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Hands-on in dairy

Benalla P-12 College could have been mistaken for a dairy farm this week as Hands-on Learning students had the opportunity to raise two calves at school.

Students at the Faithful St Campus have recently been involved with the Dairy Australia "Cows Create Careers" program.

Cows Create Careers — Farm Module is a six-week program that aims to increase the awareness of dairy industry careers in a hands-on way.

Students are educated by rearing two three-week-old calves at school and the school is provided with the dairy industry curriculum for years 7 and 8, at no cost.

Melbourne University Dookie Dairy has given Benalla P-12 College the two calves and students have received education from the dairy manager on how to run a dairy and look after the animals.

They also received an interesting lesson in the high-tech elements of the dairy at Dookie, which uses robots to milk the cows.

Hands-on Learning Teacher Pip Rowe said the school was lucky to be able to be involved in the program.

"The students are extremely excited about the calves and have really gotten on board with the program," Ms Rowe said.

"They have enjoyed organising a seven-day feeding roster, along with learning how to feed and do health checks on the calves, and constructing and organising the bedding and housing for them."

The project also required the students to make a movie and a 3D model relating the dairy industry.

After completing the program, students and teachers will be recognised at a Presentation Finale where prizes are awarded to the winning schools and students.

That event will be held in Shepparton in November.

Executive principal Tony Clark said the program was a great way to teach students about dairy farming.

"This is a terrific program for our students as many of them have never had the opportunity to work with farm animals before," Mr Clark said.

"The program gives students a chance to participate in 'hands-on' dairy farming duties and to gain a small understanding of what dairy farming entails."

Right: Benalla P-12 student Zoe Horsfall gets "hands-on" experience with dairy calves.