



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Media Release

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Local cheese varieties at risk under Australia-EU FTA

For Immediate Release

AUSTRALIA'S dairy industry could soon face a "nightmare scenario" if locally produced cheeses including feta, parmesan and haloumi are banned under a new Australia-European Union free trade agreement.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) has warned that locally produced cheese varieties with a value of production worth \$180 million and export sales averaging \$55 million each year, would face extinction if the EU succeeds in forcing Australia to accept and implement strict labelling rules, called geographic indicators (GIs), as part of the trade deal.

The EU has argued that GIs are intended to "protect distinctive EU food and drink products from imitations in Australia", but in practice Australian dairy manufacturers will be forced to change the names of locally produced common cheese brands.

"A quick look in any supermarket cheese section will show you that many Australian dairy manufacturers have built their brands on their cultural heritage, and now face the possibility of having that taken from them. It is an absolute nightmare scenario," ADIC Chair Terry Richardson said.

"Not only that, but consumers will be confused and frustrated at no longer being able to find some of their favourite dairy products on supermarket shelves."

Added to this, attempts by the EU to extend the scope of labelling restrictions to include colours, flags, and even symbols that might evoke regions in EU countries would hit a further 45,000 tonnes of Australian cheese production, averaging \$300 million in domestic and export sales per year.

Mr Richardson said the federal government needed to take stronger action during trade talks to ensure the local dairy industry would not suffer under a new trade agreement.

"The future of the Australian dairy industry depends on the federal government's courage to stay firm in trade negotiations and push back against the EU's demand to enforce GI restrictions," he said

"These trade negotiations should allow both Australia and the EU to capitalise on an improved commercial relationship.

"But we need to ensure this deal frees up the trade relationship rather than creates technical barriers such as GIs."

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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.