



MAY 2021

Message from the Deputy Chair

While some of our farmers have had some of the best weather conditions in a long time, for many, it has caused them to reflect and consider other options due to the impact of natural disasters such as drought, fire and flood. We understand how overwhelming and often painful the affects of natural disasters have on your farm businesses and we have seen great resilience to tackle these issues head on from our flood affected farmers most recently in the mid coast of NSW.

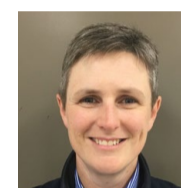
Dairy NSW will continue to assist you, helping you find the information and support you need to make decisions that are right for you and your business. We thank the consistent effort and thoughtful planning from many of our partner NSW organisations, along with Dairy NSW staff, who will continue to provide farmer support, in the short, medium, and long term. For those of us that have had a cracking good year,

now is the time for you to plan. Having a plan in place helps you to navigate the good and bad times and to be sustainable and prosperous into the future. Engage with the Our Farm Our Plan program to help you get started.

Paul, Andrew Farr and myself attended Dairy Australia's Regional Development Program in South Australia. One of the topics was business culture, paying particular attention to how we speak, respond and act, when referring to the dairy industry is important to achieve a positive culture and image for Dairy.

We are more than milk! We are proud to be dairy farmers! It is time, for us all to believe in and respect the NSW Dairy Industry, support and encourage advocates to focus on the positive, be kind and work together. It is time for us all to prosper!

Jane Sherborne, **Deputy Chair Dairy NSW**



Staff Profile

Jane Woolacott
Regional Extension Officer, Far South Coast and Wagga regions

Jane Woolacott has joined us as a Regional Extension Officer for Far South Coast and Wagga regions. Jane says: For the past 19 years I have been a veterinarian in mixed practice, initially in Murray Bridge and more recently in Bega, where for 12 years I was a managing partner in a 10-vet practice. Despite treating many species, the dairy component of my vet-day was what I loved. I find the complexity of dairy systems and the ability of farmers to manage and integrate the various components, while maintaining a trust and bond with their herd, unique and inspiring. I am a firm believer in continuing education throughout life and am currently completing a Masters Degree in Dairy Cattle Medicine at the University of Melbourne. I have also been extensively involved in training veterinary students and enjoy the teaching process. As REO for Wagga Wagga, Bega and Bodalla, I look forward to supporting extension and training; to grow capabilities within dairy communities and contribute to the sustainability of the dairy industry into the future.

E jane@dairynsw.com.au M 0409 076 140



Director Profile

Andrew Farr
Director

Elected to the Dairy NSW Board in 2020 Andrew Farr says: My family has been involved in the dairy industry since the 1940's. My grandfather first started at Dapto on the South Coast of NSW. He then moved to Burrawang. Burrawang was way too cold for him and the family so they moved onto Ourimbah on the central coast. In the 1980's we were one of the last dairies still operating on the coast and, like many others, we moved west to the Hunter valley where my wife Christine and I run a dairy operation at Singleton.

This is my second term on the board of Dairy NSW. It is a thrill to be back contributing to our industry. I said in my interview that one of my motivations to be on the board is to give back to the industry that myself and my family have been a part of for a long time. While I have experience as a farm business owner, I also have an agronomy background through my degree from Charles Sturt University and my work with Pioneer Hibred. I also offer a point of difference on the board as Christine and I have chosen to lease properties to grow and expand our business.

I am lucky to know many of you in the dairy industry and am looking forward to meeting more farmers and dairy industry colleagues in the future.

E andrew.farr@dairynsw.com.au



NSW Flood Response

The NSW Floods in March 2021 had a devastating impact on farmers in the Mid North Coast, Northern Tablelands, Hunter and Central Tablelands regions.

Across the NSW dairy regions, around 150-200 farmers were initially impacted in some capacity with around 20-25 farms having their operations severely impacted. Damages continue to be assessed and significant farm, paddock and stock losses have been reported. Milk prices also took impact as pick ups were interrupted due to road closures.

34 local government areas were declared natural disaster areas and the NSW State Emergency Service led the emergency on ground response. Local Land Services (LLS) and the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) continued to be the emergency contacts for animal and feed related enquiries.

