

14 October 2019

Submission to:
The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources
Via on-line lodgement

INQUIRY INTO GROWING AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE TO \$100 BILLION BY 2030

1. The Role of the Infant Nutrition Council

The Infant Nutrition Council Ltd (INC) is the industry association for the infant formula products and toddler milk drink industry in Australia and New Zealand. The more than 40 council members include some of the most respected food companies in Australia and internationally, (see Appendix 1 for a full membership list of the INC).

The Australian infant formula industry is considered to be one of the safest and most well-regulated dairy industries in the world. The INC plays a key role in ensuring compliance and safety in the industry, with all members required to abide by a Code of Conduct that provides direction on industry issues including the support of breastfeeding, food regulations and standards, food safety issues, and company representatives' conduct and activities.

The INC also works with local and international regulators to advance infant nutrition. The INC advocates to ensure that the regulatory environment includes the benefits provided by global research and the consideration of global trade and harmonisation with international food standards.

The INC has strong relationships with the Australian and New Zealand Governments, as well as with government departments and agencies. It works in partnership with government to protect the Australian and New Zealand brands and to support the public health goals for the protection and promotion of breastfeeding and, when needed, infant formula as the only suitable alternative.

2. A High Growth, High Value Export Industry

Australia's dairy industry is a critical part of the agriculture sector, valued at \$4.3 billion¹ to the economy, third behind only beef and wheat in size. The industry directly employs over 40,000 Australians, 18,000 of them in manufacturing.

The Australian infant formula products and toddler milk drink industry is a strong and growing component of that primary industry, due in large part to the burgeoning Asian middle-class consumer and their increased demand for, and trust in premium dairy products sourced from Australia.

As high value-added products, infant formula products and toddler milk drinks have played an important role in the development and growth of Australia's dairy exports.

In 2018, Australia's total exports for the sector were valued over A\$758million, comprising 22% of the total \$3.4 billion of dairy exports². Compared to 2017, **this reflects an increase of over 57% in value.** (See Appendix 2 for a more detailed summary of Australia's key export markets).

In addition to this huge growth in exports, the industry has also seen significant foreign direct investment into the supply chain, including from the EU, Japan and most recently China. This investment not only brings capital but also global linkages to the sector.

3. Maintaining Global Market Access

Over the past decade, Australia has seen significant demand from overseas markets, especially from Chinese consumers. This has been driven by a number of factors including recognition of the high quality and safety of Australian sourced infant formula products and toddler milk drinks. Other factors include the growth in cross-broader e-commerce trade in China; the reduction in tariffs resulting from the China Australia Free Trade Agreement; and a growing Australian Chinese community.

The increase of the infant formula trade with China has also been influenced by China's history of tainted food incidents which came to a head in 2008 with the Melamine milk scare. Following this incident, consumers avoided Chinese domestic-

¹ *Australian Dairy Industry in Focus 2018*

² *Australian Dairy Industry In Focus 2018*

produced infant formula and as a result, imported infant formula levels grew rapidly. Chinese importers and the grey market 'Diagou' sellers' selected safe Australian (and overseas) quality produce. This opportunity created an immediate market entry mode of export from Australia to China.

China has shown consistent growth as an importing country taking over 90% of Australia's worldwide infant formula and toddler milk drink exports, and making Australia the 7th largest exporter to China. Australian exports to China increased by 70% between 2017 and 2018, and have more than doubled since 2016. Based on growth projections for the China market, the INC believes that **infant formula exports to China can grow to over \$2.4 billion pa by 2030 if market access can be maintained and Australia's market share retained.**

Whilst 90% of Australia's infant formula exports are to China, other key markets include Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam and South Korea (see Appendix 2). Whilst total exports to these markets are modest when compared with China, they provide huge "upside" opportunities for Australian exporters and in many cases are easier to enter and have more transparent regulatory environments.

The INC believes that a key opportunity to grow the agriculture sector in Australia is by supporting the export of high value products like infant formula. There are a number of important roles for the Australian Government to this end.

3.1. Bi-lateral and Multi-Lateral Trade Agreements

The Australian Government's implementation of Free Trade Agreements with key export partners has been important in reducing tariffs. In some markets infant formula (along with a range of other agricultural products) attract tariffs of upwards of 30%. Acknowledging the complexity of negotiations, the INC supports the continued pursuit of these agreements, particularly those that focus on high growth markets, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

3.2. Addressing Non-Tariff Measures

The Government has an important role in addressing non-tariff measures that arise in key export markets such as China. Where those markets are covered by Free Trade Agreements, mechanisms contained in those Agreements should be utilised to ensure fair market access for Australian exports. For the Australian infant formula and toddler milk drink industry, the current complexities and delays in obtaining

brand and recipe registration by China authorities presents a considerable risk to the industry and its continued export growth.

