

**Submission
No 55**

**INQUIRY INTO LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE
DAIRY INDUSTRY IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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Submission: Inquiry into NSW dairy farming

Dear Committee,

I have been living in a dairy farming area for over 25 years, here are my observations.

1. Farmers are quitting:

Since my time living in the northern rivers, I have witnessed my dairy farming neighbours quit the business in droves. There are many factors for this. Firstly, it's no longer profitable, the work is difficult, older farmers are retiring and their children and grand children have moved to the city.

2. Droughts take their toll:

The Northern Rivers is known for lush green pastures, however recent years have brought drought to these areas and the climate is rapidly changing. It's no longer a given that animals will have pastures all year round. Bush fires are now starting to be a threat with fires effecting this region just last summer.

3. Public perception:

The market place is changing and animal welfare is becoming a major consideration with consumers. Milk production is being exposed for its cruel practices, namely, bobby calves being taken away from their mothers as soon as they're born and sent off for slaughter. Anyone that lives near a dairy farm will tell you that mothers cry for days when their new born are taken away. This fact is getting more and more publicity on social and main stream media.

4. Land degradation and deforestation:

Environmental concerns are no longer a fringe issue. The wide spread land clearing practises of the past are no longer acceptable in 2020. Neither are the amount of carbon emissions caused by animal agriculture. Land is still being cleared in NSW for dairy farming. This is unsustainable both for reasons of climate change and habitat destruction. It's madness to have an industry that is already suffering because of past practises to be allowed to continue on the same trajectory and making the same mistakes.

5. Market Place:

Plant based milk is becoming more and more popular as a dairy replacement. The NSW government should be looking at ways of helping dairy farmers transition to more sustainable agriculture, namely, plant based, this is the way of the future and if government does not help farmers with this, we will see many farms go out of business altogether.

6. Real Estate Restraints:

Farmers are sitting on large tracts of land. Many of these would love to be able to capitalise by selling portions of their land for smaller plant- based food production. However, many local government restrictions do not allow for sub-division. An initiative by state

government to pass legislation to force local government to allow farmers to change the zoning of their land in order to subdivide into smaller acreage would give farmers the opportunity to retire with some equity, instead of being forced to walk off their land. There is no market for properties that are hundreds of acres that are set up for dairy farming.

7. Health and welfare of the farmers:

All of the above are factors that are detrimental to the health and well-being of farmers. If you've ever met a dairy farmer you would know that they have a difficult and hard life, just like their animals. They never leave their properties, they never go on holidays, some in my area have never even been to the beach. The only reason they're doing this work is that they have no choice. They've been on the farm since birth, and they're trapped, both financially and physically. They need help. The NSW government needs to step up and help the humans and the animals in the dairy industry. They are both victims of the exploitation of the market place and the corporations that drive it.

Yours faithfully,
C. Blasonato