Dairy NSW and Sub Tropical Dairy continue to work in collaboration with Regional Development Programs, State Government, LLS, processors and SDFOs on the immediate and ongoing response to the flood damage. We are leading a flood recovery advisory

service providing one-to-one support from experienced advisors to assist farmers in recovery and planning following the impacts of the floods. Confidential advice is provided to impacted dairy farm business in the areas of:

- Animal health and welfare
- Mastitis management
- Feed budgeting and ration formulations
- Emergency on-farm infrastructure
- Milking machine servicing
- Cashflow budgeting
- Agronomic advice

Working with farm businesses, the advisor visits face to face and provides a written report outlining an action plan for the farm. A Dairy Australia extension officer then follows up to offer support with implementing the action plan.

This service is still running, and all dairy farms impacted by the March 2021 floods are eligible for this service. To find out more contact your local Regional Extension Officer.



Follow us on
Facebook

[facebook@dairynsw](https://www.facebook.com/dairynsw)

New Focus Farm for NSW

Dairy Australia's Focus Farm Program is not for everyone. Opening your farming business for all to see is a difficult thing to do. It takes courage and honesty and a willingness to accept well-intentioned criticism and try new ideas in farm management.

Bega Cheese supplier, Kevin and Brodie Game are two dairy farmers who have agreed to take on the challenge. They were recently announced as Focus Farmers for the south east of New South Wales.

They have reached a point where they need help and support to take the next step in their dairy journey.

They currently lease a 240ha home block at Bemboka, 35km west of Bega, where they milk 250 cows through a 25-a-side swingover shed. They were milking 450 cows at one stage but the drought meant they had to sell cattle because of the lack of feed. They also have an additional 160ha used for growing and harvesting silage and for dry and young stock.

The Focus Farm Program centres on farming families and enterprises. It aims to help farmers to achieve their stated goals during a set period in which they are backed by a support group made up of farmers and local service providers.

The Focus Farm program has been running for almost 20 years with Focus Farms and their open days giving all farmers insight into how on-farm decisions are made and the impact they have on the broader farm business.

It is a big step for Kevin and Brodie but one they believe is important in their journey as dairy farmers.

'We were asked to be involved a few years ago but we didn't think the time was right and we weren't confident about taking it on at that time,' said Brodie. 'But now we are looking for guidance as we really don't know what our next step is.'

'As an example, we have grown to the point where we want to know whether we should look to buy our own farm or perhaps we should stay leasing.'

Last month, a support group of 20 people was formed to advise the couple on all aspects of their farm management from pasture selection, fertiliser use, stock breeding and financial control.

Brodie said it was an important time in their careers but it was still a big decision to make to open the business to outsiders and be prepared to accept criticism or advice that may not sound relevant.

'But the people in our support group are those that we both really admire.

'I think that you can often get stuck in your own little bubble on the farm but our meeting with the support group showed there were people available who really wanted to help,' Brodie said.

'We were a little hesitant at first to share our farming information but we trust the people we will be dealing with and we know they have our best interests at heart.

'In a way, it was a relief to share with those who will go on the journey with us. It was a real burden that we were carrying.'

One of the key issues facing Kevin and Brodie, is the possible move into farm ownership.

Brodie said it was an emotional decision as they faced the need to make improvements but were reluctant to do so as they would be making large investments on a farm that may not be part of their future.

'We have a big decision to make on how we move forward. If the Focus Farm team indicates that leasing is the best way for us, then we will have a clearer picture of what we should do.

'But in the end, we would really like our own farm, somewhere near Bega, because it's the area we know best.'

The couple is also hoping to get some guidance on cow numbers.

Now that they have reduced the herd size because of the drought, they are using the second lease block for silage and dry and young stock.

But they want to take full advantage of the feed they can grow.

'Our focus has changed a bit since we reduced the number of cows we milk. We want to feed the cows properly. We want to fill them with quality pasture.

'You can feed a cow cardboard and she will be full but we want her to fill up on pasture that will get the best production results,' Brodie said.

Brodie said they had been fortunate to put together a good team of workers and this helped provide them with a better lifestyle with their two sons, Roy, 4, and Harry, 2.

'The past two years have been pretty tough but with the better season and the support of the focus group, we are confident about the future,' Brodie said.

'Dairying is something that we really want to do and we want to do it right.'

Nine years ago, Kevin and Brodie decided to become dairy farmers at Cootamundra in the New South Wales Riverina.

They had two cows and a single-unit milking machine. It was hardly enough to require a vat or a regular visit from a milk tanker.