3.3. In-Market Resources and Expertise

The in-market resources of Australian Government agencies (particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrade and the Department of Agriculture) provide invaluable services to the INC and its members, including advice and support on market entry strategies, regulatory environments and links to key networks. These services are particularly valuable to SMEs, new exporters and in new export markets.

4. The Importance of Appropriate Industry Regulation

As mentioned previously, the INC supports industry regulation and has an important role in ensuring member compliance around the industry's Code of Conduct that covers food regulations and standards, food safety issues, and company representatives' conduct and activities.

The INC works closely with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and other regulators, however feels that it is important to ensure a balanced approach is taken to the regulatory environment, and in particular that the global competitiveness of the Australian industry is not compromised by decisions taken by regulators in isolation. We feel there is an important role for the Australian Government to play in overseeing such a balanced approach.

4.1. A Whole-of Government Approach to Industry Regulation

It is important that industry regulation not only underpins consumer safety and protects Australia's "clean, green" brand, but also that it supports industry growth, global competitiveness and new product innovation. Regulators must work with primary industry agencies and industry to ensure a balanced, sensible approach to regulation is developed.

An example of where this has the potential not to occur relates to labelling regulations - ***Application A1155 2'-FL and LNnT in infant formula and other products***. This application relates to the current position being taken by FSANZ to prohibit plain English terms such as 'human milk identical oligosaccharide' or 'HiMO' (or similar words or abbreviations) on infant formula labels to explain the benefits of ingredients '2'-Fucosyllactose' (2'-FL) and Lacto-N-neotetraose (LNnT). This is completely at odds with the decision to apply generic ingredient labelling

requirements, and puts Australian exported products at a distinct disadvantage when competing globally with other countries' products that are able to speak to the consumer in plain language about the innovative ingredients contained in their products.

Thank you for the opportunity of providing a submission to the Committee's inquiry. I would be happy to provide additional details on any of the matters contained in this Submission, or to meet with Committee members at a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Carey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jan Carey
CEO

CURRENT INFANT NUTRITION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ordinary Members:

Aspen Nutritionals
The a2 Milk Company Limited
Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd
H.J. Heinz Company Australia Ltd
H.J. Heinz Company (New Zealand) Ltd
Nestlé Australia Ltd
Nestlé New Zealand Ltd
Danone Nutricia Australia Pty Ltd
Synlait Milk Ltd

Associate Members:

Abbott Australasia Pty Ltd	NIG Nutritionals
Australian Dairy Park	New Zealand New Milk Ltd
Bakels Edible Oils (NZ) Ltd	Nuchev Food Pty Ltd
Bayer Ltd	Nu-Mega Ingredients
Blend and Pack Pty Ltd	Oceania Dairy
Bodco Dairy Ltd	Reckitt Benckiser
Bubs Australia Ltd	Saputo Dairy Australia Pty Ltd
Burra Foods	Snow Brand Aust Pty Ltd
Cargill Australia	Spring Sheep Milk Co
Dairy Goat Co-operative Ltd	Tatura Milk Industries
DSM Pty Ltd	The H&H Group
Freedom Foods	Wattle Health Australia Ltd
Fresco Nutrition Ltd	Westland Co-operative Dairy Company Ltd
GMP Dairy Ltd	Winston Nutritional New Zealand
Great Ocean Ingredients Pty Ltd	Yashili Dairy New Zealand
GrainCorp Ltd	
Jamestrong Packaging Pty Ltd	
Mataura Valley Milk Ltd	

Australia Export Statistics by Value and Market Share							
Commodity: 190110, Food Preparations For Infant Use, Put Up For Retail Sale, Nesoi							
Calendar Year: 2016 - 2018							
Partner Country	Australia Dollars			% Share			% Change
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2018/2017
World	395719251	482120880	758145325	100.00	100.00	100.00	57.25
China	315163645	404074946	686935927	79.64	83.81	90.61	70.00
Hong Kong	54149298	51251430	24656229	13.68	10.63	3.25	- 51.89
Taiwan	6778204	7701294	17763678	1.71	1.60	2.34	130.66
Vietnam	4573881	7538897	10110634	1.16	1.56	1.33	34.11
Korea South	8568205	3622882	8660786	2.17	0.75	1.14	139.06
Malaysia	2248102	2175013	2988895	0.57	0.45	0.39	37.42
Singapore	609422	2582998	1563735	0.15	0.54	0.21	- 39.46
New Zealand	2575267	2344566	1511309	0.65	0.49	0.20	- 35.54
Bangladesh	0	0	1415843	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.00
Cambodia	151414	482201	1061466	0.04	0.10	0.14	120.13
Indonesia	0	0	856247	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00

Austrade