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A voice for Australian dairy in EU mission

For Immediate Release

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Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) will fly the flag for the nation's dairy industry when a delegation of leading agricultural representatives lays groundwork in Europe ahead of free trade negotiations.

ADF president Terry Richardson has joined with senior figures from across Australia's farm sector on a 12-day mission to strengthen ties with the European Union and the United Kingdom as the Australian Government prepares for formal trade negotiations to commence later this year.

Mr Richardson said it was critical that Australia's dairy industry has a strong voice in discussions with the EU leading up to the negotiations.

"This delegation is about gaining an understanding of British and European markets from a farmer's perspective and ensuring that this understanding is two-way," Mr Richardson said.

"There is no doubt that individual sectors within Australian agriculture stand to make gains from formalised trade agreements with the EU, however, we must do everything we can to ensure our dairy industry is not adversely impacted."

Mr Richardson reiterated ADF's opposition to the inclusion of Geographic Indicators (GI) in any agreement.

Such an inclusion could see Australian producers of cheese varieties including Feta, Haloumi and Parmesan forced to rename their products.

"We have Australian companies that have been producing these varieties to a world standard for over 100 years. An inappropriate GI regime would have significant implications for the value of those proud Aussie brands," Mr Richardson said.

"The Australian dairy industry believes that current rules in Australia for the protection of agriculture GI's are sufficient and working effectively."

A busy schedule will see the farmers' delegation attending Green Week in Berlin and meetings with Australian Ambassadors and High Commissioners, peak agricultural bodies and European and British agribusiness and industry associations. They will also join Assistant Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Anne Ruston, on a tour of the Port of Rotterdam and nearby horticulture production facilities.

The delegation will report back to farmers at a series of seminars, beginning with a presentation at WA Farmers' annual conference in March.

Mr Richardson will also travel to Ireland to meet with senior dairy industry representatives.

Delegates

Fiona Simson (NFF, President)

Tony Hegarty (NFF Board Member and Cattle Council of Australia Vice President)

Terry Richardson (Australian Dairy Farmers, President)

John Wallace (Sheep Producers Australia)

Luke Mathews (Grain Growers Limited, Trade Manager)

Warren Males (CANEGROWERS, Head of Economics)

Emma Germano (Victorian Farmers Federation - Horticulture, President)

Alison Horswill (Export and supply chain consultant)

Rachel Nicoll (NSW Farmers Association)

Maximiliane Hanft (NFF, Policy Officer)

Scott Kompo-Harms (NFF, Trade & Economics General Manager)

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