



DAIRY AUSTRALIA

15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science & Innovation  
Suite R1-116,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Dear Ms Comish,

**Re : Inquiry into the Coordination of the Science to Combat the Nation's Salinity Problem**

Dairy Australia believes that combating the nation's salinity problem must be based on sound science to be effective – in the same manner as dealing with all other natural resource issues. Without good science, policies and management responses will be ill-directed; resulting in poor success rates, frustration and inefficient application of funds. A mixture of generic and applied science is required.

The main concerns of the dairy industry relate to irrigation induced salinity; and a number of applied projects have been (and are being) conducted to better understand relationships between irrigation and deep-drainage (and the potential generation of salinity problems). Examples of work include "Improving Water Use Efficiency by Reducing Groundwater Recharge Under Irrigated Pastures", "More Milk and Dollars from Irrigation Water" and "Alternative Irrigation Systems". Research is also underway to investigate the water use efficiency of alternative pasture plants.

The dairy industry has also been involved to some extent in generic research such as the former National Program for Irrigation Research and Development and its replacement; the National Program for Sustainable Irrigation. It has been aware of the National Dryland Salinity Program, but is not a contributor, given the lower risk faced by the industry from dryland salinity. Programs of this nature are an efficient means for multi-partner research into generic principles and help develop skills and understanding that can be applied in commodity (or region) specific research.

Dairy Australia, with support from the Australian Government Department for Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries, is establishing a methodology to be applied to a wide range of natural resource issues, to convert targets for environmental condition into targets for management change on farm. The method ("Targets for Change") will also help identify the information, support and incentives that may be needed to achieve the targets. It is being developed to reduce the risk of ill-

Locked Bag 104  
Flinders Lane  
Victoria 8009 Australia

T + 61 3 9694 3777  
F + 61 3 9694 3733  
[www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

Dairy Australia Limited  
ABN 60 105 227 987



DAIRY AUSTRALIA

directed responses to acknowledged problems and to promote management that does the right thing, in the right place, at the right time. Without a sound science base this approach will fail.

Dairy Australia commends the use of science to develop practical, efficient solutions to resource management challenges and advises against responses that are not so founded. Continued investment by the Commonwealth in generic and applied research is essential for that outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Dr M J Ginnivan  
**Managing Director**

Locked Bag 104  
Flinders Lane  
Victoria 8009 Australia

T + 61 3 9694 3777  
F + 61 3 9694 3733  
[www.dairyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au)

Dairy Australia Limited  
ABN 60 105 227 987