

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

17 June 2020

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee held a meeting via teleconference on Wednesday 17 June 2020. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Allison David (Norco Foods), Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Jane Sherborne (Dairy NSW Chair, dairy producer), Sarah Mandelson (CEO Serendipity Ice Cream), Phil Ryan (NSW Farmers' Association, dairy producer), Justin Wilson (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd).

NSW DPI: Lisa Szabo (Chair - Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement), Suzanne Robinson (Director Animal Welfare), Paul Freeman (Snr Veterinary Policy & Project Officer), Geneveive Bonello (Principal Project Officer), Matthew Campbell (Team Leader, Regulatory Operations Unit), Sheena Carter (Development Officer Dairy Farm Business Management).

Apologies: Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect, dairy producer), Michael McNamara (Director, Pecora Dairy), Peter Day (Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit), Bega Cheese Limited.

Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors with COVID-19 being the focus of discussion. Members outlined the impact it is having on their industries and discussed planning and contingency measures that they are taking to address issues relating to their operations in line with advice from NSW Health.

Members noted the huge pressures being put on industry from COVID-19 on the back of drought and the recent bushfires.

[Note: The Department has published [advice for businesses](#) on food safety aspects of COVID-19, workforce management and regulatory obligations. Members were provided out of session with a Resource Paper with key links to COVID-19 information and advice to support the NSW food industry. This includes reference to the Dairy Australia webpage *Information for Processors and Service Providers* contains a range of COVID-19 related information for the dairy sector - dairyaustralia.com.au/about-dairy-australia/about-the-industry/dairy-industry-covid19-directory/information-for-people-working-with-farm-businesses and a new fact sheet *Deep Cleaning in Response to COVID-19 Exposure*]

Food Safety Compliance Report

Members noted a report on dairy industry compliance activities between 1 July 2019 and 31 December 2019. The dairy industry sector recorded a high compliance rate with 97% of licensed businesses recording an acceptable audit and/or inspection result during this period.

Construction and maintenance were the main Corrective Action Requests (CARs) issued across the dairy processing sector. This indicates that auditors are identifying issues requiring improvement in areas such as equipment and facility maintenance. The second

area that resulted in a large percentage of CARs was pre-requisite programs, predominantly for issues related to not correctly implementing & documenting a calibration program.

Process control was the main CAR issued across the dairy primary production sector. This indicates that auditors are identifying issues requiring improvement in areas such as keeping accurate monitoring records on site. The second area that resulted in a large percentage of CARs was hygiene and sanitation, predominantly for issues related to poor facility cleaning.

The low level of enforcement activity during the period is reflective of a highly compliant industry.

Animal Welfare update

A paper was presented addressing the following animal welfare issues:

- advice and resources on animal welfare requirements for transport livestock, including fitness to load, have been developed by DPI and are being shared with industry;
- The Department is seeking feedback on the Animal Welfare Reform Issues Paper. The Paper identifies areas of reform to modernise the policy and legislative framework for animal welfare in NSW;
- Implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Saleyards and Depots is being considered for adoption in NSW legislation;
- Queensland will lead the national development of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments;
- The Animal Welfare Advisory Council has recently been reshaped as an independent scientific committee. Expressions of interest for Council positions closed in March 2020 and are currently being assessed;
- COVID-19 impacts on the dairy industry and obligations pursuant to the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*. Members were advised that NSW DPI has established the COVID-19 Primary Industries Liaison Team and an [Advice Portal](#) to help primary producers navigate the challenges and impacts of COVID-19 on their business and industry. Business, including dairies, may be eligible for support in coping with the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Auditing restrictions on licensed dairy farms to be lifted

As of 1 June 2020, restrictions placed on licenced dairy farms will be lifted. The Food Authority is supporting licensed businesses with a 90-day grace period, from 1 June 2020. Any business that was due for a food safety audit between 23 March 2020 and 1 June 2020 will not be penalised for overdue audits. Therefore, these facilities will need to have had an audit conducted by 31 August 2020.

NSW Export Assistance Grant

The Export Assistance Grant program will help NSW businesses recover from drought, bushfires and COVID-19 by providing co-funding to identify and access new export markets and re-enter previous export markets.

Grants of up to \$10,000 per eligible business will support up to 1,000 NSW eligible businesses.

Matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis, funding will centre on export marketing and development activities, such as market research, participation in international tradeshows and trade missions, inbound business support, e-commerce development and marketing materials. <https://www.business.nsw.gov.au/export-from-nsw/export-assistance/export-support-packages>

Dairy Business Unit Update

Sheena Carter provided an update to members of the work being undertaken within the DPI Dairy Business Unit. Three strategic priority areas were outlined:

- (1) innovative industry development – including the Milking Edge Project (a training and extension program for automatic milking in Australia <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/dairy-technologies/robotic-milking-systems/ams-projects/milking-edge>)
- (2) strong business management culture – including the NSW Dairy Farm Monitor Project (provides profitability and productivity data for a range of farms across New South Wales which allows farmers to compare their performance against other farms, and identify areas for improvement <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/dairy-business-advisory-unit/dfmp>)
- (3) dairy industry sustainability – broad priority with diverse work areas of animal health and welfare, land use planning and advice to government and industry. The NSW Fresh Milk and Dairy Advocate, Ian Zandstra, works closely with industry and provides government with expert advice on how to drive profitability and value across the dairy supply chain. The Advocate is supported by an Industry Advisory Panel that was established in consultation with industry. <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/advocate>

The date for the next meeting of the Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is Wednesday 21 October 2020.