

# June 2013 Update

## In this Issue...

<b>ADF Federal Election Update</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Front of Pack Labelling</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Developing Dairy Leaders Program</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Dairy Australia Constitutional Review</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Voiceless meeting</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Agriculture is Food for Thought in Our Classrooms</b>	<b>Page 3</b>

## ADF Federal Election Update

Australian Dairy Farmers' (ADF) policy and advocacy is progressing well. Meetings were held during May and June in Canberra and Melbourne with key Members of Parliament across all parties and independents, and many more meetings planned in the lead up to the Federal election.



ADF highlighted the challenges dairy farmers throughout Australia are experiencing due to the low retail milk price, high Australian dollar, trade issues, and weather extremes. We have pushed for commitments from both major political parties to assist dairy farmers in confronting these challenges.

Commitments sought include:

- A mandatory Code of Conduct to balance the market power of the retailers with a Supermarket Ombudsman appointed to oversee compliance;
- Greater support for farmers experiencing extreme financial hardship, in addition to the measures already announced in the Farm Finance Package;
- The finalisation of free trade agreement negotiations with key trading partners.

Further meetings with key Ministers are being sought following the change in the Prime Ministership and subsequent Cabinet reshuffle.

The politicians that ADF have met with so far have been receptive to our policy proposals; however, we will continue

to lobby for firm commitments that will improve the viability and profitability of dairy farming.

**Contact:** Rachel Jones

## Opening Prices 2013/14

There has been good news recently on milk prices with most major processors announcing their opening prices for 2013/14. The improved global outlook and softening Australian dollar have assisted in seeing prices around the \$5.60 per kilogram of milk solids mark.

The upper range of end of season price forecasts is around \$6.00 per kilogram of milk solids which is pleasing.

Given the tough times many dairy farmers have experienced in recent times these prices are welcome news and should see some much needed cash flow for our farmers and increase confidence in our great industry.

Whilst opening prices are very strong, the prices quoted are only averages across all suppliers, and individual farmers should seek their own price estimates for their particular situation for budgeting purposes.

**Contact:** David Losberg



*Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.*

## Front of Pack Labelling – Further investigation for dairy products in new scheme

On 14 June 2013, the Government announced it will proceed with a front-of-pack labelling scheme. A star rating out of five is given on the front of food packaging based upon the levels of individual nutrients such as saturated fats.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council voiced concerns to Ministers that the scheme could result in dairy products such as milk and cheese, which are recommended under Australian Dietary Guidelines, receiving a low star rating and seen by consumers as an unhealthy option. This is because the scheme will rate products by their individual nutrient components rather than looking at foods as a whole.

There also remain some key outstanding questions about the costs, benefits and implementation of a food labelling scheme.

In deciding to proceed with the scheme, the Government Committee specifically identified that dairy products would be further investigated with a report back to the Committee by December 2013.

ADIC Chair Noel Campbell made public and media comment welcoming continued examination of the system for dairy products. This provides the opportunity to ensure the scheme provides consumers with the right information about dairy products so they can make positive food choices that are based on recommended daily intakes.

**Contact:** Irene Clarke

### ADF Membership

Have you become a member of ADF? Any dairy farmer who is a member of their State dairy body may join ADF at no additional cost.



Dairy farmers can now communicate with ADF directly on national issues, attend

ADF annual general meetings and will be able to vote on the election of Business Directors.

Further information regarding ADF membership can be found at the ADF website

[www.australiandairyfarmers.com.au](http://www.australiandairyfarmers.com.au)

We encourage all dairy farmers to join ADF by simply downloading the Membership Form on our website, completing and returning the form to the ADF office.

**Contact:** Sarah Chahine

### ADF Policy Advisory Group Meetings

During May and June, the five ADF Policy Advisory Groups (PAG's) met.

The PAGs are:

- Animal Health and Welfare
- Farming Systems and Herd Improvement
- Markets, Value Chain and Trade
- Natural Resources
- People and Human Capacity



Key agenda items in this round of PAG meetings included discussion and feedback on the draft Dairy Australia Annual Operating Plan for 2013-14, discussion on the draft sustainability framework targets, the ADF 2013 Federal election policy priorities, and key initiatives in each PAG area. The PAGs also submitted their workplans for the coming year identifying priority activities and actions.

The 2013 PAGs are made up of a combination of grass roots ADF business members and ADF Board and National Councillors. Nominations are still open for membership of the Farming Systems, Natural Resources and People and Human Capacity PAGs.

For further information about the PAGs or possible membership, please contact Irene Clarke, Senior Policy Manager.

**Contact:** Irene Clarke



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### Developing Dairy Leaders Program

ADF Policy Officer, Rachel Jones, attended the Developing Dairy Leaders Program (DDLDP) in Canberra on 24 June. The DDLDP is a joint Dairy Australia and ADF initiative and was delivered by the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia (NCDEA).

