

## About the National Herd Improvement Data Collection Survey

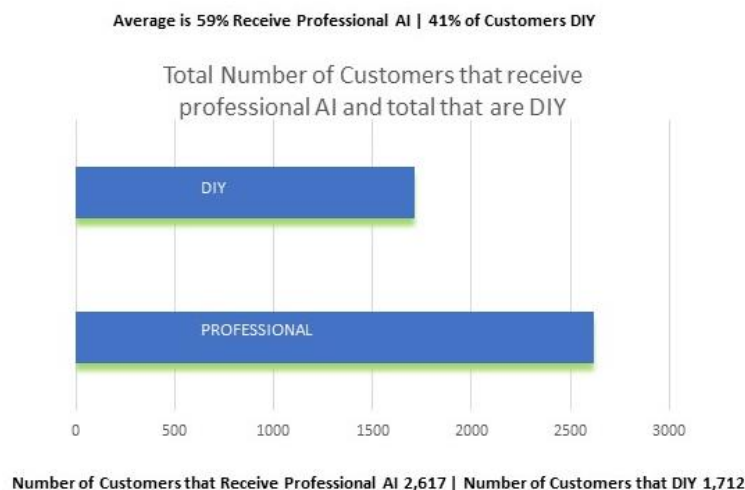
An initiative of the National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA), this annual survey has been designed to collect information to build a stronger herd improvement sector.

Over time the intention is that the year-on-year survey results assist NHIA in mapping industry trends and identifying issues that may impact the AI and herd improvement sector. In this first year the survey provides an indication on the health of the sector for the industry.

Carried out in September 2020, 67% of respondents were NHIA members, 33% of respondents were non-NHIA members active in the herd improvement industry. NHIA estimates that the survey respondents represent approximately 70% of herd improvement businesses actively involved in artificial insemination.

## Professional versus DIY artificial insemination comparison

The National Herd Improvement Data Survey 2020 revealed that a total of 4,329 herds received AI services from survey respondents over the last year. Of these 59%, or 2,617 herds, received professional AI services and 41%, or 1,712 herds, received AI services on a DIY basis.



A professional insemination is defined as being carried out by a trained technician paid to perform the service. A DIY insemination is defined as being carried out by a non-professional technician, usually within their own herd. Generally professional technicians work for a herd improvement organisation or, where self-employed, provide AI services to a number of farms.

It should be noted that ‘non-professional technician’ does not mean untrained, although training may be harder to access for these workers.

## How many professional inseminations are carried out in Australia each year?

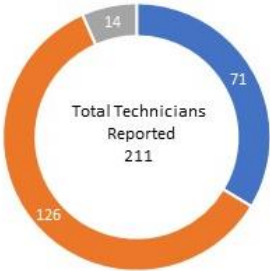
Survey respondents reported carrying out a total in excess of 759,000 professional inseminations annually. Based on the reported number of herds receiving professional AI services this equates to approximately 300 professional inseminations per herd carried out annually.

The average number of professional inseminations carried out in the last year by survey respondents was just over 28,000.

### How many professional AI technicians currently operate in Australia?

Survey respondents reported utilising a total of 211 professional AI technicians annually. Of this total number 71 (34%) were full-time AI technicians, 126 (60%) were part time and 14 (6%) unclassified.

Full Time and Part Time Techs



Full Time Techs Reported 71 | Part Time Techs Reported 126 | Other 14

The ratio of full time to part time AI technicians is an important indicator of the industry’s ability to sustain technicians as a full time role. While further research is required, anecdotal evidence suggests that seasonality coupled with the specialisation of professional AI businesses are factors in this ratio. While many businesses have a core base of full-time technicians, at times of peak demand part time technicians are engaged.

### Professional insemination customers v DIY insemination customers

Survey respondents estimated that 59% of their customers received professional AI services and 41% were DIY customers, which tallies with the analysis on the total number of herds that receive AI services.

% PROFESSIONAL AI and % DIY



Average is 59% Receive Professional AI | 41% of Customers DIY

Anecdotal evidence suggests that factors such as herd size, available service providers and region are key indicators as to whether a herd owner uses a professional service provider or chooses the DIY option.

## Summary

The first National Herd Improvement Data Collection Survey has established the baseline for measurement of future industry development.

The survey clearly shows the importance of the herd improvement industry to the Australian dairy and beef industry, and that both professional and DIY artificial insemination services are a vital component of inputs at herd and farm level.

A key finding is that the relatively high level of DIY operators, at 41%, highlights the need for continued sector investment in training and accreditation to ensure that these workers remain current with best industry practice. This will also assist in providing a career pathway for DIY operators to transition to professional AI technicians.

It should also be noted that continued and additional training investment will likely have a positive effect on successful insemination rates, with a follow-through impact on fertility and milk and beef production.