



Tuesday 2 August, 2011

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Radcliffe,

Re: Inquiry into biosecurity and quarantine arrangements

The Australian dairy industry would like to make the following points to the Senate Inquiry into biosecurity and quarantine arrangements.

The Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) and Dairy Australia (DA) provided a detailed submission into the Beale Review and in principle, supported the recommendations from the review. The dairy industry has also been an active contributor to the ongoing consultation on Biosecurity arrangements and into the AQIS MTF process for Export Certification. We note that the Senate is still undertaking its Inquiry into biosecurity and quarantine arrangements and would like to add a few comments to the opportunities provided to date.

Biosecurity

Like other food industries in Australia, the Australian dairy industry needs to be protected from exotic diseases. An outbreak of an animal disease such as foot and mouth disease would be a serious disaster for the Australian dairy industry. However the second element of maintaining our livelihood is that we need access to overseas markets. To maintain this access we need to ensure that Australia does not leave itself open to criticism, complaint, challenge and ultimately trade sanctions as a result of an unnecessarily harsh quarantine regime. The dairy industry's position on quarantine and biosecurity reflects its unique position in national and international markets.

The Beale Review on Quarantine talked about national consistency with respect to Biosecurity. This is important as Australia operates in a national and global context and while the dairy industry supports the consistency, we are concerned about cost shifting on to producers for strategies that are fundamental to maintaining livestock industries and for rural economies.

Biosecurity plays a critical role in protecting the food supply, providing community as well as individual benefits. Any actions in this area need to consider all potential impacts, including human health impacts, socioeconomic costs from trade losses, and environmental damage. This includes achieving a biosecurity and quarantine system viewed by all as meeting the letter and spirit of World Trade Organisation agreements, and not as a trade barrier.

Dairy Export Certification

The dairy industry has been an active contributor to the Ministerial task Force process to enhance dairy export certification – in return for moving to full cost recovery of the dairy export program under AQIS.

The dairy industry has developed a 3 year strategic plan for dairy exports. This plan relies on the continued tripartite partnership arrangements in place with AQIS, State Regulatory Authorities (SRAs) and industry.

Industry seeks an export certification process that:

- supports and enhances the existing risk based, outcomes focused dairy food safety systems in a manner that is cost effective for all partners, especially industry;
- ensures a seamless regulatory framework across both export and domestic regulatory requirements, recognising third party deliverers and non regulatory programs; and
- builds on the existing Australian dairy industry food safety system, providing the benefits sought by industry while enhancing continuous improvement of the Australian dairy industry food safety system

The industry also expects government to cover the costs of those activities that protect the community and help ensure a viable export food industry. These costs should not be simply shifted to industry – all parties need to take responsibility and share the costs appropriately.

The dairy industry appeared before the Senate (by teleconference) and raised a number of issues that have been recorded. We look forward to the outcomes from the Senate Inquiry.

Yours Sincerely,

Wesley Judd
Chairman