But Kevin and Brodie had other ideas as they started out on a new adventure that would ultimately lead to a developing career in dairying.

The couple used the milk from those two cows to help feed bull calves that they bought locally and slowly built up an asset.

While neither had family backgrounds in dairying, Kevin had undertaken a dairy apprenticeship when he left school while Brodie had experience in showing beef cattle.

Kevin is originally from Bega, a strong dairying area on the south east coast of NSW while Brodie grew up at Cootamundra and it was in Brodie's home town that the couple first met.

'I had also done some work experience on a dairy farm and I liked the intensive nature of the work,' Brodie said.

'I loved working with the beef cattle but you didn't get to see them very often.'

While they both had jobs, they used their beef-rearing sideline to build up a bank that enabled them to make a start in dairying.

And that start came when they successfully applied for a share farming position on property at Bega.

The couple was focused on growth and by 2016 they had taken on a 240ha lease farm at Bemboka, 35km west of Bega and substantially increased the number of cows they milked.

They then took on an extra 160ha under lease and by 2018 they were milking up to 450 cows split between two farms.

It was a massive growth spurt that was curtailed by drought and saw them have to sell a large percentage of their herd because of lack of feed.

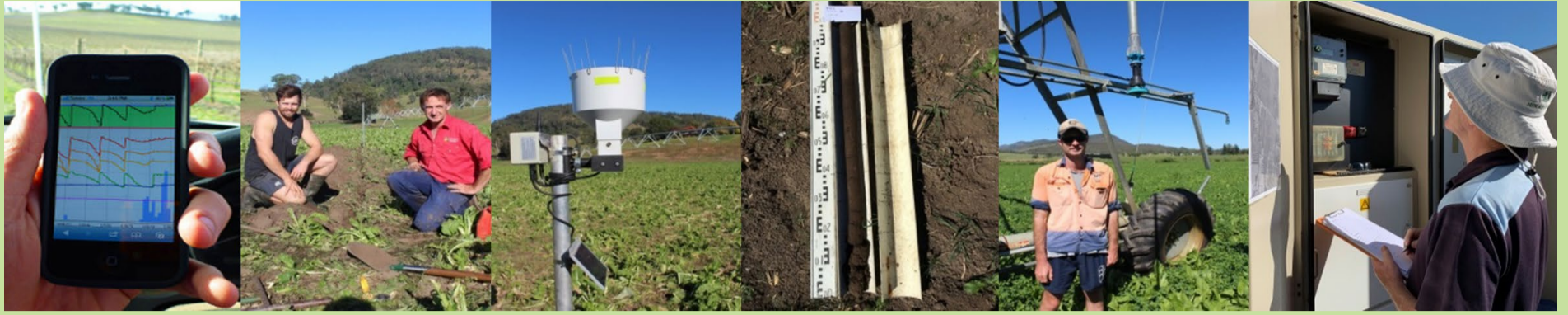
But while it was a difficult decision to make, Brodie said it was the right thing to do.

'When we got to around 400 cows, we had really passed our sweet spot in managing the farm,' she said.

They are now down to milking 250 cows in a 25-a-side swing over shed but with the improved season, they hope to be back to around 300 by the end of the year. But that may depend on the advice of the Focus Farm support group.

This article was provided courtesy of Robert White.





Hunter Irrigating for Profit Project – Seasonal Update

The Hunter Irrigating for Profit Project has just released the Bowman Farm and the Kywong Flat Seasonal Irrigation updates (February–April 2021).

Project Manager, Marguerite White says the project is demonstrating how important it is to use available technologies, many of them free, to improve production under irrigation. This period is a prime example of when a false sense of plentiful water and nitrogen availability, to kick-start winter pastures and crops, may impact optimal yield. The project has shown that moisture levels in the top layer of soil may be drying quickly and not available to the small, developing roots.

