

THE GEOFF BOXSELL LEGACY PRIZE

A Prize for Dairy Science Students

University of Sydney Dairy Research Foundation

About This Prize

In 2025, Geoff Boxsell received the University of Sydney Dairy Research Foundation Dairy Science Award in recognition of a lifetime of contribution to the industry. As part of receiving the award, Geoff donated his two \$500 gift vouchers to support dairy science students. This prize has been established using that donation.

The Backstory: How Spreadable Butter Began

Butter tasted better than margarine. Everybody knew it. But margarine had one undeniable advantage: it spread straight from the fridge. Butter, cold from the refrigerator, was hard and unyielding, notorious for tearing toast. Consumers noticed. They began buying margarine.

The dairy industry had a problem and it needed someone willing to challenge the accepted way of doing things.

Inside the Jamberoo Co-operative Dairy Factory on the New South Wales South Coast, Geoff Boxsell and his head laboratory technician Kevin Richardson began to think differently. Geoff was the factory manager, a dairy technologist trained at Hawkesbury Agricultural College who had studied cultured cream techniques in New Zealand. Kevin was the precision behind the butter room. Together their work had kept Jamberoo butter graded Choicest by the Department of Agriculture for fifteen consecutive years, and in 1976 a bulk box of Jamberoo butter became the Supreme Champion dairy product in Australia.

Their next project was more ambitious. They blended cultured cream with sunflower and safflower oils. The result spread easily from the fridge with the flavour of real butter. Local farmers loved it. Consumer demand was growing.

The regulations of the time presented a challenge. The Pure Food Act did not permit vegetable oils in products marketed as butter. Geoff and Kevin sent a sample to the NSW Minister for Agriculture. The response from authorities was clear: the product could not be produced or marketed in that form under existing regulations.

They could not call the product butter. So they called it Stuff.

While the product was unable to proceed commercially in its original form, Geoff and Kevin understood something important: when consumers want something that is genuinely better, the market eventually responds. The idea attracted strong local interest because it solved a real problem.

Eighteen months later, as consumer demand continued and regulations evolved, spreadable butter re-emerged under commercial branding.



Today, spreadable butter is in kitchens across Australia and around the world. The story of Stuff is that the status quo can be challenged, that innovation sometimes requires persistence in the face of obstacles, and that consumers are one of the most powerful forces in driving change in the food industry.

The Competition

The Geoff Boxsell Legacy Prize invites dairy science students to reflect on the future of the industry and the potential impact of their own research.

When Geoff and Kevin developed spreadable butter, they were solving a real problem that consumers had already identified. They used technical knowledge, challenged existing thinking, and pursued an idea with clear practical value. Their collaboration is a reminder that innovation in dairy science is rarely a solo achievement, and that knowing what consumers need is as important as knowing the science.

Students are invited to submit a short response (maximum 500 words) to the following question:

How could your research contribute to significant change in the dairy industry, similar to the impact of spreadable butter?

Entries should address:

- The problem the research is trying to solve
- Why it matters to farmers, processors, consumers or regional communities
- How it could make a difference to the dairy industry

Two winning students will each receive a \$500 gift voucher. Winners will be selected by a small judging panel, with Geoff Boxsell invited to participate, subject to availability. The prizes will be presented by Geoff at a suitable dairy science, industry or student event.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be assessed on:

- Industry relevance
- Potential impact
- Clarity

Eligibility

The competition is open to currently enrolled dairy science students at Australian Universities, including undergraduate and higher degree research students.

Enquiries

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Submissions

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