

19 December 2017

Livestock exporters vote in support of statutory dairy cattle export charge

THE Australian Livestock Exporters' Council (ALEC) has welcomed formal industry support for the implementation of a new statutory dairy cattle export charge.

ALEC CEO Simon Westaway said the statutory charge will be collected by the Commonwealth to allow industry service provider LiveCorp to deliver technical support for dairy cattle export supply chains and fund RD&E programs specific to Australia's dairy cattle trade which is worth almost \$130 million annually.

"The statutory charge will ensure LiveCorp is adequately resourced to administer programs to enhance the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of Australia's dairy cattle export industry," Mr Westaway said.

At the ALEC Annual General Meeting in Perth last month, exporter members resolved to proceed with an industry ballot proposing a rate of \$6 per head, in accordance with the Australian Government's *Levy Principles and Guidelines*.

Livestock exporters were subsequently invited to register to vote on the statutory charge in a ballot which closed on Monday (December 18, 2017). The ballot demonstrated emphatic industry support for the new statutory charge, with 80 per cent of registered exporters voting in favour of the reform.

Australian livestock exporters currently pay statutory export charges on exported beef cattle, sheep and goats. In 2006, livestock exporters initiated a voluntary charge on exported dairy cattle to enable funding for sector-specific RD&E and marketing at a rate of \$3 per head. In 2014, ALEC members voted to increase the voluntary dairy cattle charge to \$6 per head.

"The voluntary dairy cattle export charge has been significantly under-collected and, as such, has not been sufficient to meet the RD&E and marketing needs of our dairy cattle export trade," he said.

Mr Westaway said LiveCorp and the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) had now been advised of industry's strong endorsement for the new statutory charge. He said a wide range of stakeholders participated in the consultation process, which had informed industry's decision to proceed with the ballot.

"Peak producer groups including Australian Dairy Farmers and the National Farmers Federation support the statutory charge for dairy cattle exports because farmers recognise the importance, and further potential, of Australia's dairy heifer export market," he said.