To find out more about the project you can contact her at mwhite@icdprojectservices.com.au and download the report online ils.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1313450/Hunter-Irrigating-for-Profit-Report-February-April-2021.pdf

Figure 1 Compaction of the saturated site has led to topsoil hard capping and poor establishment in some areas of the site



Tim Middlebrook, Bowman Farm, Gloucester NSW: February–April 2021 Irrigation Update

The effects of extreme rainfall events have resulted in disappointing establishment of the rye/ barley/ brassica mixed pasture that was aerial broadcast, after 450mm across 6-days, in March. Soil moisture monitoring demonstrates that after extreme saturation the top 40cm of the soil profile, where the young roots are developing, has actually dried swiftly and is heavily compacted. Whilst the soil moisture graph shows that irrigation is not needed, the stacked graph is highlighting the need to irrigate carefully to provide moisture to where it is needed at this time. With flooding causing damage to the pivot's motor, Tom is relying upon the 30mm forecast by his SWAN Systems notification to provide this moisture. Slow growth means that the paddock is still at least 14 days away from first grazing and Tom has attempted to boost development with additional nitrogen that would have been lost from the system through run-off and leaching. Watch the video to hear from Tom himself on the impact of high rainfall and the decisions made during this stressful period! youtu.be/ox5Nzh9oMPA



Adam Forbes, Kywong Flat, Gloucester NSW: February–April 2021 Irrigation Update

The effectiveness of extreme rainfall recovery at Kywong Flat reflects the different pasture establishment stages and soil types of the sites, prior to the March 450mm in 6-days event. On F6, a combination of the paddock being sown to Prairie Grass in early March, and a good free draining soil, has delivered good recovery and grazing is imminent. F3 had not undergone winter sowing prior to the rainfall event, leaving poor quality silage to be cut from the site followed by Italian Ryegrass sowing in early April. Establishment has been slow. Weather events have affected access to soil moisture technology data with power cut to the base station mid-March. Adam is currently relying upon visual decisions once again and realises he needs to reinstate the pump to the river and consider starting to irrigate.

Watch the video to hear from Adam himself! youtu.be/CgJT4FKt7dM



Farm Safety – Have your say

Researchers at the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney and the Centre for Work Health and Safety are conducting a survey to understand emerging work health and safety (WHS) risks to farming communities in New South Wales from changes implemented on farm.

Anecdotally we understand there have been changes to the enterprise mix on farms and changes to land use practise. A formal request in 2020 from the Centre

for Work Health and Safety, wanting to understand emerging work health and safety risks for farmers in NSW generated this important work.

The survey asks about business practices, health and well-being changes that have been made on farm, and any proposed changes for the future. It also explores how farming communities access information to inform their on farm decision making.

This survey is a tool to understand the broader sectoral similarities and differences of practice. Once we undertake the analysis of this survey (June 2021) we will then commence 5 deep dives to better understand how

things are changing, why things are shifting and how best to support farmers to better understand and plan for their changing risk profiles.

For each completed survey, \$10 will be donated to the Country Women's Association of NSW (Up to 300 surveys).

If you have a farm, they encourage you to have your say by completing the survey online. utsau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5ouINrntxbkrSm1 You can contact Dr Rebecca Cunningham, Research Principal (Climate Change Adaptation) at the Institute for Sustainable Futures at Rebecca.cunningham@uts.edu.au

Accelerating Heifer Genomics

Genomic testing of females has the potential to enable a quantum leap in genetic gain in the Australian dairy herd.

The Accelerating Heifer Genomics Project aims to significantly increase uptake of genomic testing of heifers so that it becomes a routine practice on most Australian dairy farms.

Have you considered genomic testing females in your herd? It's a simple test which reliably predicts a heifer's future performance so you can make early decisions about her role in your herd.

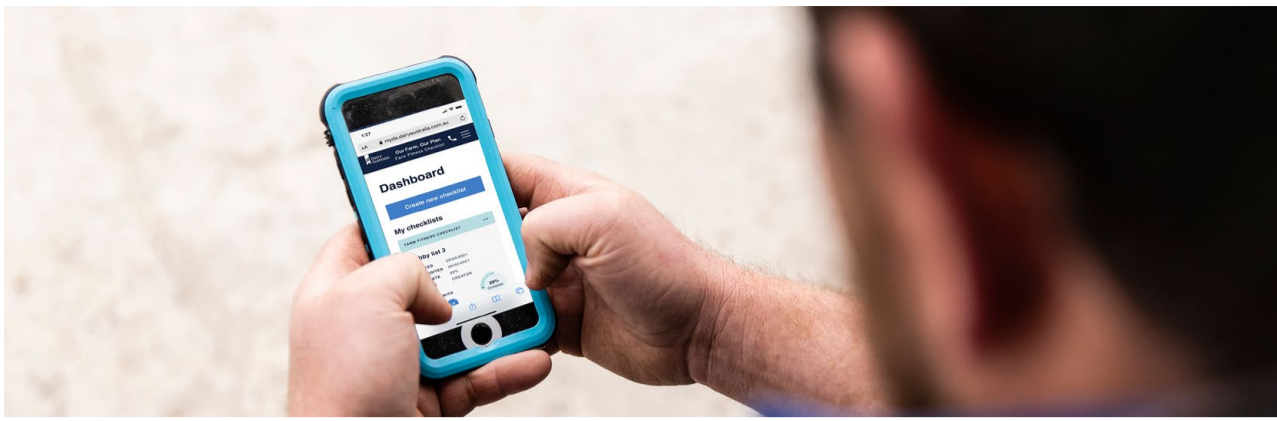
Dairy farmer Huw Evans is just one of a growing number of farmers who are using genomic testing of females to guide decision making on the family farm.

