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REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE

Paul Weir
Dairy committee member
(North Coast dairy district council)

We are already well into 2008 and what a start we have had! There has been rain, rain and more rain on the North Coast. We have had over 600mls already which has slowed summer crops (if the floods didn't destroy them) and the chance to make silage is limited. Cows with stone bruised feet are driving us all round the bend at the moment.

On the industry front, 2008 has started where 2007 finished; with change and uncertainty. There is further potential for rationalization with the sale of Dairy Farmers and other processors have been jostling for whatever un-contracted milk is about. A certain shortfall of milk in the Brisbane market looms, there is drought in NZ and there are rising farm gate costs (fuel, grain, fertilizer, round-up) which are eroding the margins once again.

There have also been changes to the BJD approach and hot topics this year include global warming, the GM debate and animal welfare. These are just the tip of the iceberg and its only February.

Over the next few months, the Dairy Committee members will be holding District Council meetings. I ask you to take up this opportunity to put your views forward and hear about the many issues we endeavour to represent you on.

We look forward to seeing you,
Paul Weir

BJD dairy

All dairy farmers need to be aware of the changes occurring to the Bovine Johne's Disease (BJD) program in NSW that start on 31 March 2008.

Under the changes, quarantine will no longer be applied to dairy holdings which are infected or are suspected of being infected with BJD after 31 March 2008. This means that dairies will be able to sell cattle to all other dairies in NSW regardless of their BJD zone and to any beef property within their zone.

From 31 March, dairy producers will need to provide a Dairy BJD Assurance Score Declaration Form each time they move or sell cattle, except when the cattle are being sold

directly to an abattoir or at a slaughter only sale.

At saleyards, the Dairy BJD Assurance Score of cattle from the dairy holdings will be required to be displayed on pens and auctioneers must announce this score before selling the cattle. Cattle from dairy holdings with a Score of less than 7 will be held in a segregated area of the saleyard.

The higher the score, the lower the risk of introducing BJD: CattleMAP Herds MN1, MN2 and MN3 have the highest Dairy BJD Assurance Score (8, 9 and 10) and are the lowest risk. A beef producer will retain their Beef Only Status if they buy dairy cattle with a Score of 8 or above.

You should by now have received an information pack from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and received notification of local BJD Dairy workshops. For additional information please check the NSW DPI website at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/heath/specific/cattle/bjd> or contact the Association's Member Service Centre on 1300 794 000.

LPA NVDs for bobby calves now available

With the autumn bobby calf season about to commence, Meat & Livestock Australia has announced that it will be providing a Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) National Vendor Declaration (NVD) for bobby calves.

The LPA bobby calf NVD, which has been endorsed by the LPA Advisory Committee, Australian Dairy Farmers, SAFEMEAT and the Australian Meat Industry Council, is of a similar format to existing LPA NVDs and will allow bobby calf producers to document and confirm the feeding regime and chemical treatments of the bobby calves they sell.

In order to use the LPA bobby calf NVD producers must be accredited with the LPA program. For those producers not yet accredited with LPA they can call 1800 683 111 to complete the accreditation process.

To download free LPA bobby calf NVDs producers must visit www.mla.com.au/lqs and click on the "Access the LPA Bobby Calf NVD" link. In order to access the software program that automatically generates the LPA bobby calf NVDs producers must provide their property identification code (PIC) and LPA number. Once the program is downloaded producers will not need to be connected to the internet to generate future bobby calf NVDs.

Orders for printed bobby calf NVDs can be made from 17 March by calling 1800 683 111. By using

the LPA bobby calf NVD producers agree to enter the LPA random selection pool for an on-farm audit.

Voluntary restriction on the use of Oestradiol for lactating dairy cows

The Australian dairy industry has agreed to introduce a voluntary restriction on the use of oestradiol for lactating dairy cows commencing 1 January 2008. This has been communicated to veterinary practitioners through the Australian Veterinary Association.

The restriction has been introduced for trade purposes in response to changes in EU regulations although expert advice indicates that food safety is not an issue. The voluntary restriction will still allow oestradiol to be registered and available for use in non-lactating heifers. Alternative treatments are available and research is underway to provide more information about their effectiveness. The restrictions may be monitored by dairy companies through treatment records in dairy farm QA programs. For more information please contact your local veterinary practitioner.

ADF conference New Zealand

The Australian Dairy Farmers' ('ADF') Board members were hosted by the New Zealand Farmers Federation in New Zealand from Monday 11th February to Sunday 17th February. The week consisted of a four day tour of the South Island's dairy farms and concluded with a two day conference in Christchurch.

Of particular interest were the presentations from; Warren Mason (Dairy Australia) on 'The Possible Impacts of Climate Change on the Australian Dairy Industry', Caroline Saunders (UK) on 'Carbon Trading Schemes in the EU and NZ' and Andrew Ferrier (CEO- Fonterra NZ) on 'Fonterra's Strategic Plan and outlook for 2008'.

ADF also held a Board meeting to discuss ADF's strategic plan for 2008, the work of the Dairy CRC, animal health and welfare issues, trade, milk prices, extension programs, the National Centre for Dairy Education (NCDEA), Climate change and the 2008 Young Dairy Farmers' Tour of New Zealand.

2008 Young dairy farmer New Zealand study tour

The ADF Young Dairy Farmer New Zealand Study Tour is a unique opportunity for selected dairy farmers to undertake an educational program so that they may develop their industry leadership knowledge and capacity.

The young dairy farmer business tour is open to aspiring young dairy farm leaders aged 25-40. The tour has become known as a very effective educational program.

