

13 March 2026

**The Hon Chris Bowen MP**  
Minister for Climate Change and Energy  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Via email: [Chris.Bowen.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Chris.Bowen.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister Bowen,

### **Request for urgent meeting – fuel and fertiliser supply impacts on the dairy industry**

I write to request an urgent meeting to discuss the emerging impacts of fuel and fertiliser shortages on the Australian dairy industry and the broader dairy food supply chain.

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) is receiving reports from multiple regions that both supply constraints and logistical disruptions are already affecting farm operations. While fuel remains technically available in some areas, delivery schedules have deteriorated significantly due to decreased supply and congested delivery chains.

In northern Victoria, regular deliveries are now being delayed by up to two weeks, creating a real risk that larger dairy farms will run out of the fuel required to operate essential on-farm equipment such as machinery, generators, and water systems. Smaller farms are travelling significant distances to secure supply.

In Western Australia, farmers are reporting a combination of fuel shortages and fertiliser supply disruptions, alongside rapidly increasing prices. In some cases, fertiliser is simply unavailable, and prices have almost doubled since the conflict in the middle east commenced, with some suppliers advising that availability will remain constrained in the coming weeks. This presents immediate concerns for pasture and cropping systems that underpin feed supply for dairy herds.

Compounding these pressures are emerging risks in upstream petrochemical supply chains. The instability in the Middle East is disrupting global petrochemical and logistics networks, with suppliers declaring force majeure in parts of the supply chain. Petrochemicals are key inputs to polymer resins used in essential packaging materials across the food and dairy sectors. Reduced availability and increasing price volatility in these inputs present a further risk to food manufacturing and distribution, highlighting the importance of the Government's work to develop a national Food Security Strategy.

For the dairy industry, these disruptions have direct implications for animal welfare, farm safety and national food production.

Dairy farms operate every day of the year and rely heavily on fuel for milking operations, refrigeration, feed preparation, irrigation, effluent systems, and emergency power generation.

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Interruptions to these systems can quickly create serious animal welfare risks, including the inability to milk cows, maintain milk cooling systems, or provide adequate feed and water in line with animal welfare regulations.

Dairy is a highly perishable product that requires constant refrigeration, daily collection and uninterrupted processing to remain safe for consumption. Any disruption to fuel availability across farms, milk tankers, processors or packaging supply chains risks immediate spoilage and lost production. Given milk and dairy products are a staple in Australian households, sustained disruptions would quickly flow through to reduced retail supply, increased price volatility and potential shortages on supermarket shelves.

There are also significant safety risks associated with farmers attempting to manage fuel shortages, including increased transport distances to source supply, reliance on backup equipment, and the operation of farms without fuel or reliable power generation. These risks also increase the likelihood of incidents requiring emergency response at a time when rural emergency services are already under pressure.

Given the essential and continuous nature of dairy production, it is critical that dairy farming and its associated supply chain are clearly recognised and treated as an essential service in any fuel security or emergency supply prioritisation arrangements.

An urgent discussion with you would allow industry to outline the developing situation, identify immediate risk points across the dairy supply chain, and explore practical measures to maintain fuel and critical inputs remain available to dairy farms and processors.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at the earliest possible time. I have copied the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry given the implications for national food security and animal welfare. Please contact ADF CEO Stephen Sherridan on 0408 664 841 to make arrangements.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



**Ben Bennett**  
President  
**Australian Dairy Farmers**

**CC:** The Hon Julie Collins MP  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry