

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

21 October 2020

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee held a meeting via video conference on Wednesday 21 October 2020. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Allison David (Norco Foods), Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect, dairy producer), Sarah Mandelson (Serendipity Ice Cream), Michael McNamara (Pecora Dairy), Phil Ryan (NSW Farmers' Association, dairy producer), Bimi Singh (Bega Cheese Limited), Justin Wilson (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd).

NSW DPI: Lisa Szabo (Chair - Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement), Suzanne Robinson (Director Animal Welfare), David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Paul Freeman (Snr Veterinary Policy & Project Officer), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit), Sheena Carter (Development Officer Dairy Farm Business Management), Jenine Ryle (Snr Policy & Programs Officer).

Apologies: Geneveive Bonello (Principal Project Officer), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Jane Sherborne (Dairy NSW Chair, dairy producer).

Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors with COVID-19 remaining a focus of discussion. Members discussed issues with the state border closures and associated restrictions. The dairy industry Issues Management Rapid Response Plan, International Freight Assistance Mechanism and potential exemption processes were discussed in relation to COVID-19 assistance to industry. Members were also encouraged to approach the Department or Dairy Australia to discuss their specific challenges further.

Members were provided with a Resource Paper with key links to published COVID-19 information to support the NSW food industry including [advice for businesses](#) on food safety aspects of COVID-19, workforce management and regulatory obligations.

- The COVID-19 Primary Industries Liaison Team can be contacted by emailing covidinfo@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- online resource COVID-19 advice can be accessed at dpi.nsw.gov.au/home/covid-19

Members noted that Biosecurity and Food Safety (BFS) Officers are authorised under the *Public Health Act 2010* to ensure food businesses have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. Peter Day outlined that Officers have been conducting proactive visits to dairy processing licensees and that COVID-19 Safety Plan compliance will remain an ongoing focus of the Department's audit program.

Helen Dornom reiterated that Dairy Australia's website includes industry-specific resources and extension programs to assist farm owners, dairy processors and service providers in effectively managing employees and business during COVID-19. The Dairy Australia COVID-19 Directory can be viewed here [Dairy Industry COVID-19 Directory](#)

Food Safety Compliance Report

The Committee noted a report on dairy industry compliance activities for the 2019-20 financial year. Members noted that 97% of the licensed dairy businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result. In comparison, the compliance rate in the dairy sector for the previous financial year was 94%. It was noted that there was a reduction in audit and inspection figures for the March to June 2020 period as BFS Officers focused on COVID-19 safety plan auditing.

Construction and maintenance were the main Corrective Action Requests (CARs) issued across the dairy processing sector. This indicates that auditors are identifying issues requiring improvement in areas such as equipment and facility maintenance. The second area that resulted in a large percentage of CARs was pre-requisite programs, predominantly for issues related to not correctly implementing & documenting a calibration program.

Process control was the main CAR issued across the dairy primary production sector. This indicates that auditors are identifying issues requiring improvement in areas such as keeping accurate monitoring records on site. The second area that resulted in a large percentage of CARs was hygiene and sanitation, predominantly for issues related to poor facility cleaning.

International Engagement Update

Ian Sanders provided industry analysis figures with dairy export figures indicating that NSW milk exports increased by 1% over the year at \$13M (year to August). The top five export markets were China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. The exports of raw and processed dairy products decreased 15% year on year worth \$107M with the top five markets being China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan and Singapore. Members noted that Dairy Australia's annual *In Focus* publication provides detailed import and export statistics.

Ian informed members of a Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment project which aims to reduce the administration burden for businesses applying for export approvals (including digital processes). Ian will update members as developments in this space occur.

DPI Dairy Business Unit Update

Sheena Carter provided an update to members on three strategic work areas within the Dairy Business Unit.

- (1) innovative industry development – benchmarking the performance of robotic dairies compared to other conventional milking systems as part of the Milking Edge Project - a training and extension program for automatic milking in Australia
<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/dairy-technologies/robotic-milking-systems/ams-projects/milking-edge> Continued release of AMS online modules and engagement with industry via webinars and AMSmoko's on Facebook.
- (2) strong business management culture – Results for the 2019/20 financial year of the NSW Dairy Farm Monitor Project will be released shortly – the project provides profitability and productivity data for a range of farms across New South Wales which informs industry on trends on input costs and pricing. Participating farmers get an individual report to compare their performance over time and against other farms, and identify areas for improvement <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/dairy-business-advisory-unit/dfmp>.

- (3) dairy industry sustainability – dairy industry sustainability – broad priority with diverse work areas of animal health and welfare, land use planning and advice to government and industry. The NSW Fresh Milk and Dairy Advocate, Ian Zandstra, works closely with industry and provides government with recommendations on how to drive profitability and value across the dairy supply chain. The Advocate is supported by an Industry Advisory Panel that is made up of farmers, processors, researchers, consultants and government (LLS, DPI). Mr Zandstra and the Panel are currently developing an NSW Dairy Industry Action Plan with actions to underpin a successful future for the NSW dairy industry. A draft is expected to be available for wider industry consultation shortly <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/advocate>

Australian Dairy Plan and Reform

Helen Dornom informed members that the *Australian Dairy Plan* was recently published on 28 September 2020. The Plan aims to deliver increased profitability, confidence and unity across the industry. It is a joint initiative of Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Dairy Products Federation, Dairy Australia and Gardiner Dairy Foundation, with its development led by Independent Chair, John Brumby AO.

Reform of industry structures and advocacy was a key theme during nationwide consultation for the Australian Dairy Plan. The Plan including the consultation summary can be viewed here [Australian Dairy Plan](#)

The date for the next meeting of the Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is to be advised.