



Australian Dairy Farmers

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29 November 2005

Ms Maureen Weeks
Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Weeks,

Re: Inquiry into the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005

The Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005.

The ADF represents all the State Dairy Farmer Organisations, including the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, the NSW Farmers' Association – Dairy Committee, Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association – Dairy Council, South Australian Dairyfarmers' Association, Western Australian Farmers' Federation – Dairy Section and the Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation. Dairy Australia (DA) is the dairy industry-owned service company, limited by guarantee, whose members are farmers and industry bodies, including the Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and the Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF). DA supports the ADF in its animal welfare activities.

ADF believes that the proposed National Animal Welfare Bill has adopted an overly regulated approach to managing animal welfare. The Australian dairy industry is committed to risk-based, outcomes-focussed frameworks, with minimum but effective regulation to achieve expected animal welfare outcomes. The dairy industry believes that:

“Sound dairy husbandry practices deliver good animal welfare outcomes”

- The dairy industry is committed to, and serious about, delivering good animal welfare outcomes with continuous improvement as appropriate
- The dairy industry has a solid track record for achieving good animal welfare outcomes
- The dairy industry is different to other livestock industries as animals are closely monitored every day as part of normal farming practice

There appears to have been no consultation with key stakeholders prior to the release of the National Animal Welfare Bill in either 2003 or 2005.

The Bill has been proposed despite the existence of the *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS)* which has the same purpose, that is to ensure animal welfare issues are given adequate priority at a national level. The level of commitment and progress of the *AAWS* and other initiatives, such as the dairy industry's National Animal Welfare Strategy that sit beneath the *AAWS*, clearly indicate how seriously Australia takes its animal welfare responsibilities and the high standard of welfare that is already being achieved across a number of areas. On this basis, the ADF opposes the Bill.

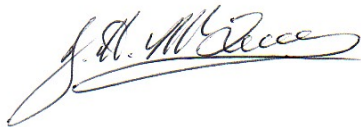
The Federal Government developed an AAWS with the vision that the welfare of all animals in Australia is promoted and protected by the adoption of sound animal welfare standards and practices. The AAWS was formulated on the basis that Australia already has a strong existing framework to establish and enforce acceptable animal welfare outcomes and has comprehensive animal welfare legislation and enforcement in place at national, state, territory and local levels. National codes of practice and auditable industry quality assurance programs are also in place and provide a sound basis for the humane and responsible use and treatment of animals.

The AAWS provides national direction for the development of future policies and the revision of existing approaches to animal welfare for all animals across Australia. It was adopted by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) in 2004 after more than four years of consultation with key stakeholders. The Australian dairy industry, along with other agricultural industries, endorsed the AAWS. The Federal Government has since committed \$6 million to the implementation of the strategy and is currently consulting with all key stakeholders on the development of action plans to implement the strategy.

As a global operator, the Australian dairy industry takes its responsibility for welfare issues seriously and is committed to a national approach to deliver good animal welfare outcomes through sound husbandry practices.

Please do not hesitate to contact John McQueen, CEO Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd. (on Tel: 03 9442 8044 jmcqueen@dairy.com.au) or Helen Dornom, Technical Issues Manager, Dairy Australia (Tel: 03 9694 3897 or hdornom@dairyaustralia.com.au) if you have any queries regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely,



for
Wesley Judd
Vice President
Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd.

Cc Helen Dornom – Dairy Australia