

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 13 September 2020

Partially
Confidential

This submission covers the following (specifically Terms of Reference items B, D, G) components addressing the long-term sustainability of the NSW Dairy Industry.

This inquiry needs to consider the positive and negative aspects of the dairy industry. The first question of this inquiry should be “Is this industry worth sustaining?” Product demand is falling, long term health studies are questioning dairy’s benefits and environmental pressures are all contributing to farmer stress and uncertainty. This investigation needs to consider the dairy industry in context of the public health, environment and financial factors. As way of an introduction the first link is a light-hearted but science-based overview of the impacts of dairy (1) and the second focuses more on the animals cruelty, health and political aspects (graphic images and inappropriate language 2). If you are unwilling to watch the second video then please reflect on why as these are the realities of this industry which include Australian practices. These videos also contain links to their reference material as well.

- (1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=21&v=IAzA8wiuc7E&feature=emb_logo
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcN7SGGoCNI>

Public Health

There is an increased awareness of the health problems associated with consuming dairy that are leading people to reduce or replace its usage. Dairy has been removed from the Canadian food guide (1). They (37 scientists) removed dairy from being an essential food based on the science. This is an ongoing trend as other governmental areas are also starting to move that way (2). Please do not underestimate the significance and precedent that the Canadian government has set. When you follow the science then dairy falls away.

- (1) <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>
- (2) <https://www.sfweekly.com/news/city-jails-and-hospitals-must-cut-down-on-meat/>

Lactose cannot be digested by 65% of the world population (1,2). Given Australia’s demographic (3) our percentage rate is lower, however our export markets are nearer the 65% range making this a poor product to sell (4). Do you really want to sell a product that makes your consumers sick? These overseas markets may also reduce with global trends or increased awareness of the negative health affects.

- (1) <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/lactose-intolerance#statistics>
- (2) <https://scarydairy.org.uk/health>
- (3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demography_of_Australia
- (4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactose_intolerance

Dairy is being questioned about its nutritional value relating to calcium and bone strength (1,2,3,4,5,7). Nutritional science continues to show the negative effects of dairy products with its saturated fats, oestrogen and hormones. As more research becomes available public opinion (7) will move with it and demand will continue to decline.

- (1) <https://www.webmd.com/diet/news/20200214/rethinking-milk-science-takes-on-the-dairy-dilemma>
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyzYwVtvgEI>
- (3) <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2014/12/human-skeleton-has-become-lighter-over-time>

- (4) <https://www.pnas.org/content/112/2/366.abstract>
- (5) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25352269/>
- (6) <https://scarydairy.org.uk/health>
- (7) <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6527926/questions-asked-at-da-agm/>

There is increasing research that strongly links dairy consumption with prostate and breast cancer. Also growth hormones and oestrogen that occur naturally in dairy products also have negative impacts on people (1,2,3,4,5,6). It's not really surprising after all, cows milk is for baby cows !

- (1 video summary) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXWaCfWi1_U
- (2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3357167/pdf/brc0005-0044.pdf>
- (3) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15203374/>
- (4) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3249408/pdf/kwr289.pdf>
- (5) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12710911/>
- (6) <https://scarydairy.org.uk/health>

Just like smoking there are public health consequences to eating highly saturated foods such as dairy and cheese. These contribute to the cost of public health which also comes out of the NSW government budgets. So making money from selling these products is offset by the cost of health and lower productivity due to illness. This investigation should consider the total cost and not just the profit portion of dairy.

Animal Welfare

The physical and emotional abuse of dairy animals is well documented (1,2,3,4,5,6,7). This includes the methods of animal reproduction, the mental anguish caused by separating the mother and calf at birth, daily animal abuse including animal herding, fallen 'down' cows (from exhaustion), dehorning and mastitis (8). There is little financial incentive to care for the cow when it can be easily replaced. After years of this treatment they are then slaughtered, on average at 5 years old when their natural lifespan is 20 years. From birth to death these animals are abused and mis-treated.

- (1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcN7SGGoCNI>
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQRAfJyEsko>
- (3) <https://www.animalsaustralia.org/investigations/dairy-calf-cruelty-investigation/>
- (4) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cow-sexual-abuse-violence-dairy-farm-punch-kick-hit-essex-nfu-a9215306.html>
- (5) <https://www.thevegankind.com/news/2017-09-06-land-of-hope-and-glory-vegan-documentary-labelled-uk-version-of-earthlings>
- (6) <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/105069718/hidden-cameras-reveal-northland-farmer-beating-cows-in-milking-shed>
- (7) <https://www.peta.org/features/dairy-industry-cruelty/>
- (8) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mastitis_in_dairy_cattle

