National Farmers Federation

1 July 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Re. Inquiry into the Primary Industries (Customs) Charges Amendment (Dairy Cattle Export Charge) Bill 2020

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Primary Industries (Customs) Charges Amendment (Dairy Cattle Export Charge) Bill 2020 (the bill).

The NFF was established in 1979 as the national peak body representing farmers and the agriculture sector more broadly across Australia. The NFF's membership comprises all of Australia's major agricultural commodities across the breadth and the length of the supply chain. Operating under a federated structure, individual farmers join their respective state farm organisation and/or national commodity council. These organisations form the NFF.

The NFF strongly supports the provisions in the bill, which will:

- impose a charge on the export of dairy cattle
- set the rate of provision on a per head basis for dairy cattle
- enable the full funding of the Dairy Cattle Export Program, to meet specific research and development and marketing activities for the dairy cattle export sector.

Australian dairy cattle are sought after in international markets, and the sale of dairy cattle provides important income diversification for Australian dairy farmers.

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Currently, the Dairy Cattle Export Program delivered by LiveCorp is funded through a voluntary levy, which is significantly under-collected.

The bill would establish a statutory levy, and these funds will be invaluable to support the needs of the dairy cattle export trade in areas of animal health and welfare, supply chain efficiency and regulatory performance, market access and stakeholder communications. We would stress the importance of decisions about allocation of levy funds being made in consultation with industry.

The NFF offers its full support for the detailed submissions provided to this inquiry by our member organisations, Australian Dairy Farmers and the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC). The ALEC submission references the extensive consultation and analysis undertaken by ALEC in 2017-18 to inform the recommendation for government to implement a Dairy Cattle Export Charge, and which identified broad support for the levy proposal.

The NFF recommends that the bill be passed without delay. Should you require any further information in relation to this submission, please contact Adrienne Ryan, General Manager Rural Affairs at the National Farmers' Federation, on 02 6269 5666 or aryan@nff.org.au.

Yours sincerely

TONY MAHAR
Chief Executive Officer