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Australian Dairy Farmers welcomes new Government

For immediate release

Australian Dairy Farmers Limited
Level 2, Swann House
22 William Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Phone +61 3 8621 4200
Fax +61 3 8621 4280

www.australiandairyfarmers.com.au

ABN 76 060 549 653

Australian Dairy Farmers congratulates the Federal Coalition on its election to Government.

“ADF has enjoyed a constructive relationship with the Coalition in opposition and throughout the election campaign, and we look forward to continuing that spirit of engagement with them in Government,” said Noel Campbell, President of Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF).

“We welcome the Coalition’s acknowledgement of agriculture as one of the five pillars of the Australian economy. The Coalition’s agriculture plan, whilst not completely aligning with all of ADF’s policy priorities, demonstrates its intention to give agriculture the focus it deserves, and we stand ready to work with the Government to achieve our goals.”

The Coalition has pledged to “fast-track” FTAs with China, Japan and South Korea, and ADF expects significant and meaningful progress on this promise within the first 100 days of a Coalition Government.

The dairy industry is a significant export industry, with exports valued at almost \$3 billion in 2011/12. The industry needs FTAs to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

The Coalition promise to invest \$100 million in agricultural innovation and R,D&E will also help the dairy industry grow and compete internationally. ADF appreciates the Government’s support in this vital area.

ADF expects prompt commencement of the promised “root and branch review” of Australia’s competition laws and of the red and green tape audit as milk priced at an unsustainable \$1 per litre has been hurting dairy farmers for over two and a half years now.

ADF will continue to lobby for the introduction of a mandatory Code of Conduct to balance the extreme market power of the major retailers, and for the appointment of a Supermarket Ombudsman with teeth to oversee compliance.

“Whilst the proposed review of the Competition and Consumer Act is a step in the right direction, it falls short of the mark,” said Mr Campbell.

“Farming families need help to balance the excessive market power of the major supermarkets. The former Government was more forthright in its commitment to address this power imbalance, and we hope that the new Coalition Government will also recognise the effect this power imbalance has on our industry.”

“We look forward to building on our strong relationships with the new Government and to working with them to help grow Australia’s dairy production and make our farmers more profitable.”

ADF will be seeking meetings with key Ministers as soon as the new ministry is announced. In particular we will seek immediate meetings with the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Trade to press home the urgency of the industry’s issues.

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For further information please contact:

ADF Communications,
Telephone (03) 8621 4200