



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:

A second draft of legislation has been released. The VFF has seen this and unfortunately it seeks a very broad referral of powers. We have always maintained the devil would be in the detail and this is certainly the case.

In the legislation the Federal Government is attempting to control water rights, water prices, annual allocations and river flows. They are also seeking control of the 10% limit on water held by non-landholders, which they want to remove. There is no acknowledgement of the irrigation water received through Snowy Hydro. This revised legislation has far-reaching implications for the region and we are working to ensure this is not adopted.

Other State Governments are beginning to voice concern over this legislative power grab and the Federal Government claim they will revise the legislation for a third time.

Richard Anderson attended an Industry Briefing on the legislation organized by the Federal Government. The inter-state agricultural groups present supported the VFF's concerns and were shocked by the powers sought in this new legislation.

The VFF will continue to be involved as the next draft of legislation becomes available.

Meeting with Minister Thwaites:

Richard Anderson and Simon Ramsay met with Minister Thwaites to discuss outstanding concerns with the Federal legislation. Premier Bracks and Minister Thwaites will raise our concerns with the Prime Minister when they meet next week.

National Farmers Federation Technical Working Group:

Richard Anderson attended this meeting. Discussion focused on the Federal Water Plan and the need to ensure the legislation does not involve a full referral of State Government powers.

G-MW Seasonal Outlook:

Geoff Akers attend this meeting. Discussion focused on the amount of water required in storages to make an allocation and when carried over water would be available. The delivery of stock and domestic water on spur channels remains a concern. Geoff Akers urged G-MW to establish clear principles and trigger points for allocation announcements and these be clearly communicated to irrigators.

Lake Mokoan Meeting:

Richard Anderson presented at a public meeting in Benalla regarding progress with the alternative option to decommissioning Lake Mokoan.

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.

Farmers expect that cheaper water will result in increased G-MW staff efficiency. Also G-MW needs to adopt a more commercial business model and be more accountable to its customers. There needs to be significant investment in the region for infrastructure upgrades, but these must not increase costs to farmers.

UDV/VFF Annual Conference:

We encourage all branch delegates to attend Annual Conference in June. Issues to be debated include the conclusion of the moratorium on GMO's and the dairy industry's position.

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.