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**SUBMISSION TO OBJECT TO TERMS PROPOSED BY THE
EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROTECTION AS GEOGRAPHICAL
INDICATIONS IN AUSTRALIA**

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EU GI name you are objecting to: Product 62: Neufchatel (France)

Ground(s) of objection to the protection of the EU GI name

1. The EU GI name is used in Australia as the common name for the relevant good.

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Introductory Comments

The Australian Dairy Industry Council (ADIC) is the peak national representative body of the Australian dairy industry. It represents the interests of dairy farmers and processors across the entire dairy value chain to create a more prosperous and sustainable future for the local industry and the regional communities that rely on it.

Dairy Australia is the national services body for dairy farmers and the industry. Its role is to help farmers adapt to a changing operating environment, and achieve a profitable, sustainable dairy industry. As the industry's research and development corporation (RDC), it is the 'investment arm' of the industry, investing in projects that cannot be done efficiently by individual farmers or companies.

The Australian dairy industry welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the public objections process on the European Union's request that Neufchatel cheese be recognised (and protected) as a EU GI as part of the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement.

In making this submission the dairy industry recognises that Neufchatel has for many years been a protected GI name in France for soft, slightly crumbly, **mold-ripened cheese made from raw cow's milk** in the Neufchâtel-en-Bray of Normandy.

However, the name Neufchatel in Australia refers to a different (and widely used) style of cheese.

As the Cheese.com website explains:



French Neufchatel is a raw milk mould-ripened cheese that dates back to medieval times. It looks similar to Camembert, with a dry, white, edible rind, but which has a saltier and sharper taste. Unlike other soft-white-rinded cheeses, Neufchâtel has a grainy texture. It is usually sold in heart shapes and typically matured for 8–10 weeks before sale

In the late 1800s US cheesemakers made an American cream cheese, which they also called Neufchâtel,¹ by adding cream to the pasteurised milk and other inputs used in the European Neufchâtel recipe. The resulting product is a soft cream cheese that has a considerably lower fat and higher moisture content than regular cream cheeses.

This style of cream cheese was subsequently introduced into Australia many decades ago by firms such as Kraft Foods. Kraft has often described their Philadelphia Brand Cream Cheese as a Neufchatel cheese in internal company marketing material (see Attachment 1).

While the two cheeses share a common name (i.e. they are effectively homonyms) they actually are targeted at very different consumer markets.

1. Jeffrey A. Marx, "The Days Had Come of Curds and Cream": The Origins and Development of Cream Cheese in America, in *Journal of Food, Culture and Society*, Vol. 15, Issue 2, June 2012.

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Cheese.com separately identifies Australian Neufchatel as a different cheese to its French homonym describing it as a semi-soft cow's milk cheese (made from pasteurised milk) that is similar to Cream Cheese, but which has a lower fat content and slightly smooth and creamy texture. The product is mild in taste produced with various flavors, for example strawberry or chocolate. It is used in cooked foods such as pastries, cheesecakes and quiches rather than direct consumption as French Neufchatel is used.

Australian dairy firms such as Kraft and Tatura Milk Industries were major producers and exporters of Neufchatel cheese through the latter part of the 1900s. The cheese making operations of these firms have subsequently been taken over by other local industry players such as Bega Foods.

As a result, Australia has a consistent track record of producing and exporting significant volumes of (American-style) Neufchatel cheese over the past 40 years.

Dairy Australia has published annual estimates of the volume of Australian Cream and Neufchatel cheese each year since the late 1980s, with production over the last five years averaging over 85,000 tonnes per annum. Refer Attachment 2 for pictures of Australian Neufchatel cream cheese recently observed for sale at Melbourne delicatessen (noting the Tatura Milk Products brand is clearly shown for this cheese).

Neufchatel cheese has a lower retail profile in Australia than some other cheese varieties. This reflects the fact that, although Australian-made Neufchatel cheese is available for sale at many delicatessens in major cities, most Neufchatel sales in Australia occur through non-supermarket outlets.

Dairy Australia estimates that local food service and industrial food processors utilise between 5-7,000 tonnes of domestically produced Neufchatel cheese each year.

Australian firms export similar volumes of this cheese to a range of markets across South East and North Asia with Japan being a market of particular importance for Australian exports.

Given the large volumes involved and the long-standing history of Australian sales of (American-style) Neufchatel cheese, enforcing full GI protection for this name in the Australian market immediately upon entering into any FTA would impose substantial costs on a number of Australian dairy firms. It would also create significant risks and disturbances to the Australian and export supply chains for this cheese (as French Neufchatel would not be in a position to replace lost Australian production).

Attachment1: Kraft Philadelphia / Neufchatel Cheese Images



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PHILADELPHIA CREAM CHEESE - CREAM CHEESE - NEUFCHATEL 1/3 LESS FAT

Ingredients: PASTEURIZED NONFAT MILK AND MILKFAT, CHEESE CULTURE, SALT, STABILIZERS (XANTHAN AND/OR CAROB BEAN AND/OR GUAR GUMS).

Size: 8 OZ

Upc: 2100061247

Attachment 2: Australian Neufchatel Cheese Retail Sale Images

