

Media Release



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ADF condemns Howes' howler on family farms

For immediate release

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Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) has condemned comments by Australian Workers Union national secretary, Paul Howes that the era of family farms needs to end if Australia is to position itself as the food-bowl of Asia.

ADF President, Noel Campbell, described Mr Howes' comments in The Australian newspaper Sunday as a simplistic thought bubble that contributes little to the dairy industry or agriculture in general.

"Let's be clear, we're not talking the Beverley Hillbillies - family-owned enterprises comprise over 90% of farm ownership in an industry that directly employs 43,000 Australians and generates \$13 billion in exports ever year," Mr Campbell said.

"A careful examination of the facts will show that while the industry has had its share of challenges in recent times, including unfavourable weather and lower margins, this has nothing to do with whether a farm is family-owned or not.

"In reality, the opposite is the case with family-owned farms being a source of strength and stability around which the dairy industry has persevered and ultimately, prospered.

"The family-owned farm remains the backbone of our industry and nothing that Mr Howes' thinks or says will fundamentally alter that fact."

Mr Campbell said Mr Howes' use of the description 'ma and pa farming' demonstrated how out of touch he is with the modern farming sector.

"These poorly-chosen words do not reflect well on Mr Howes' or his understanding of the realities of modern day farming," he said.

"We need action, not glib one-liners, to help unlock Asia's trade potential and that's why ADF continues to advocate for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that provide meaningful commercial opportunities with key market partners, including China, Japan and Korea.

"This is the real priority for our industry, not who owns our farms or how big they are, as we seek to capitalise on the opportunities that the rise of Asia presents us."

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