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**Wednesday 16 May 2018**

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**Australian Dairy Farmers clears up Weekly Times allegations**

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**For Immediate Release**

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*The Weekly Times* has shown contempt for its readers and the broader dairy industry.

The publication today of unsubstantiated gossip around the Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) regarding our position on an industry Code of Practice is reckless and lacks credibility.

The article makes a number of false claims and it is appropriate that we correct the record and shed light on the nature of dairy industry relationships.

The ADF Board never held the position that the organisation should support a mandatory code. We have always said that first we must assess how a mandatory code would work and whether this would benefit industry.

We are in the process of reviewing the current Code, and as part of this process we are assessing the implications of a mandatory code.

It is false to state that anyone other than ADF Board and staff had input into drafting our submission to the ACCC.

It is also false to claim that any processor made demands to ADF that we change our position.

We have agreements with 11 different processors and not one of them threatened, bullied or even contacted ADF to try and influence our position on the code of practice

It is common in the agriculture industry for different organisations to have differing views on industry issues. This is not something that ADF tries to disguise.

There was a commitment at the time when the Code was launched in mid-2017 that a review be conducted. We understand the importance of engaging all stakeholders in the review process, and this process is already underway.

The Code of Practice is a vital part of restoring relationships across industry, and we want to ensure that we get the Code right by strengthening provisions, including more formal dispute resolution procedures

Industry is expected to consult on all industry issues, whether it is animal health and welfare, trade and market access, biosecurity, nutrition, marketing – the list goes on.

These accusations in the Weekly Times have a deep impact on farmer representatives, staff and the health of the entire industry.

We are acutely aware of the myriad of on-farm challenges, and now is the time when we should all be working together to improve the state of our industry.

It is the role of ADF to advocate on behalf of farmers. Every minute wasted responding to spurious claims is a minute lost that should be spent standing up for farmers.

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