To find out more about genomic testing, and how it's being used on Huw's farm, visit dairyaustralia.com.au/genomics

'Since we have been (genomic) testing and having a bit more of a focus on the calves and their quality, it has meant we have put more effort into growing them well and feeding them well.'

Huw Evans, 350 cows





Have you tried out the new Farm Fitness Checklist?

The new online self-assessment tool that helps dairy farmers evaluate their farm business performance and can be used anywhere, at any time and on any device.

The Farm Fitness Checklist is part of our flagship farm business management initiative Our Farm, Our Plan, which uses a simple 'now, where, how' planning cycle to assist dairy farms to identify and achieve long term goals. It also adds to the range of resources already available through its farm performance analysis platform DairyBase.

Farm Performance Lead Neil Webster said:

'Our online 'Farm Fitness Checklist' is a new tool for farmers to assess themselves where they are at now and to identify opportunities for improvement. It's a great way get started on the Our Farm, Our Plan journey any time, anywhere.

'The checklist prompts thinking and discussion about all aspects of the dairy farm business, including the people involved. It automatically saves all your answers in one spot and allows you to share the results with the right people like your partner, farm team or trusted advisor. Support is available from our regional teams, online or farmers can contact us on 1800 548 073.'

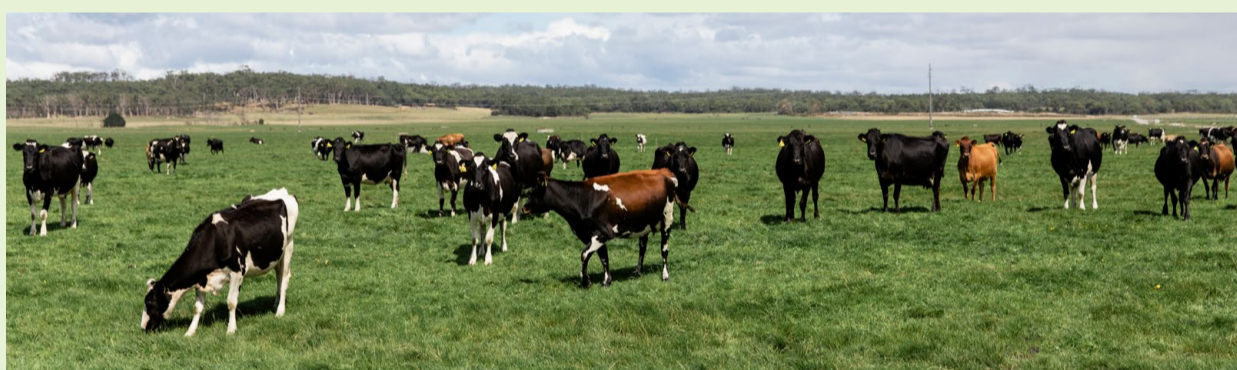
Dairy Australia Managing Director David Nation said action to build farm business skills and improve profitability was a key commitment of the Australian Dairy Plan.

'Our aim is for all dairy farms to have a long term business plan in place within the next five years. Our Farm, Our Plan provides a straightforward process for farms to identify and document long term goals, as well as better manage risk. It includes a one-on-one follow up for farmers participating in the program over 24 months to support them to embed and implement their plans,' commented Dr Nation.

Dairy farmer and Dairy Australia Director Tania Luckin said the new farm business management tools could make a big difference to farm profitability alongside achieving lifestyle objectives.

