

# FARM VOICE



by  
Matt Brand  
CEO  
NSW Farmers  
Association

**Being a member based organisation, members are obviously at the heart of everything we do. The key is to have a value proposition (demonstrated membership value) that farmers understand, appreciate and therefore are comfortable in investing in each year via their annual subscription.**

It is important as an organisation that we understand where we have come from since the creation of the Association and make sure we are true to what we should be doing.

We must define a common purpose with tangible goals and an action plan for our staff, elected members and the wider membership base to galvanise around. We need to make sure as an organisation that we are flexible and responsive and strive to constantly

improve and innovate everything in all we do.

Members need to see that being a member of NSW Farmers is an essential ingredient for productive farms; in essence the Association is a must have business input no different to insurance.

By having a clear vision of where we want to go we will ensure that we get as many people as possible being 'champions' for the Association, being both emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation.

The way we do this is to give our members and staff ownership of what we are trying to do across all the challenges we are presented.

We achieve this ownership by being less bureaucratic and more proactive. Our lobbying activity must be driven not only at the head office level but also at branch, district and regional levels.

The ongoing surveys we are doing will ensure that we give our members what they want, and gain an understanding as to what degree our current membership base is engaged with the Association.

This will enable us to develop retention and attraction activities to build

upon our membership base.

A key initiative that has commenced is the reinvigoration of the regional conferences.

We have the Regional Services Managers working alongside their respective regional chairperson to create an event that involves guest speakers, head office staff, and both members and non members in a regional conference.

This will provide key information in a workshop style environment, which encourages all attendees to participate.

The outcome of these regional conferences will be potential future policy directions on specific issues for that region that the NSW Farmers Association can incorporate into its advocacy activity.

These regional conferences will become stand alone events which will be utilised to attract local media to highlight the convention and demonstrate that the outcomes may involve local solutions to a localised issue identified at the conference.

Finally, the NSW Farmers Association logo has changed. This is a statement of reinvigoration.

With a new President, Board and CEO,

the new identity reflects a change in our purpose: to grow Australia's potential via food and fibre production.

The creative line is NSW Farmers...Growing the best. The reality is that farmers produce the best and consumers demand the best.

This connectivity is something we need to build upon in the months and years ahead to have a meaningful conversation with consumers, who are also voters.

The role of the NSW Farmers is to be the conduit in bridging the gap between consumers and farmers.

By increasing our visibility by supporting our members to grow the best food and fibre, we will renew pride and respect in our farming community.

NSW Farmers is a great brand that needs to be nurtured and enhanced; we will be doing this by bringing to life this strategy and galvanising the entire Association around it.

The key to this is building our brand champions. We will reinforce through action and activities that NSW Farmers is an Association for and of the NSW Farmers, growing the best opinions, research, staff, food, fibre and members.

## Opinion: Home brand milk: How it threatens food security in NSW



By Cameron Clark -  
Senior Policy Adviser

**Coles has reported increased milk consumption over the past six months, well above long term trends. The supermarket chain says these results show both customers and the dairy industry are winning as a result of Coles' 'Down Down' milk pricing initiative.**

There is no question that customers are benefiting from these prices in the short term, but the benefits to industry regarding this initiative are questionable.

The graph on the right from Dairy Australia shows percentage changes in month to month milk sales (red) and milk production (blue) for the past 2 years in NSW. In contrast to that reported by Coles however, the graph also shows that there has been quite a degree of fluctuation in sales.

