Committees consist of individuals from the dairy industry and herd improvement sector with relevant expertise.

Members are either:

- Nominated by stakeholders for approval by the DataGene Board, or
- Appointed directly by the DataGene Board, in line with each Committee's terms of reference.
- Each Committee includes at least one member of the DataGene Leadership team to ensure strategic alignment.

These Committees provide an essential mechanism for industry input, ensuring DataGene's programs remain responsive to stakeholder needs.

Committee	Role	Membership
Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee (GESC)	Provides advice and recommendations to the DataGene Board on specialist matters in relation to genetic evaluation and related technologies. The Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee helped prioritise projects that are presented in this AOP.	• Farmer Chair • DataGene's Chief Executive Officer & Stakeholder Relations Manager • Representatives from: • Dairy farmers (2) • Breed organisations (2) • DairyBio (2) • Genetics company (1) • Genomics service provider (1) • Dairy Australia (1)
Data Access and Standards Standing Committee (DASC)	Provides advice and recommendations to the DataGene Board on specialist matters in relation to the development and implementation of data standards and sharing. The Committee will also provide advisory services to the broader herd improvement industry to assist in decision-making regarding data access and standards	• Independent Chair • DataGene's Chief Executive Officer & Chief Information Officer • Representatives from: • Herd Test Centres (3) • Software providers (3) • Dairy farmers (2) • Breed organisations (2) • Genetics company (1)
Herd Test Centre Committee (HTCC)	Makes recommendations and proposals to DataGene Board and management, and respective centre Boards (or equivalent) on herd test-related matters, including software and service development. Enables collaboration on pre-competitive projects.	• DataGene's Chief Executive Officer & Stakeholder Relations Specialist • 1 representative each from: • National Herd Development (NHD) • HICO • Dairy Express • TasHerd • FarmWest • Yarram Herd Services

Organisational Structure

DataGene's organisational structure is based on the following functional areas and roles:

Chief Executive Officer			
Research & Development	**Genetics & Delivery**	**IT, Strategy & Business Development**	**Finance & Operations**
• Lead Scientist • Geneticist / Team Leader • Geneticist	• Stakeholder Relations Manager • Stakeholder Relations Specialist • Industry Liaison • Project Officer • Genomic Services Officer • Marketing & Communications Manager	• Group Leader -Strategy, IT & Business Development • Chief Information Officer • Project Managers • IT Manager • Senior Software Engineer • Software Developer • Systems Administrators	• Executive Assistant • Business Operations Supervisor • Bookkeeper

DataGene's Leadership Team consists of the heads of each business unit and key staff, including representatives from DairyBio. This team meets regularly to drive strategic and operational alignment.

The Lead Science function is provided by DairyBio rather than a dedicated DataGene employee. However, the integration of scientific advancements into practical implementation was a key reason for DataGene's establishment.

The Annual Operating Plan (AOP) serves as the foundation for setting business unit goals. Relevant objectives from the AOP are incorporated into the performance and development plans of all DataGene employees to ensure alignment with organisational priorities.

Performance metrics

The DataGene Board and Leadership Team regularly track key performance metrics across several critical areas, including:

- genetic merit of the national herd – monitoring improvements in genetic gain.
- market acceptance – assessing the adoption and use of DataGene products and services.
- herd recording levels – evaluating industry participation in herd data collection.
- extension and communication reach – measuring engagement with DataGene's extension and communication efforts.

Performance is routinely tracked against several metrics within these areas. However, there are three primary metrics that are routinely reported in DataGene's Annual Update, that are:

Primary metrics for DataGene

The rate of genetic gain of sires of cows for BPI exceeding $30/cow/year over a 10-year period.	For Holsteins, the average rate of genetic gain for BPI in sires of cows over the past 10 years (2014-2024) is $29.22/cow/year. However, progress has accelerated in the most recent five years ($29.46/cow/year). For Jerseys, the 10-year trend is $16.48/cow/year, with the most recent five-year trend at $16.73/cow/year.
The level of female genomic testing increasing annually by at least 15%.	62,749 females were genomically tested during 2023-24. This represents a decrease of 33% from 2022-23.
The number of new cows with phenotypes in CDR increasing annually by 5% of the previous year.	The number of cows with data in the CDR in June 2024 has increased to 18.2 million cows. This represents an increase of 6.0% from June 2023.

These metrics provide valuable insights to guide decision-making and ensure DataGene delivers meaningful impact to the industry.

Risk management

DataGene's Board and Leadership Team take a proactive approach to risk management through the following measures:

Risk Monitoring and Review – Conduct regular reviews of the formal risk register to assess internal, external, and project-related risks.

Strategic Analysis – Undertake annual horizon scanning and SWOT analysis to identify emerging issues, threats, and opportunities.

Cybersecurity Measures – Perform an annual security audit and penetration testing of DataGene's information technology systems, conducted by an external IT security consultant.

Comprehensive Insurance Coverage – Maintain appropriate insurance policies, including:

- Business Insurance
- Public Liability and Product Liability Insurance
- Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Cyber Insurance

This structured approach ensures DataGene remains resilient and well-prepared to manage risks effectively.

Appendix 2: Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ADF	Australian Dairyfarmers
AGBU	Australian Genetic and Breeding Unit
AGM	Annual General Meeting
API	Application programming interface
ARC	Australian Research Council
BPI	Balanced Performance Index
BRD	Business Requirements Document
CDCB	Council for Dairy Cattle Breeding
CDR	Central Data Repository
CRDC	Cotton Research & Development Corporation
DA	Dairy Australia
DASSC	Data Access & Standards Standing Committee
DPC	Data processing centre
EBITDA	Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization
FVI	Forage Value Index
GESC	Genetic Evaluation Standing Committee
GESNP	Genetic Evaluation System, New Platform
HIISSG	Herd Improvement Industry Strategic Steering Group
HTCC	Herd Test Centre Committee
ICAR	International Committee on Animal Recording
iDDEN	International Dairy Data Exchange Network
KPI	Key performance indicator
LTE	Linear type evaluation
MIR	Mid infrared

NHIA	National Herd Improvement Organisation
NLIS	National Livestock Identification Scheme
RAM	Random access memory
RDP	Regional Development Program
SI	Sustainability Index
SME	Subject matter expert
SNP	Single nucleotide polymorphism