

# Obsalim training opportunity for Australian dairy farmers

## What is Obsalim?

*A method for assessing farming/feeding practices and their effects on animal nutrition and milk production*

Obsalim is a practical observation technique taught to dairy and other ruminant farmers who then use it in the field to evaluate and adjust the nourishment needs of their herd (cows, sheep or goats).

('Obsalim' is a contraction of 'observe' and 'alimentation' (or nourishment).)

## How does Obsalim work?

Through observing various signs on and around the animals, it is possible to use Obsalim techniques to know exactly what is happening in the rumen. After making such a diagnosis, the farmer can then change the distribution or composition of the ration, or the management of the herd, in order to improve the take-up of the ration and improve the overall health and condition of the animals. Obsalim observations also allow the farmer to determine whether correcting a ration or changing the distribution or housing of the animals is appropriate.

Changes in feeding pattern, access to food, the composition of the ration, housing or the type or origin of the ration – all these affect the herd. Even changes in the composition of the group and the weather can have an influence. This is the reality of farming. Having an easy to use but effective tool to monitor the impact of the diet on the animal should lead to increased efficiency in the farm, healthier animals and better quality milk.

Based on regular observation of the eyes, hooves, skin, hide, dung, urine and other indicators, you can establish a precise diagnosis of the nutritional condition and needs of the animal.

## What are its benefits?

The Obsalim tool has been found by farmers who use it to prevent loss and disease from otherwise unnoticed and uncorrected imbalances in feeding. They have reported significant reductions in the need for antibiotics and veterinary assistance. Farmhouse cheesemakers who use the technique have reported improvements in the cheesemaking quality of their milk. It is of particular interest to organic farmers, but also very relevant to those farming conventionally.

The Obsalim technique was developed and fine-tuned by a French veterinary surgeon, Dr Bruno Giboudeau, through 15 years of trial and error and collating information. In the last 10 years, the method has proven its efficacy and has gained widespread popularity in France. There is now much interest in Obsalim from other countries, in particular the UK, US and Canada.

## How is the Obsalim technique taught?

The Obsalim technique is taught in a simple and practical way that gives the farmer the tools needed to start applying the technique straight away to the farmer's own herd and farm.

This is done through a 2-day workshop, together with a 1-day farm visit to see how to apply the tools in a hands-on setting. The training is designed to be straightforward and hands-on, so as to give the farmer the confidence to be able to accurately determine what features to look for, and what management changes to make to correct for them.

All training comes direct from the source – Dr Bruno Giboudeau will be in Australia to conduct the workshops himself.

You will also learn about the animal welfare and economic benefits you should see through using the technique.



## What reference materials can I access?

You will be shown how to refer to a set of picture cards that enable feed-related problems to be seen in the field and acted on immediately. You are taught during the workshop how to use the cards, so that you can use them effectively on your own on your farm.

You can learn more about the Obsalim method here (including detailed information on the cards): <http://obsalim.com/en/method.htm>

Two YouTube tutorials are also available on how to learn the Obsalim technique (**1, 2**). They are introductory only, but give some idea of the technique and how it is taught.

## What assistance will be available after the Obsalim training?

If there is sufficient interest in the workshops, we also plan to arrange for one or more Australian farmers to be trained in the technique across all the ruminant types, who will become consultants in the technique, able to follow up with workshop participants who would like additional training or follow-up farm visits.