

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

The primary objective of the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is to contribute to the NSW Food Authority's goal of ensuring the production and sale of dairy products that are safe and suitable for human consumption, by advising on policy and practices introduced into provisions of the Dairy Food Safety Scheme as it relates to dairy and dairy products and developed through a consultative process. Other government agencies may seek to use the broad expertise and experience of the Committee Members to obtain advice on matters beyond the scope of the provisions of the Dairy Food Safety Scheme.

Summary of outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee – Summary of outcomes

10 June 2026

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 10 June 2026. Issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

Attendees:

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Stewart Davey (Dairy Australia), Ruth Kydd (eastAUSmilk), Donna Salway (Dairy NSW), Steven Salway (NSW Farmers' Association), Su Zhang (Star Combo Pharma Ltd).

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Andrew Davies – Chair (Director Food Safety & CEO Food Authority), Anneliese French (Acting Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Meher Grigorian (Acting Secretariat), Humad Naeem (Acting Regulatory Operations Manager), Kate Wingett (Manager Animal Welfare Policy and Programs).

Apologies: Eric Davis (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Iain Fee (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Patrick Phillips (Acting Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Chandni Rath (Norco Foods), Brendan Sharpe (Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Agriculture and Biosecurity), Bimi Singh (Bega Cheese Ltd), Petrea Wait (Senior Program & Project Officer, Animal Welfare Unit).

Conflict of interest declaration

Members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest.

Summary of 22 October 2025 meeting outcomes

There were no comments on the meeting outcomes.

Industry updates

Members provided updates on the following key and emerging issues in their respective sectors:

- EastAusmilk reports that their National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) tags are frequently failing. These tags, which are intended to remain on livestock for their entire life,

often need to be replaced within two years. EastAusmilk estimates that around thirty percent of its NLIS tags require replacement each year. Possible causes of the premature failure of these tags include sun exposure and water seepage, which can occur once cracks develop in the tags.

- They are replacing an average of three to five NLIS tags each week on the farm.
- EastAusmilk reported that bulls tend to lose their NLIS tags at a higher rate than cows. In a specific instance, when a group of forty bulls was loaded onto transport for sale at a market, all of the bulls left with their NLIS tags securely attached. However, upon their arrival at the saleyards, it was noted that twelve of these tags had fallen off during transit. This situation highlights a potential concern regarding the durability and effectiveness of tagging for bulls, suggesting that further investigation into tagging materials and practices may be beneficial.
- It was agreed that industry feedback will be referred to DPIRD's Livestock Traceability team for follow up.
- Star Combo Pharma Ltd reports that dairy bulk powder sourced from NSW is typically sold at a higher price compared to similar products from other Australian regions. To enhance its export potential, the company believes that this product must be sold at a more competitive price. Star Combo has suggested that the higher prices in NSW may be due to increased compliance costs compared to other jurisdictions.
- Dairy Australia indicated that the compliance burdens and costs for dairy producers are likely to be similar across various Australian states. A more plausible explanation for the higher price of bulk milk powder in NSW may be that NSW is unable to achieve the economies of scale that jurisdictions like Victoria do, as Victoria produces a significantly larger quantity of bulk milk powder.
- Dairy Australia reported that dairy production costs are increasing, with inputs such as nitrogen fertiliser nearly doubling in price. eastAUSmilk concurred, noting that rising petrol and water prices have also contributed to these higher production costs.
- NSW Farmers noted that in addition to the impact of the fuel crisis on all inputs, they rely on buying grain and hay from NSW but are noticing a reduced harvest from their usual sources.
- NSW Farmers also reported an opening price for milk that is lower than the previous year, despite increasing costs.
- It was agreed that industry feedback will be referred to the relevant teams within DPIRD to inform responses to industry price pressures.

1) Matters raised relating to the Dairy Food Safety Scheme

Food Safety Compliance Report

DPIRD's Compliance and Integrity Systems Unit provided an update on the dairy industry compliance activities for the 2025-26 financial year. 96 percent of licensed Dairy businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result, a 1 percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year. A total of 246 audits and inspections were conducted, with a combined total of 21 regulatory interventions (improvement notices, prohibition orders, or warning letters). Biosecurity and Food Safety Compliance has moved to an audit and inspection calendar, which retains the risk based operational model for all licensed food businesses.

The BFS Compliance team received seven antibiotic notifications from processors, along with two reports of E. coli & Salmonella pathogen detection in ready-to-eat (RTE) products identified through mandatory processor testing. In each case, the team engaged with the relevant dairy processing facilities and farms, conducting additional inspections to help prevent future occurrences of antibiotic and pathogen detections.

The Regulatory Operations team continues to implement a risk-based audit and inspection calendar for all licensed food businesses, allowing the frequency and scope of monitoring to be adjusted in response to emerging risks and changing strategic priorities. Complaints, inspections, and investigations relating to dairy businesses will remain managed on an as-needs basis.

Other matters

Animal welfare update

DPIRD's Animal Welfare Policy and Programs team updated members on the following:

1. *The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Amendment (Enforcement and Operational Powers) Bill 2026* was introduced to the NSW Parliament on 7 May 2026. The Bill contains a total of 44 proposed amendments to the POCTA Act, with an additional 12 consequential amendments to the POCTA Regulations and other Acts. Proposed amendments of note include:
 - Clarifying that the term 'person in charge' can apply to multiple persons at the same time
 - Stock Welfare Panels (SWP) changes including:
 - Extending SWP to include additional species (camelids, bison, buffalo, ratites), to apply to any land or production system, to allow appointment of additional Panel members with relevant expertise, and to include failure to provide appropriate husbandry.
 - If a SWP progresses to a seizure operation, police will have greater powers to exclude people from the scene and detain vehicles, and animals may be seized from vehicles.
 - Stock owners from whom animals have been seized will be prohibited from repurchasing the stock animals.
 - Stock owners whom are the subject of a SWP may be directed to not bring stock animals onto the property
 - Appropriately trained Local Lands Services officers will be able to enter land and euthanise livestock and wildlife in critical situations
 - Appropriately trained and approved POCTA Act inspectors will be able to administer pain relief and sedation to minimise animal suffering
 - Mandatory pain relief for mulesing
 - Reducing the age of surgical castration of pigs from 2 months to 21 days unless performed by a veterinarian
 - Additional offences and increased maximum penalties for offences.

The Bill is expected to be debated in Parliament in the coming weeks. The Animal Welfare team is undertaking readiness activities to enable timely implementation should the Bill receive Assent.

2. Virtual fencing was legalised in December with an amendment to the POCTA Regulations. The [Animal Welfare Guide for Virtual Fencing of Cattle](#) is available on the DPIRD Animal Welfare Reform webpage.

The date for the next meeting of the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is to be 4 November 2026.