



## NSW Farmers additional information as requested on Notice

NSW Upper House Committee hearing into the long-term sustainability of the dairy industry in NSW, 4 November 2020.

- Mr Colin Thompson, Chair NSW Farmers Dairy Committee
- Ms Jodie Dean, Policy Director – Agricultural Industries

## Plant Based Beverages and Health Star Rating of Dairy products

### Plant-based labelling and marketing – consumer evidence and confusion (document attached)

- Consumer perceptions of plant-based products imitating milk and milk products – Table 1 – provides Australian evidence around consumers confusing those products as being nutritious and that same people think those beverages contain milk (attached).

### Providing the scientific evidence for healthier Australian diets - evidence to support the role of Milk, Cheese and Yoghurt in our diets (document attached)

- The 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines provide clear evidence and recommendations for the inclusion of milk, cheese and yoghurt in our diets across all life stages.  
[https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/n55\\_australian\\_dietary\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/n55_australian_dietary_guidelines.pdf)
- In 2019, The National Heart Foundation reviewed the growing body of evidence for dairy and confirmed that regular fat milk, yoghurt and cheese are healthy options for Australians (attached).
- Drouin-Chartier JP et al. Systematic Review of the Association between Dairy Product Consumption and Risk of Cardiovascular-Related Clinical Outcomes. Adv Nutr. 2016 Nov 15;7(6):1026-1040. doi: 10.3945/an.115.011403. <https://academic.oup.com/advances/article/7/6/1026/4568635>

### The Australian Health Star Rating System (document attached)

- Aligning the Health Star Rating of Category 3D cheeses with the Australian Dietary Guidelines – Memo (attached).
- Shortly after the HSR system launch, a non-peer reviewed NSW Health Report determined that an HSR cut-off point of 3 stars was an acceptable demarcation between five food-group foods and discretionary foods. Dunford E, Cobcroft M, Thomas M, Wu J. Technical Report: Alignment of NSW Health Food Provision Policy with the Health Star Ratings system. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health; 2015 [cited 2018 Sep 23]; Available from: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/Publications/healthstar-rating-system.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/Publications/healthstar-rating-system.pdf)

## NSW Farmers' Association

## **Workforce and Industry Training – attracting and retaining workers and farmers**

Thank you for the opportunity to outline some of the opportunities for the NSW Government to support the staff attraction, retention, training and development needs of the dairy sector. Attracting new talent is a key objective for the dairy industry, as is ensuring that there are adequate programs available for the development of a highly skilled workforce that helps build industry capability.

### **Staff and worker attraction**

Core to the dairy industry in NSW is the ability to attract new staff and talent to the sector. This requires adequate foundation training programs in place to support their introductory knowledge and skill needs. Currently, this need is met by TAFE NSW and Tocal Agricultural College.

TAFE NSW offers a Cert III in Agriculture (Dairy Production), completed over one year.

<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/course/-/c/c/AHC30216-01/Certificate-III-in-Agriculture-Dairy-Production>

This is a nationally recognised course, where students learn core skills around pasture and crop management, milking operations, chemical use, fencing, livestock health and management, machinery operations, artificial insemination and WH&S.

Tocal offers a Dairy Traineeship, taking up to two years to complete.

<https://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/courses/traineeships/dairy-traineeship-tocal>

Training is held in short blocks at the college's Paterson campus. The Traineeship includes use of the College farms, visits to commercial farms in NSW and uses the experience of industry professionals and mentors. It includes a blend of face-to-face, online courses and workplace assessment with practical components and hands-on exercises.

Each of these courses provide a good foundation of dairy skills and knowledge for new industry entrants. More could be done to promote both courses in a bid to attract more talent to the industry. In addition, a review to ensure that they are accessible to potential students in core dairy regions in NSW would assist in maximising their uptake. Dairy production in NSW has shifted considerably in recent years, with the establishment of large production operations to central NSW regions, away from the coastal regions traditionally delivering the bulk of NSW milk production.

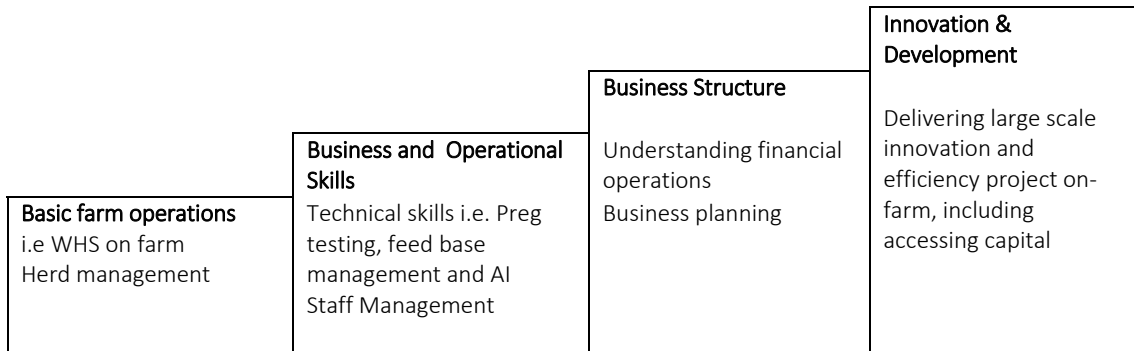
### **Ongoing Skills Development**

Training and development opportunities shift considerably for those who are already working in the dairy industry, including employed farm staff and farm business owners/operators. This area is core to ensure staff retention and skills development, and sustainability of NSW dairy businesses that are able to continually invest in innovation and efficiencies to ensure they are profitable. This may or may not include expansion and growth of their operations and diversification and value adding in their commodity marketing.

Industry through Dairy Australia and Dairy NSW prioritise people, skills and capability as core pillars to their strategic plans and operations, recognising the importance of the people in the industry to its ongoing development and viability. More does need to be done to activate these initiatives to engender uptake and positive impact for the industry.

Flexibility in delivery needs to be prioritised in recognition of the barriers to engagement with structured off-farm course delivery for dairy farmers and their staff.

The offering of training also needs to be tiered and evolve to allow progression and career development for dairy industry participants and for farm business owners to develop and establish their businesses to build profitability and sustainability over time. A brief example of what this skills development pipeline may look like can be seen below.



Dairy Australia’s ‘*Dairy Passport*’ is one example of a flexible skills development platform designed to educate dairy farmer employers to manage a workforce and to educate dairy farmer employees on the latest farming practice information specific to their role. This flexible model offers online manuals and resources. Greater investment in more interactive and in-person education is needed to engage farmers and their staff and to recognise the technical nature of dairy farming.

The NSW Government could champion expansion of such a program across the state, paired with access to individual units and courses from a range of providers. Individuals could tailor their training to skill stage and business circumstances to build a recognised qualification.

NSW Government investment in R&D within the Dairy Industry will be more effective if coupled with investment in on-farm skill development. Programs such as heat detection and artificial Insemination training allow updated research and innovation to be put into practice on-farm.

To ensure these farmers continue to manage successful businesses and to bridge the gap between innovation and profitability, more investment in ongoing education of dairy farmers and their staff is required. Finally, more work needs to be done to identify knowledge gaps for dairy farmers and their staff.