



Victorian Farmers Federation

United Dairyfarmers of Victoria

District Council 2 and 3 Regional Update



Over the past two weeks, your dairy and water leaders from DC 2 and 3 have been involved in the following activities.

Federal Water Plan:

Richard Anderson and Geoff Akers have met with Minister Thwaites twice over the past two weeks to discuss the new draft legislation. Following the Victorian Government's meeting with the Prime Minister it seems the Federal Government is prepared to make some concessions. These include ensuring the legislation gives the Commonwealth the power to enforce water caps and water metering and the water market be regulated by the ACCC. Preliminary discussion on the legislation suggests that not all concessions made by the Prime Minister are detailed in the revised legislation and further negotiations will continue.

Foodbowl Unlimited Proposal:

Over 20 representatives from District Council 2 and 3 met with Ross McPherson and John Corboy of Foodbowl Unlimited to understand the proposal and discuss concerns. Foodbowl Unlimited is proposing a complete refurbishment of the Goulburn and Murray irrigation region with the water savings gained being split between the environment, irrigators and urban water authorities in Melbourne. These urban authorities would provide significant funding for the water.

Richard Anderson and Geoff Akers met with Treasurer Brumby and Minister Thwaites in Melbourne as well as foodbowl representatives to discuss the proposal. The VFF reiterated its policy position that it does not support water north of the divide being sent south of the divide.

Richard Anderson and Geoff Akers had further meetings with Treasurer Brumby and Minister Helper last Thursday. The VFF discussed ways water savings can flow back to farmers, the need for on-farm infrastructure upgrades and risks of water price increases.

The need to consult widely with grassroots farmers was also discussed.

Lake Mokoan Meeting:

Richard Anderson and Broken system water users met with Senior DSE officials to discuss the alternative option to decommissioning Lake Mokoan. Issues around dam wall costs and the amount of permanent water to be purchased are not yet resolved. DSE will discuss concerns with Minister Thwaites.

Dethridge Wheel Accuracy:

G-MW has found that dethridge wheels on average under record water flows by 10%, some as high as 24%. New Federal Government standards will require accuracy plus/minus 5% of new meters. This under-recorded water must remain for agricultural use - see our principle below.

Water Principles:

We noted in our previous column that we have developed 3 key principles regarding our irrigation system. These include improved service, cheaper water and a more competitive region.

The ability of our region to remain competitive is essential to ensure our industries continue to grow and increase production.

Water savings gained through more accurate metering cannot be taken from farmers; this water must remain in productive agricultural use. We believe the 4% limit on water trade out of districts must remain in place as well as the 10% limit on non-landholders not being increased.

We will continue to keep you informed of our lobbying activities with regular inserts in Country News. If you want further information please contact your branch or district council representatives.