



27 April 2018

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Via email: jsct@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' inquiry examining the *Framework Agreement between Australia, of the one part, and the European Union and its Member States, of the other part* (EU Framework Agreement). The NFF supports the EU Framework Agreement and urges the Australian Government to use it as a stepping stone for a comprehensive and high-quality trade agreement with the EU that substantially improves market access for all of Australia's important agricultural commodities, including red meat (beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat), dairy, horticulture, grains, sugar, cotton, rice and wool.

The NFF is the peak national body representing farmers and, more broadly, agriculture across Australia. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF. The NFF is committed to advancing Australian agriculture by developing and advocating for policies that support the profitability and productivity of Australian farmers. Developing stable export market opportunities for Australian agricultural produce and reducing distortions in global markets are key priorities for the NFF.

Trade in agricultural goods with the EU is in the NFF's view underdeveloped. According to ABARES data, Australia exported approximately \$3.8 billion worth of food to the EU in 2016-2017 while importing agricultural goods worth more than \$4.7. This is a significant deviation from Australia's usual agricultural trade pattern, with Australia being a net food exporter with all other major markets.

Special Agricultural Trade Envoy

The NFF particularly welcomes Article 50 of the framework, stating the aim to have closer cooperation in agriculture and rural development. The NFF would cherish an inclusion of the Australian agricultural industry in talks between Australian and EU officials. To this end, the NFF recommends including a Special Agricultural Trade Envoy (SATE) in agriculture talks with the EU.

In the NFF 2018-2019 Pre-Budget submission, the NFF suggested that Government should consider appointing an eminent Australian with significant experience in agriculture and


international trade as a SATE. This suggestion is based on the New Zealand model in which New Zealand Ministers for Trade and Primary Industries have appointed several SATEs since the early 2000s. The NFF believes that the model used in New Zealand can be applied to the Australian context.

The SATE in New Zealand is a practising farmer who has had extensive experience as an elected representative in New Zealand agriculture industry bodies. The role of a SATE is to provide a farmer's perspective to international trade negotiations and build partnerships with other farming groups offshore, and the NFF believes that the EU Framework Agreement would be a great place to start using a SATE.

Recommendation

The NFF, as the peak industry body representing Australian farmers and agribusiness, seeks the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to endorse without delay binding treaty action for the EU Framework Agreement.

For further information on this submission, please contact Senior Policy Officer for Trade and Economics Maxie Hanft at 02 6269 5666 or mhanft@nff.org.au.



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