

HOTLINE

Newsletter of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria



Dairy Industry Active and Promoting

At the time of writing I have just returned from the Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) events in Canberra. This encompassed “Cows on the Lawn” and the ADIC innovations dinner at the National Gallery showcasing all things dairy. This is a great way for the UDV to represent our Victorian industry and support our national body, ADF, and promote the Australian dairy industry.



UDV President Adam Jenkins with opposition trade spokeswoman Penny Wong at the ADIC dairy industry dinner in Canberra.

Many key politicians and industry leaders came out to the lawns in front of Parliament House to talk dairy and the things important to us. They also took the opportunity to pose for the media with the cows on the lawn. This was followed up with a tremendous by-partisan ADIC dinner with all sides of politics represented enjoying the friendly atmosphere with industry leaders. I am confident they left with a sense of pride of the co-investments both industry and government have achieved laying the foundations for further research and development into the future.

On another note it was great to meet so many farmers who attended the China Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) seminars across the state. I want to thank you all for coming along and making valuable contributions. We had about 300 attend the sessions, many of whom have subsequently been in contact with their local Members of Parliament expressing their opinions about the importance of free trade in relation to farming and the communities in which we live.

The recent announcement of bipartisan support for the passage of the required

ChAFTA legislation from the government and opposition was welcomed from farmers across the country. We will watch this space closely and keep you informed of any further actions that maybe required from our industry. The dairy industry should be extremely proud that we have been one of the key leaders on this issue and this has been heard loud and clear in Canberra.

While we move closer towards the summer season, it's important to take stock of how you are situated and what strategies are available to you as the dry weather seems more likely than a month ago. The lack of spring rains has made farmers review fodder and water availability. Farmers are also reviewing budgets and cash flow projections.

The UDV has been holding meetings around the state to get a sense of what resources are available and what we can do to inform government and other key stakeholders of the state of play and begin the planning process around a long hot couple of months. What does this mean for you, your families and key stakeholders? If you or your friends are becoming increasingly concerned about your area or a neighbour please ring the UDV Office. And we can put

you in touch with someone who has the experience to help you.

Lastly, your policy councillors that represent you help provide direction for factors affecting you and your regions. The right to farm and the social license to farm are becoming more and more important. We need your help to touch base with your councillors and just let them know what issues you have in your neck of the woods. Their phone numbers and emails can be found in this hotline.

Until next time, happy farming.

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Industry Support for Dairy Levy Poll Change

At least \$750,000 could be saved by the dairy industry if the dairy levy poll process was held only when a change to the levy was sought, according Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) president Noel Campbell.

Mr Campbell said the national lobby group was supporting such a move to streamline the levy poll process following the recommendations of an independent panel.

The dairy levy poll is held every five years and determines the amount of money paid by dairy farmers to Dairy Australia, the industry's research, development and extension arm.

The last levy poll was held in 2012 and the process took 15 months over the course of more than 50 meetings throughout Australia.

Mr Campbell said it cost \$720,000 plus the cost of participation by state dairy farmer organisation representatives.

He said Dairy Australia staff and other industry representatives would not be taken away from other work if a poll was not required.

He said the money saved might go instead into research, development and extension.

The outcome of the last poll was a levy rise of 10 per cent.

Mr Campbell said the poll process involves Dairy Australia recommending a levy

proposal (either a rise, status quo — and there always has to be a zero option) to an independent panel.

Dairy Australia must justify its recommendation and then the panel makes a decision about the choices. If the recommendations from the latest independent report are adopted, if the panel recommends status quo there will be no levy poll process. If farmers believe a poll is necessary they can initiate one by bringing together a group of levy payers representing at least 15 per cent of the votes.

This would activate a Dairy Australia general meeting and then 50 per cent of voters would need to resolve to hold a poll.

The next levy poll is scheduled for early 2017. Mr Campbell said preparation for the poll process would begin early next year, so changes recommended by the independent report would have to be legislated by federal Parliament in autumn. If it is not legislated before the poll process begins again, there won't be any changes for the next poll.

Before the changes could be legislated it would have to be proven that the majority of dairy farmers voted in favour of the change, Mr Campbell said.

The ADF will hold meetings about the independent report in the next two months and then there will be a poll, most likely electronic, for farmers to vote about what they wish to do.

The results of that poll would be forwarded to the federal Government as proof of the wishes of the industry, according to Mr Campbell. This is hoped to be completed before the Dairy Australia annual general meeting in November.

Mr Campbell said the proposal to hold a levy poll only when a change was required would not limit the scrutiny of Dairy Australia.

He said Dairy Australia was still required to be independently reviewed every five years, while farmers could also still question the organisation through lobby groups and local regional development programs.

Essential water replacement after bushfire

The Victorian Government has a policy about replacing essential water used during bushfire fighting operations.

The aim of this assistance scheme is to relieve genuine hardship in the community by replenishing essential private water supplies that have been used by fire services during bushfire emergencies.

CFA and DELWP firefighters have the legislative powers to take water from any waterway or water source for firefighting purposes.

The water owner can request replacement of essential water under this scheme.

The water replacement scheme recognises that, while farmers understand the urgency of firefighting, their basic water interests have to be protected too.

If taken for firefighting purposes, a reasonable and sufficient volume of essential water will be provided to sustain the:

- ▶ health of affected residences and pets
- ▶ health and productivity of stock.

To lodge a request for water replacement, please contact your local municipality within three months of the water being taken.

Every effort will be made to replenish essential private water supplies within 48 hours of the affected landholder's request. However this may take longer if firefighting is still underway.





UDV Member Employment Advice Service

The VFF Workplace Relations Department can help you understand the latest employment compliance issues. As a UDV member you will receive professional and timely advice from experts within the industry on issues such as:

- Award interpretation
- Leave entitlements
- Superannuation
- Employment Agreements
- Award rates
- Redundancy
- Discipline & termination of staff
- Discrimination & harassment
- Dealing with sick & injured staff
- Disputes & much more



Member Employment Advice Service

1300 442 481 **VFF** 



UDV Tailor Made Package

- Includes the Employment Starter Kit (ESKi)
 - Unlimited verbal tailored advice
- 4 hours p/a of tailored written advice on complex workplace relations matters
- Access to the VFF Industrial Association (VFFIA) when seeking legal representation
 - Specialist advice on Awards

Call 1300 442 481 to talk to the VFF Workplace Relations team

This project is supported by



Shelter Belts Prove Economic Benefit

Milk price continues to challenge us and seasonal conditions can always disappoint but in my recent travels around the state talking to farmers and other stakeholders a very exciting report was put in front of me which offers dairy farmers some great opportunities.

Many farmers have planted native shelter belts because "it's the right thing to do" and grants and planting labour were available. But both old and new research has been compiled by the Basalt to Bay Landcare group in based in the south west's Koroit, that demonstrates unequivocally that shelter belts have huge economic benefits. Below are just some of the figures backed up by the research that the EBONS report contains.

- ▶ Sheltered areas have a 17% estimated increase in Dairy Milk Production. Over the life of a belt that is an increase in production of 30%.
- ▶ Milk production is depressed by cold at a rate of up to 1.34kg per day (4% fat-corrected milk)

- ▶ Property values on well sheltered farms are on average 15% higher.
- ▶ Hot cows have 26% less milk production than shaded stock.
- ▶ Fast moving grass fires are the main fire threat to Dairying in Victoria. Shelter belts increase a property's ability to buffer stock from direct flames and hot winds.
- ▶ And finally the one we all need to be aware of as an industry is that the provision of shade and shelter is a minimum animal welfare standard in Australia and for our trading partners.

By Adam Jenkins

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