'The Our Farm, Our Plan goal planning process helps to distil what farm businesses are trying to achieve and over what period of time, so farmers are in control of the direction of the business as well as the things they would like to achieve off the farm. If our goals are a destination, then the plan on a page we create in Our Farm, Our Plan is the roadmap that will help us to get there,' Ms Luckin said.

For more information on the 'Farm Fitness Checklist' and Our Farm, Our Plan visit dairyaustralia.com.au/OFOP



Dairy Levy Review – Have your say

A review of the Dairy Australia levy is currently underway with the formation of a Levy Poll Advisory Committee (LPAC).

The LPAC manages the levy review process and it comprises of nine dairy farmers along with five representatives (three of which are dairy farmers) from industry bodies (as required by legislation).

Chaired by Ron Storey, the LPAC is expected to make a decision regarding the levy by June 2021. In the event a change to the levy is recommended and

a levy poll is required, this process would extend into 2022.

In the LPAC's role of reviewing whether the levy should increase, decrease or stay the same, the LPAC will receive and consider direct submissions from Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and DA as well as feedback and input from dairy farmers via members of the LPAC or via a short survey.

To provide your views complete the survey surveymonkey.com/r/GNJHLL3 and attach any written submission

For more information contact:

Paul van Wel	Regional Manager	M: 0407 434 073	E: paul@dairynsw.com.au
Greg Duncan	South Coast	M: 0477 044 047	E: greg.duncan@dairyaustralia.com.au
Carly Potts	Mid North Coast	M: 0455 227 707	E: carly.potts@dairynsw.com.au
Jonathan Price	Hunter and Central West	M: 0427 896 942	E: jonathan@dairynsw.com.au
Jane Woolacott	Far South Coast and Wagga	M: 0409 076 140	E: jane@dairynsw.com.au
Elise Jeffcott	Communications	M: 0418 991 589	E: elise.jeffcott@dairynsw.com.au

What's On

June

- 1 Bega Rabobank Succession Planning Workshop
- 3 Warrigee RaboBank Succession Planning Workshop
- 7 Milk Supply Agreement Session (Online)
- 7-8 Advanced Nutrition in Action (2) (South Coast)
- 8 Milk Supply Agreement Session (Online)
- 8 Transition Cow Management Advisor Webinar
- 11 June Seasonal Update (online)
- 21 Rearing Healthy Calves Online
- 24 LLS Seasonal Update Field Day (Oxley Island)

July

- 7 SIP2 What's my yield gap (Tocal)
- 12-13 Cups On Cups Off (Rollands Plains)
- 13-14 Advanced Nutrition in Action (3) (South Coast)
- 14 Lameness Workshop (Oxley Island)
- 15-16 Cups On Cups Off (Gloucester)

August

- 16-17 Advanced Nutrition in Action (4) (South Coast)

More info at dairyaustralia.com.au/dairynsw

Online enrol anytime:

Milking and Mastitis Management (Online)

Online expression of interest anytime:

Farm Business Fundamentals
Dairy Farm Business Analysis
Our Farm Our Plan



We're for farmers

Dairy farmers are unfairly impacted by competition failures in their supply chain. This starts at the supermarket checkout with irrationally low retail prices, then continues at the farmgate where farmers can be given a raw deal for their product. NSW Farmers has been tirelessly advocating for improved supply chain conditions for dairy farmers.

Retail prices

NSW Farmers continues to urge the retailers to lift their pricing on popular dairy items. We have conducted media campaigns and have implored politicians to pressure the retailers. If the supermarkets don't step up, we will continue to explore other options until farmers see a fair price for their product.

Mandatory Dairy Code of Conduct

NSW Farmers played an instrumental role in the final design of the code, and in the code becoming mandated. With the code being put to test for the first time during the 2020/2021 supply period, we will stay abreast of any issues that arise and ensure our members are properly represented.

Helping our members in disaster recovery

NSW Farmers facilitated the distribution of major donations to our dairy members through our bushfire relief fund, and successfully advocated for meaningful bushfire recovery packages from the NSW Government.

Join NSW Farmers today at nswfarmers.org.au or call 1300 794 000

Dairy SnapShot

Dairy NSW emails a monthly newsletter with key events, industry updates, news, programs and support relevant for you on farm. If you don't receive this please email info@dairynsw.com.au and we will get in touch with you!