

The Advertiser

News

Ban cut-price milk to save us, urge farmers

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The South Australian Dairy Farmers Association has called on the Federal Government to block sale of \$1 a litre milk as farmers fight to survive.

SADA president David Basham said other proposals to help the industry include the need for farm household support, a transport fodder subsidy, farm labour wage help and provision of more irrigation water.

The State Government has also been urged to stop using country regions for revenue-raising measures such as the new Natural Resources Management Levies.

South Australian and Victorian Governments have implemented emergency relief packages this week to provide mental health support and financial counselling to farmers blindsided by unexpected cuts to the price they are paid for their milk.

The price cuts from major processors Murray Goulburn and Fonterra already affect about a quarter of South Australia's 253 dairy farms which produce 550 million litres of milk from 82,000 cows each year. But it is feared that other dairy processors will cut prices from the start of the new season on July 1.

ANZ yesterday said it would suspend loan repayments and waive fees as part of an assistance package for dairy farmers and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is looking into whether the cuts involved any misleading or unconscionable conduct.

State Agriculture Minister Leon Bignell this week announced \$60,000 in funding to help Dairy Australia deliver its Taking Stock program as a short-term measure, and urged consumers to buy South Australia-owned products.

SADA chief executive Andrew Curtis backed this call.

"We have a concern about the \$1 a litre milk and the impact that has on the industry," he said. "We are very supportive of consumers boycotting the \$1 a litre milk and seeking to buy the branded milks that return a reasonable amount to the farmers." But Primary Producers South Australia chairman Rob Kerin said an inspection of The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources books shows that the State Government appears to be recovering more money from farmers than it is spending on water issues.

"From what they've shown us, we don't think they can justify the \$6.8 million or the new corporate charge of another \$4 million to \$5 million," Mr Kerin said.

Environment Minister Ian Hunter said in two NRM regions independent assessments showed that for most farms the combined levies (land and water) is less than one per cent of the total cost of running a farm.

Mr Kerin said regional areas couldn't afford to lose \$10 million to \$11 million to NRM levies, and questioned if the Government was simply revenue raising.

Shadow Agriculture Minister David Ridgway has urged the government to use only South Australian dairy products in State Government procurement following fears that New Zealand milk is being used by some departments.

Mr Bignell said as far as he knew government departments did buy SA milk. YOUR SAY: SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BLOCK THE SALE OF \$1 MILK? ADVERTISER.COM.AU

WHERE YOUR MILK COMES FROM SA produces 550 million litres of milk a year.

About 400 million litres is consumed here.

150 million litres (roughly) is sent interstate. COLES' OWN BRAND Produced in: Australia Owned by: Coles which contracts Lion to produce the products.

Price per litre (full cream): \$1.

WOOLWORTHS SELECT Produced in: Australia.

Owned by: Woolworths.

Price per litre

(full cream): \$1.25.

FARMERS UNION/ PURA/DAIRY FARMERS Produced in: More than 550 Australian dairy farms.

Owned by: Lion (parent company is Japan firm Kirin).

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.25 (Pura); \$2.19 (Dairy Farmers); \$2 (Farmers Union iced coffee)*
TWEEDVALE Produced in: South Australia.

Owned by: Private family in the Adelaide Hills.

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.30 PAULS Produced in: Australia from dairy farms around the country. Has processing plant in Clarence Gardens.

Owned by: Parmalat (parent company is French firm Lactalis).

Price per litre (full cream): \$1.60.

A2 Produced in: Australia.

Owned by: The A2 Milk Company.

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.85.

WOOLWORTHS FARMERS' OWN BRAND Supplied by Parmalat (Clarence Gardens) Produced in: Australia
Owned by: Woolworths, supplied by Parmalat.

Price per litre (full cream): \$1.99.

SADA FRESH Produced in: SA by local farmers. Packaging and distribution through Parmalat, Clarence Gardens.

Owned by: The South Australian Dairy Farmers' Association.

Price per litre (full cream): \$1.50.

B.-D FARM PARIS CREEK Produced in: South Australia.

Owned by: B.-d Farm Paris Creek.

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.60.

FLEURIEU MILK & YOGHURT COMPANY Produced in: Myponga, SA.

Owned by: Fleurieu Milk & Yoghurt Company.

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.43.

THE COMPLETE DAIRY Produced in: Australia Owned by: Lion.

Price per litre (full cream): \$2.50.

* Prices may vary between retailers.

OTHER DAIRIES:Devondale, Mondelez Australia, Adelaide Hills Dairies, Alexandrina Cheese Company, Robe Dairy, Golden North, Jersey Fresh, Hindmarsh Valley Dairy.

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