The tour aims to ensure all tour participants gain a better understanding of the New Zealand dairy industry, including farming, manufacturing, promotion and marketing of their dairy products, as well as the different structure of the New Zealand dairy industry compared to that in Australia.

Given that the tour participants come from all states in Australia, the tour provides, often for the first time, the opportunity for farmers to get to know and understand the farming situation in other states of Australia & New Zealand.

Participants will departing Australia around early June. The tour which takes approximately two weeks, is planned to enable participants to spend a day at the New Zealand National Agricultural Field Days held at the Mystery Creek Field Centre on 11-14 June 2008.

The applicant's past record of personal development and demonstrated industry and community leadership contribution will be key assessment criteria. Participants must commit to completing an individual tour report.

Application forms are available from Sarah Kelly on 02 82511700 or kellys@nswfarmers.org.au and the closing date is Monday 7th April 2008. Successful applicants will be notified by 21 April 2008. Please note that applicants must have a valid passport to enable travel into New Zealand.

UK Study Tour

NSW Dairy Industry Conference (DIC) is committed to leading a sustainable dairy industry in NSW.

DIC and industry partners are offering a paid study tour to the UK and Ireland from 20th June to 12th July 2008 for a young person aged 35 or under who can demonstrate their leadership as a full time employee of the NSW Dairy industry.

Funding will cover airfares, internal travel in the UK and Ireland, participation in the International Dairy Federation (IDF) First Dairy Farming Summit on Climate Change titled "*The Heat is On*" in Edinburgh, tours and meetings outlined on the draft itinerary and limited meals. The estimated value has been calculated at approximately \$9000.

The study tour will include farm, manufacturing/processing and retail/distribution site visits and meetings with industry leaders and dairy associations, including work undertaken by dairy industry regulatory and extension services (DEFRA, UKFSA).

The objectives of the tour are to:

- i. establish networks with the dairy industry leaders in the UK and Ireland
- ii. study the UK dairy system from farm level through to retail, from both industry and regulatory aspects
- iii. observe the latest in dairy industry technology in the farm and manufacturing sectors
- iv. provide an understanding of world/European dairy politics and the issues that drive industry governance
- v. provide an understanding of export issues facing the Australian industry
- vi. network with other NSW dairy industry participants on the study tour.

- vii. provide post tour leadership experiences, reports and other information gathered to be able to better inform, increase industry knowledge and lead the NSW dairy industry in the future

Application forms are available from Sarah Kelly on 02 82511700 or kellys@nswfarmers.org.au and applications close at 5pm, Wednesday 26th March, 2008. Successful applicants will be notified by 30th April 2008. Please note that applicants must have a valid passport to enable travel into England and Ireland.

Regional meetings

Come and express your views and concerns at the Northern Dairy District Council Meeting of NSW Farmers Association. Come and hear what's happened/happening on the following issues:

- BJD
- EBL
- Animal Welfare/Bobby calf residues
- NCDEA (National Centre for Dairy Education Australia)
- NLIS funding
- Climate Change (potential impacts on farmers)
- GM debate
- Farmer Milk Contracts
- Young Farmers tour to NZ
- Young Farmers Northern region
- AGM

Adrian Drury (Chairman), Terry Toohey (Deputy Chairman) and Paul Weir (your elected reps on the dairy committee) will be in attendance.

Dates/Locations:

- LISMORE
Monday March 17, 7.30pm
Mary Gilhooley's Pub meeting room
Tea/coffee provided
- DORRIGO
Tuesday March 18, 10.30am
Dorrigo Heritage Hotel (Top Pub)
Light lunch provided
- MACKSVILLE
Tuesday March 18, 7.30pm
Macksville Ex-services Club
Tea/coffee provided

Finley Workshop- Cereal Crops for Dairy Farms. Are they an option and how do I grow them?

There will be a workshop detailing cereal crops and their use in dairy farming systems. This will be held on March 7th at Finley Returned Soldiers Club from 10.30am to 1pm.

Combined annual dairy conference NSW

The 2008 inaugural combined annual conference of the NSW Dairy Industry Association (DIAA), the NSW Farmers Association Dairy Committee and the Dairy Industry Development Company (DIDCO) will be held at The

Novotel- Sydney Olympic Park from Wednesday 11th June to Friday 13th June, 2008.

With a theme of "Results Through Relationships" this event will bring together dairy farmers, processors, suppliers and others from across the dairy industry.

The event will be the focus for approximately 200 dairy industry representatives with many key decision makers and company representatives in attendance. There will be a range stimulating speakers, lively discussions and a range of networking and social functions to appeal to all industry representatives.

Proceedings will commence with a Golf day on Wednesday 11th June, followed by a Wine & Cheese welcome function at The Novotel- Sydney Olympic Park. At the conclusion of the welcome function we will be showing the State of Origin game on a big screen in the conference room. Thursday 12th June is reserved for a full day of conference sessions and for the annual NSW Dairy Products Awards Dinner. Friday 13th June will involve NSW Farmers Association and Dairy Industry Development Company (DIDCO) meetings.

More information on this event and Committee/Delegate nomination forms will be supplied to members in the coming month.

NSW Farmers' Association dairy awards

This year the NSW Farmers' Association Dairy Committee and the Dairy Industry Development Company (DIDCO) will present two awards at the combined dairy industry annual dinner.

- An Innovation Award, and an;
- Environmental Sustainability Award

The dairy committee and DIDCO will be posting out nomination forms for these awards with the committee/delegate nomination forms. Please put your thinking caps on and have some nominations ready!