

Ross McInnes

29th September 2013

Mr Ian Rickuss MP
Chair,
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee,
Parliament House,
Brisbane, Queensland 4000
Email: arec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Rickuss,

Re: Fair Milk Mark Bill 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to write to your committee on this important issue and Bill.

There is no question that the present market is failing both the Queensland dairy farming families and the consumer in Queensland.

I would like to show my support and appreciation for the work done on the Fair Milk Mark Bill.

One of the greatest frustrations from consumers is which brand of milk they should buy to give the best return to dairyfarmers.

Dairy farmers in this region of Australia have been very hard hit by the Milk Price War. It is a constant source of frustration that the free market price signals are failing abysmally here. I do believe that the message sent by having a Fair Milk Mark that cannot be hijacked by the power of the supermarkets is one of the things that could lead to a decrease in that power, while at the same time providing consumers with a clear understanding and choice to support Queensland dairy farming families and providing a sustainable return to dairy farmers.

I believe that to qualify for a "Fair Milk Mark" - that the sale of this milk at the regular price is not a detriment to the dairy milk supply chain.

Dairy farm numbers have dropped from 1545 in 2000 to 510 in July 2013. Total Queensland milk production has dropped from 848 million litres in 1999/2000 to just 458 ML in the last financial year compared with 550 ML of sales. Queensland's growing population means there will be a need for an extra 100 ML within a decade.

Dairying is a viable industry both in the southern regions of Victoria and Tasmania and in the northern regions of NSW and Queensland. What is preventing us from receiving a reasonable return on our labour is the failure of the market.

Our dairy farmers are currently facing unprecedented turmoil with the majority of them not being able to cover monthly accounts from their milk cheques. If there is not change to this situation we will see many more dairy farmers exit the industry when we should not be losing any as we are short of milk to meet our own Queensland market.

It is our hope that a Fair Milk Mark will go some way to fixing this imbalance and as such we would like to see Government support to put this initiative in place as a matter of urgency.

Regards



Ross McInnes