The second residential of the 2013 Developing Dairy Leaders Program was held in Canberra on 24-25 June, with participants learning about farmer advocacy, handling media interviews and developing policy. The group also had the opportunity to meet with federal politicians including Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Sid Sidebottom, Member for Gippsland Darren Chester, Senator Bridget McKenzie and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry John Cobb.

Participants were tasked with developing a policy to encourage farmers to become an "Employer of Choice" – one that adopts good employment practices such as competitive wages and flexible working arrangements to achieve staff retention. The participants needed to research their policy, consult with stakeholders and lobby for adoption of the policy.

The participants delivered their presentations to a panel comprising James Freemantle of REDgum Communications, Bill Youl and Shane Hellwege from Dairy Australia and Rachel Jones from ADF. The quality of the presentations was impressive, with many great ideas and initiatives developed. Several participants have already had some success with having their RPD or state dairy farming organisation adopt elements of their policy for further development.

**Contact:** Rachel Jones



### Dairy Australia Constitutional Review

Submissions on the Dairy Australia Constitutional Review closed on 17 May 2013. The ADF submission along with all submissions lodged are available on the Dairy Australia Constitutional Review website (<http://www.daconstitutionalreview.com.au/>).

Key recommendations of the ADF submission are:

- Consultation with ADF should be improved;
- Group B membership should be limited to 2 members (ADF and ADPF) acknowledging that this means ADF has a duty to perform its role as a national representation body;
- The term of directors should be 3 terms (9 years) maximum;
- The number of farmer directors should be increased to 4 on a Board of 9;

- It is a preference that the Chair be a levy payer but this should not be prescribed in the Constitution, rather it should be encouraged through guiding principles in the Board's Charter;
- Options for improved attendance at general meetings should be explored, including through the use of technology; and
- Two key areas for future consideration and separate review are the levy poll process (this should be a first principles review) and the allocation of Group A votes.

ADF will meet with the Panel to discuss the submission in July 2013. The Panel's final report is due with the Board at the end of August 2013.

**Contact:** Irene Clarke

### Voiceless meeting

In mid-June ADF met with Voiceless, an animal rights group. The purpose of the meeting was to engage with Voiceless as part of the National Dairy Industry Animal Welfare Strategy (NDIAWS) and explain the industry's position on key animal health and welfare issues.

ADF provided an overview of the dairy industry in Australia, outlining the proactive and good work the industry is doing on animal health and welfare and discussed our priority issues for animal health and welfare.

**Contact:** David Losberg

### ADF welcomes Emma Clark, Communications Manager

ADF is pleased to announce the appointment of Emma Clark to the ADF team as Communications Manager.

Emma has a strong background in communications, public relations, marketing and events, having worked within the physiotherapy, property and housing industries. Her last role was with the Property Council of Australia.

**Contact:** Natalie Collard

### Draft Saleyard Welfare Standards and Guidelines meeting

ADF and Dairy Australia attended a workshop on the draft national Saleyard Welfare Standards and Guidelines.

The Standards apply to all those responsible for the care and management of livestock that are handled through saleyards, including saleyard managers / superintendents, saleyard staff, stock persons, agents, transport operators and drivers.

The workshop reviewed the draft Saleyard Standards and Guidelines and provided feedback and suggested amendments.

In attendance were key stakeholders from livestock industries, state and territory governments, the RSCPCA, Animals Australia and farmer groups.

**Contact:** David Losberg



### Western Australian Farmers' Federation Dairy Conference

Australian Dairy Farmers CEO, Natalie Collard, attended the Western Australian Farmers' Federation (WAFF) Dairy Conference held in Busselton, WA on 21 June. The event theme was 'Uniting Industry to Affect Change'.

Ms. Collard spoke about the current issues that ADF is lobbying for, as well as ADF's 2013 Federal Election policy platform. Other key speakers included Mr. Ken Baston, Minister for Food and Agriculture, and Mr. Michael Partridge, Deputy Chair of Western Australian Farmers Federation and an ADF National Councillor. The dynamic event was well attended and concluded with a gala dinner and awards ceremony.

**Contact:** Natalie Collard



### National Farmers Federation (NFF) Members Council

President, Noel Campbell attended the NFF Members Council meeting in Darwin on 20 June. The meeting focused on the Coalition and the developing northern Australian agriculture.

NFF President, Duncan Fraser said, "Given close to 50 percent of the world's population live directly to our north, there's potentially a huge opportunity for this area to grow its role as a key supplier of food to our northern neighbours.... But it is essential that this is done in way that is sustainable, and in consultation with the agricultural sector.