The NSW Department of Primary Industries administers the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act 1979, The Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986 and Animal Research Act 1985 (9) but when I asked them to provide the number of complaints, investigations and prosecutions for dairy-farm animal cruelty (I had asked for publicly available information - emails can be provided) they were not able to provide this. They advised that they are not an enforcement agency implying that they do not have the data and I should contact the RSPCA NSW, Animal Welfare League (AWL) NSW and the NSW police. I then contacted

the RSPCA but they did not reply to my request and the Animal Welfare League were not able to provide any information due to the Privacy Act; the Police wanted to charge me a fee for the data. There is no data available on the data.nsw.gov.au website relating to prosecutions and conviction regarding animal abuse and neglect, including dairy but we know that it does happen (1). How can a government body enforce the law when it is not aware of the information regarding the treatment of animal it is meant to protect? How can the public trust the government to enforce these laws when there is no publicly available information? Why is this information not made public. Why are four different organisations (of which two are charities) involved in the protection of animals from abuse. Clearly the NSW government is not serious about animal welfare so it puts a toothless organisation in charge within a disjointed enforcement structure.

(1) <https://www.theland.com.au/story/6539431/rspca-moves-on-cows-horses-sheep/>

I looked at the Annual Reports for both charities. The Animal Welfare League received \$190,657 in 2017-18 (1) from Commonwealth, state and local governments (2018-19 report was not available). RSPCA show \$1.1mil in government grants for 2018-19 (2). Please note that this is not just state government but all levels of government. This money has to cover monitoring, reporting, travel, administration, prosecution and intervention. This is a shameful amount of money to cover all livestock in NSW. There are over 700 dairy farms in NSW alone (3).

The RSPCA reports, in 2018-19 that they had 15,673 cruelty cases investigated only 77 prosecutions with an average of \$14,285 per prosecution (0.5% of cases are prosecuted). Their reporting does not state what types of animals were involved. How can we know if farm animals are being treated well when there is no information specifically about them. The Agricultural Gag laws are yet another hinderance reporting animal abuse on private property. The government seems to have little interest in protection of animals, even its 2016 NSW Dairy industry Strategic plan (3) mentions the word "cow" once in the entire document (just do a word search of its 16 pages). Clearly the focus is not on the welfare of the animals.

Animal welfare legislation needs to be moved to a government department. The NSW Department of Primary Industries has a conflict of interest as it both represents those that profit from animal abuse and also prosecutes those same people. I would strongly recommend that the NSW Police take over the enforcement of these laws as they have no vested interest. You should not be using charities (4) with the enforcement of state laws.

(1) <https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Financial-Statements-30-June-2018-signed.pdf>

(2) https://www.rspcansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2018-2019_Year-in-Review_Online.pdf

(3) https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/681681/NSW-dairy-industry-strategic-action-plan-2016.pdf

(4) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare>

Where is the technology to assist with monitoring of animal health and welfare. For example, does the Milking Edge (robotic milking 1) project have the ability to identify mastitis and then not milk the cows? Can it identify lame or cows that are likely to 'down'? Can it analyse the milk to see if it is under extreme stress, exhaustion or malnourishment? These should be added to the software to ensure animal welfare and

minimise animal harm during the milking process. These are animals are not machines and need to be treated with dignity and care.

Why is it up to Animals Rights groups to expose farmers for abuse and neglect. Agriculture Gag laws should be removed from NSW and Federal laws. We should not be protecting those who abuse and neglect animals. We should not be prosecuting those that expose these crimes (2). Data relating to abuser prosecutions; convictions; premature animal deaths and other animal welfare key performance indicators should be made available on the NSW data website. These laws allow cruelty to be covered up and increase the distrust toward government motivations for animal welfare. These laws need to be removed and transparency increased on dairy farms.

(1) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/publications/pdi/2019/milk>

(2) <https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/nsw-government-silences-animal-rights-activists/>

Farmer Welfare

Most farmers will acknowledge that cows are not milk machines. They are animals that feel pain, have emotions and personalities. They would see this every day. Farmers have come under greater stress from pricing models, variable climate and drought, animal treatment and everyday stresses. Many may suffer mental health issues as they are trapped and conflicted between profit and animal care (1). This video talks about the anguish and conflict that dairy farmers feel. One solution is to provide farmers with financial support and land management assistance if they want to transition to alternative farming practices. Farmer numbers are falling (2,3) and you need to consider all the factors that are moving dairy farmers out of the industry, which includes the mental health and stress that they endure. Even the NSW Government also recognises that significant growth will come from large-scale dairy farms and not small family farms. This will also push smaller farmers out of the market (4).

