

ADF Member Update - 20.05.16

As debate rages about milk price shock in the public sphere, it is essential that we don't let the facts about the current challenges our industry is facing go astray.

The decisions made by some major processors, in particular Murray Goulburn and Fonterra, in recent weeks have hit Australian dairy farmers hard.

We can't change what has happened, but we can work to take charge of the things within our control – that means providing support to equip farmers with the tools they need to help manage their current situation and finding ways to prevent this issue in future.

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) in collaboration with state members and Dairy Australia is providing targeted assistance. I encourage you all to take advantage of these resources by contacting your Regional Development Program (RDP).

Industry efforts will continue to support farmers during these challenging times, but in order for farmers to get through the short term ADF is seeking commitments from all parties to back our farmers during this financial crisis.

Ongoing discussion with all political parties, both state and national has delivered positive commitments from State government, particularly in Victoria and South Australia, to help farmers continue to operate.

We have met with Federal politicians this week to discuss support measures we need here and now, including one off grants for dairy farmers in exceptional circumstances, increased funding for the Rural Financial Counselling resources and streamlining access to existing government programs. A bipartisan approach to these solutions is essential.

Our priority remains delivering support for the short term but that doesn't mean we aren't considering solutions to prevent this issue from occurring again.

ADF has always advocated that there needs to be a better balance between retailers, processors and farmers. We are working with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to address these concerns. We were pleased to see that the ACCC's Agricultural Engagement Unit heeded our call to investigate the processors actions in recent weeks and we will assist with that investigation where possible.

ADF is working with financial institutions to ensure farmers are treated fairly. The ANZ's announcement is very encouraging, and we are confident other banks will take a balanced approach, if not provide a similar assistance package.

Farmers have been hit with a number of challenges but with the resilience we know this industry has, and the right support we will work through this and build a stronger future.