

(...)

The chairman of the Senate Committee

Re: Submission to the Senate Committee on Milk Pricing

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to place the following submission to the Senate Committee regarding milk pricing.

We are fourth generation Dairy Farmers in the Main Arm Valley, the same valley where there were once 36 family Dairy Farms, we are now the last one standing. We do this out of pride and the love of the industry, but our time on a farm that has been in our family for over 120 years maybe quickly coming to an end. Not because of our lack of will or determination but solely due to the turn of events that have taken place in the last 12 years and the direction milk pricing is currently heading. It is extremely hard to sit down with our son (fifth generation) and daughter-in-law whom entered into a partnership with my wife and I two years ago with a strong desire to continue the family tradition of Dairy Farming, to explain to them both there is no future in Dairy farming unless urgent action is taken immediately by Governments and Industry leaders to stop major supermarkets/chain stores controlling the price of milk. Prior to deregulation we could clearly see a future, we had a reasonable and stable income, if we needed machinery or feed we could afford to purchase it, now my wife and daughter-in-law are both forced to work off farm and we are still battling to break even.

If action is not taken immediately we predict the following to occur:

- The price of milk to the farmer will decrease further.
- A mass exodus of the Fresh Milk Dairy Farmer from the industry.
- Supermarkets will control the Dairy Industry just as my late father Roland Johnston MBE, former Chairman of Norco Co-op Ltd who fought so hard to get equality for all N.S.W Dairy Farmers in the milk war, said would happen after deregulation of the dairy industry.
- The only brand of milk you will find will be Home Brands.
- The milk that is sold in supermarkets/chain stores will certainly not be fresh. It is clearly going down this road now with permeate currently present in certain milk.
- Young families forced to drink long life or powdered milk.
- Farming knowledge handed down from generation to generation will be lost as there will be no young Dairy farmers entering the industry.
- WE WILL BE FORCED OFF OUR FAMILY FARM.

What is happening now is a senseless act destroying the lives and futures of our Australian Dairy Farmers. There is no logical reason for this to be happening. Is this a future for our children?

PLEASE DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN!

Yours Sincerely

Murray Johnston

And on behalf of: Bronwyn Johnston, Michael & Georgia Johnston and their children, sixth generation, Scarlett and Maverick Johnston.

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