(1) <https://www.plantbasednews.org/culture/former-cattle-farmers-urge-people-to-go-vegan>

(2) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/publications/pdi/2019/milk>

(3) <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6527926/questions-asked-at-da-agm/>

(4) https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/526688/Growing-the-dairy-industry.pdf (page 7)

Drought and Water Usage

A 2018 study by Oxford University (1,2) states that a litre of cows milk uses 1,050 litres of water to produce it. Soy milk uses 297 litres (70% less water) and Oat milk uses 48 litres (95% less water). Should we really be developing dairy in Australia which is known for its droughts and variable climate (3). Surely a more reasonable approach is to grow products that consume less resources and land making them more reliable. The Department of Primary Industries (4) also recognises the limitations for land and water resources.

(1) <https://medium.com/@tabitha.whiting/what-milk-should-you-buy-to-reduce-your-environmental-impact-e0489153e3b8>

- (2) <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-46654042>
- (3) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/dairy/dairy-business-advisory-unit/dfmp>
- (4) https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/526688/Growing-the-dairy-industry.pdf (page 7)

Business & industry

The trend for milk consumption continues to fall (1) from 2013/14 to 2018/19 milks sales have dropped 6.7% (105.7 litres to 98.6 litres projected) with other dairy products remaining mostly flat (1). This is not just a trend in Australia but is prevalent world wide (2). Dairy milk alternatives are growing strongly (3). Business needs to investigate and redefine what 'milk is'.

- (1) <https://content.dairyaustralia.com.au/industry/production-and-sales/consumption-summary>
- (2) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-22/australians-slowly-turning-to-alternative-milks/7949890>
- (3) <https://www.plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/global-vegan-cheese-market-to-reach-7-billion-by-2030>

Agricultural Food Disruption

With improving technologies and more competitors, traditional foods such as beef and dairy are under threat. If modern food sciences can make new food products similar to common foods but cheaper, healthier or better for the environment then they will attract market share. Common examples are lab grown meat, plant-based meats, etc. (1,2,3). There are also Australian producers (3). 'Perfect Day' (4) use specialised strains of yeast to brew proteins found in dairy but from plant sources. As these technologies grow the NSW Government should be ready for this disruption and should also invest in these new technologies.

- (1) <https://impossiblefoods.com>
- (2) <https://www.beyondmeat.com>
- (3) <https://www.v2food.com>
- (4) <https://www.perfectdayfoods.com>

Support and Innovate

I would like to propose that the NSW Department of Primary Industries consider all their sectors and help farmers transition into non-dairy industries/markets such as non-dairy milks and cheeses. These industries are growing and allow diversity of income sources for farmers that also happen to require less resources and are cruelty free. It also provides farmers an opportunity to stay in the milk industry but just source it from plants and not animals. There are current organisations that can help farmers transition (1,2,3,4) and the NSW Government should also support this and increase its scope to include plant based dairy and cheese. Even current Dairy groups are expanding into plant based milks and cheeses or other industries (5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12). These industries are growing and offer new opportunities to grow markets that use less resources; are better for humans and cause no pain and suffering for animals.

- (1) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jennysplitter/2020/01/14/poultry-to-plant-based-some-animal-farmers-are-working-with-vegans-to-get-out-of-the-meat-business/#fd11d62738fa>
- (2) <https://thetransformationproject.org>
- (3) <https://en.refarmd.com>
- (4) <https://vegconomist.com/interviews/refarmd-transitioning-farmers-out-of-dairy-we-want-to-give-back-the-power-to-farmers/>
- (5) <https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2019/12/Landmark-decision-to-allow-carbon-farming-on-pastoral-lands.aspx>
- (6) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2014-07-14/australian-hemp-farming-opportunity/5594476>
- (7) <https://www.theland.com.au/story/4097549/clarence-bracing-for-change/>
- (8) <https://www.dairy.com.au/health/healthy-bones>
- (9) <https://www.farmonline.com.au/story/6889149/joining-forces-to-meet-hot-demand-for-protein/>
- (10) <https://thenewdaily.com.au/finance/consumer/2020/07/15/fake-meat-australia-export/>
- (11) <https://www.graincentral.com/news/plant-based-meat-opens-opportunities-for-crop-growers/>
- (12) <https://www.dairy.com.au/health/healthy-bones>

The question asked by this investigation is “Is dairy sustainable?”. Dairy is not sustainable in its current form and it needs to evolve and follow the science. We should be developing local businesses to grow, process and innovate plant-based milks to ensure that local farmers have a market and NSW can develop processing technology that transforms the raw materials into consumable products that are truly healthy for consumers, the economy and the environment including its animals.

Now dear reader I used to be like you. I drank milk most of my life but due to ongoing bloating from lactose I finally stopped and felt better. I came to realise the amount of suffering that animals endure and that I don't need animals for food, clothing, entertainment, gambling or product testing. Our modern day food science and technology will continue to innovate as our world becomes much smaller and more fragile. I would hope that you embrace innovation and seek an exciting future rather than stick with the past and fall behind all the while causing suffering and death to millions of animals.