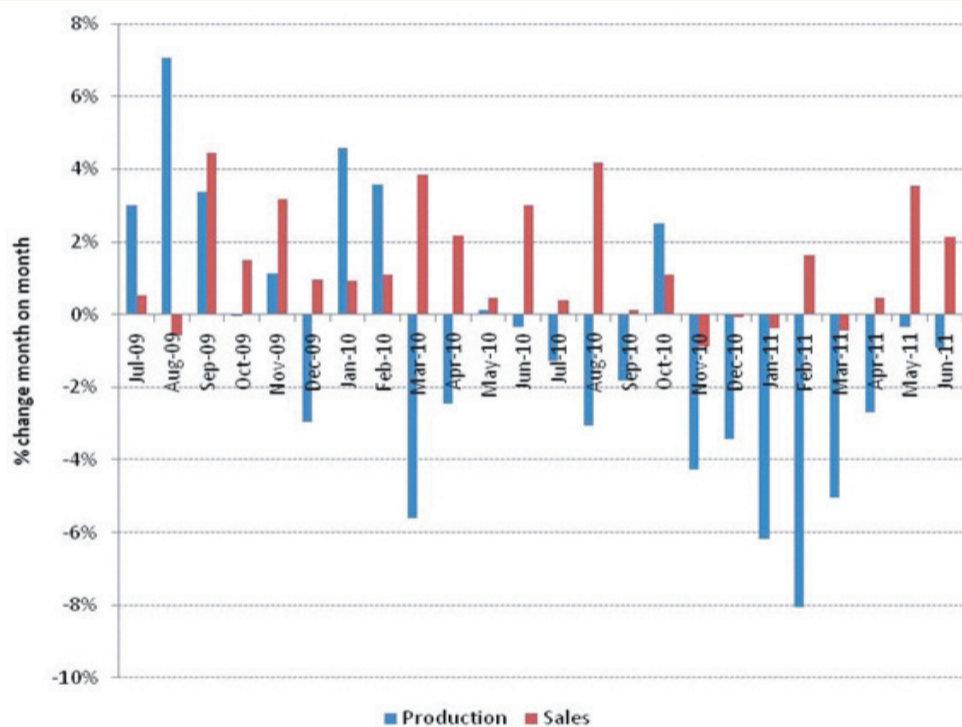
Yes, milk consumption is up for the past 6 months since the Coles initiative was implemented on January 26, however, sales were also up to a similar degree at many other times in the past 2 years, obviously without any supermarket initiative at play.

What should be of great concern to consumers is the distinct decrease in NSW drinking milk production.

There could be many factors at play regarding this shift such as the weather, decreased processor requirements for fresh milk, the processing of milk into alternative products, and/or a system that is failing the dairy farmers of NSW.

In this regard, devaluation of a valuable commodity through the sale of home brand milk by processors to retailers may well be a key part of this failure.

If this shift in production continues, fresh milk may well become a scarce commodity in NSW, inevitably increasing milk prices to the consumer (think bananas) and our very own food security.



NSW production and drinking milk sales relative to the same month of the previous year (%).



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For more information please contact Rebecca at [johnsonr@nswfarmers.org.au](mailto:johnsonr@nswfarmers.org.au) or 02 8251 1866

## From the NFF President

**Agricultural issues continue to dominate news headlines and Parliamentary discussion on both a State and a Federal level. Coal seam gas, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, carbon tax and live exports are all issues of incredible importance to the farm sector in NSW and across the nation.**

But the piecemeal approach in politics and policy to issues like these raise serious questions about the future of agriculture and the role our Parliamentarians and the community expect our industry to play.

This is a debate the community needs to have and that politicians need to engage in, so that the long-term impacts of decisions made now are understood and don't have a perverse effect on agriculture.

Coal seam gas is a perfect example. The issue has now exploded in Federal Parliament, with all parties champing at the bit to have their say on the issues around land use access and farmers' rights.

While politics has inflamed the issue, the important thing for farmers is that we make sure that Governments get

the policy right. The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) has been working with NSW Farmers' on this issue, having recently developed a Mining and Coal Seam Gas Taskforce to tackle the mining and coal seam gas debate head on. Your new President, Fiona Simson, is an integral part of this Taskforce.

What we have seen over the last couple of weeks is politics trying to strictly divide us into different camps: mining vs agriculture, state vs state, community vs community. But this is not about an 'us versus them' approach - it's about working with other industries, other states and other communities to ensure we get the balance, and the process, right. This is about securing a long-term future for our farmers, our industry and our communities.

These assets are too valuable to risk.

We need a long-term vision for agriculture, and this is the message the NFF continues to take to Parliament House in Canberra, to ensure our views are heard.

Jock Laurie