



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Media Release

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Dairy needs strong presence in EU trade discussions

For Immediate Release

AUSTRALIA'S dairy industry is urging the federal Government to fight for a fair outcome for the sector amid new trade negotiations with the European Union.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council said the Government needed to push back against excessive restrictions sought by the EU that could further damage the value of Australian dairy exports to Europe, which already saw an alarming 94.3 per cent decline over the 10-year period to 2016, from US\$45 million to just US\$2.3 million.

Of particular concern are efforts to increase protections for geographic indications of origin (GIs), such as limiting the use of GIs to production from specific regions instead of whole countries, protection in only the original language, and as a compound name with a geographical component.

ADIC Chairman Terry Richardson said there was danger the use of GIs would lead to the usurping of common cheese names, putting Australian exporters at a disadvantage to their European counterparts.

"It is vital that any free trade agreement has benefits for both sides, considering the ease of access European businesses have to the Australian market," Mr Richardson said.

"We are deeply concerned that GIs will mean local exporters will no longer be able to use common names like brie, cheddar or fetta because it relates to a specific European region."

Mr Richardson said the negotiations were a unique opportunity to reset the barriers that are currently stifling trade between Australia and Europe.

"Australia is in a very good position to capitalise on a new relationship with the EU because of the preferential access we have to Asian markets through our existing trade agreements with China and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries," he said.

"The EU hasn't yet opened agreements with Asia, but we are well-placed to supply those markets – that is our value opportunity if we are serious about getting better markets for dairy products."

The EU's chief trade commissioner will visit Canberra next month to formally kick off negotiations.

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The Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) is the dairy industry's peak policy body. It co-ordinates industry's policy and represents all sectors of the industry on national and international issues through its two constituent bodies, Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd (ADF) and the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF). It aims to foster, promote and protect the interests of the Australian dairy industry by driving a whole of industry approach to dairy policy and the development of the dairy industry.