"The NFF has asked both the Opposition and the Government to strongly consider these areas – not just in northern Australia, but also right across the country – and we will continue to work with all sides of Parliament in the lead up to the Federal Election," Mr Fraser said.

**Contact:** Noel Campbell



### Primary Industries Education Foundation

#### Agriculture is Food for Thought in Our Classrooms

The future of agricultural education in Australia is bright, if the enthusiasm of Australia's educators at the Primary Industries Education Foundation (PIEF) Workshop is any indication.

ADF Policy Officer Rachel Jones attended the PIEF Workshop, held in Canberra on 5-6 June, bringing together educators, business leaders and industry representatives from across Australia to share ideas and discuss the innovative ways in which schools have incorporated agriculture into their curriculum.

PIEF held the conference after a 2011 survey of school children conducted by the Australian Council of Educational Research revealed that 27 per cent of Grade 6

students surveyed believed that yoghurt grows on trees, and only 55 per cent of students knew that cheese was made from a farmed product.

Presentations featured educators discussing programs operating in their schools, industry groups about the support they can provide to young people keen to pursue a career in agriculture, and businesses that are providing the tools to advance agriculture in the classroom.

Some of the presentations delivered included a presentation from WestVic Dairy on "Promoting Dairy Careers", which detailed some of the programs run in South Western Victoria to encourage students to choose dairy as a career. AgForce QLD also presented "Moo Baa Munch", an educational agricultural event held annually in Queensland that aims to increase student awareness of where their food and clothing comes from and the variety of careers in agriculture.

PIEF hope the Workshop will become a regular event, and will improve Australian students' understanding of agriculture and the vital role it plays in Australia's history, present and future.

**Contact:** Rachel Jones



### Remember the changes to superannuation guarantee from 1 July 2013.

1 July 2013 has now passed and employers need be aware of the changes to their super obligations that are now in effect.

#### Super guarantee rate rise

The rate of super guarantee (the compulsory super payments you make on behalf of your employees) has risen by 0.25% to 9.25%.

If you are paying super guarantee on behalf of your employees at the minimum rate, you will need to apply the additional 0.25% from 1 July 2013 onwards. Contributions are calculated based on the date you pay your employees. This means that payments made after 30 June 2013 will need to be calculated using 9.25%, not 9%.

For help calculating super guarantee contributions, visit [ato.gov.au/supertools](http://ato.gov.au/supertools).

#### Removal of the upper age limit

If you have eligible employees who are aged 70 years or over, you will need to start making contributions on their behalf from 1 July 2013.

If you are unsure of how your business needs to adapt to the changes, visit [ato.gov.au/employersuper](http://ato.gov.au/employersuper) or seek help from superannuation service providers.

The Small Business Superannuation Clearing House, <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/business/services/medicare/small-business-superannuation-clearing->

**house/** offers help in processing super guarantee payments for small businesses. If you have 19 employees or fewer, you can use this free service to pay your super contributions in one transaction to a single location. For larger businesses, there are a range of commercial clearing houses that can help you process your super contributions.

**Contact:** Emily Chee, Australian Tax Office  
(02) 93748546 or [Emily.Chee2@ato.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Chee2@ato.gov.au)

### AFL Paying Tribute To Farmers

Australian Dairy Farmers and National Farmers Federation staff were guests of the Greater Western Sydney (GWS) Chairman at the GWS GIANTS vs Geelong match at Skoda Stadium on Saturday 8 June 2013. At the match it was announced that in 2014 GWS will host an AFL Farmers Tribute Match.



The concept, developed by Australian Dairy Farmers Limited (ADF) and the GWS Giants coach Kevin Sheedy, is built on shared values of hard work, innovation, community and the strong, long term relationship between rural communities and sport.

ADF President Noel Campbell said that the GIANTS are finalising "a broader 2014 plan involving a year-long community countdown leading to a centrepiece AFL match, a farmers' market style showcase and the bringing together of sporting, community, business and government leaders".

GIANTS Head Coach Kevin Sheedy said the game recognised the contribution made by farmers to Australia. "In many ways, farmers have been the backbone of this country. Australian football is also an important part of rural communities and we would like to recognise that with this match," Sheedy said.

"ADF would like to see every farmer celebrated for their contribution to Australia, and this concept provides an unprecedented opportunity for showcasing the value of our farmers and agriculture in general, as well as and build a greater understanding between rural and urban communities", Mr Campbell said.

**Contact:** Natalie Collard

### Udderly Fantastic

With all that is happening in our industry, why not join Udderly Fantastic?

Udderly Fantastic is a secure website and a great way to share your stories, photos and discuss the many different issues currently facing the dairy industry. Join up to find out more!

**Contact:** Sarah Chahine

