



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.

Drought Meeting with Victorian Government: Geoff Akers and Meg Parkinson (VFF Deputy President) met with Premier Brumby, Minister for Agriculture, Joe Helper, Treasurer, John Lenders, Minister for Water, Tim Holding and Minister for Regional Development, Jacinta Allen, last week to discuss drought impacts and key support measures the State Government should introduce. Measures discussed included water rebates where the Federal grants do not apply, payment of this year's installment of the 06-07 deferred water bill, fund the pumping of Waranga Basin, possibility of accessing the Goulburn Environmental Water Quality reserve if it will not be required for Bendigo, extension of the shire rates rebate business support and apprentice retention and strategies to keep dairy, livestock, grains and horticulture viable during the drought.

\$20 000 Irrigator Grant:

The Federal Government has released further details on the \$20 000 Irrigators Grant. Grants will be payable for activities undertaken between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2009 and will be paid directly to irrigators. Eligible irrigators must meet the Exceptional Circumstances Interest Rate Subsidy off-farm assets test of \$750 000. Activities eligible for assistance include; fixed water charges, piping, extending bores, reconfiguring irrigation systems and laser leveling.

We are assured applications from Centrelink will be available this week.

Foodbowl Modernisation Project:

Geoff Akers and Max Fehring attended the Foodbowl Steering Committee meeting last week. Discussion focused on the recent public meetings and timeframes to review submissions.

DC 3 Submission:

DC 3 held a meeting last week to discuss the Foodbowl Modernisation draft report with the discussion points being developed into a submission to the Foodbowl Steering Committee.

Key concerns identified in the report relate to the public/private interface and connections to the main trunks.

Federal Water Plan:

\$1.6 billion for on-farm efficiencies was allocated by the Federal Government as part of the \$10 billion plan over 10 years. Last week the Federal Government announced a Pilot Programme targeting on-farm efficiencies. Each project must focus on improving the efficiency of existing agriculture-based irrigation, be managed by a partner able to demonstrate a formal relationship with irrigators and generate water savings of at least 25 megalitres that will be returned to the Commonwealth for environmental purposes.

National Farmers Federation (NFF) Water Taskforce:

Richard Anderson attended the NFF's Water Taskforce meeting last week. Discussions focused on future models of the Taskforce and Industry Working Group as well as the Federal Water Plan.

Rural Women's Luncheon:

A special thank you to Phylis Broadwood for organizing the Rural Women's luncheon last week at Waaia. The luncheon was a huge success with close to 100 women attending.