

7 April 2026

The Hon Tony Burke MP  
Minister for Home Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Via email: [Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

I write to seek your assistance in addressing a critical gap in Australia's migration framework that is currently constraining investment in the dairy industry and limiting growth opportunities for regional communities.

Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) and a commercial partner are currently working with a cohort of international dairy farming families who are ready to relocate to Australia and invest in dairy farm businesses. This group alone represents approximately \$160 million in on-farm investment and the potential to deliver around 50 million litres of additional milk production.

These families are experienced, owner-operator farmers from leading dairy regions including the Holland, Denmark and Canada. They are seeking to purchase and operate their own farms, relocate with their families, and contribute directly to Australia's food production system. However, there is presently no suitable visa pathway that enables this form of productive agricultural investment.

Existing migration settings require individuals to enter Australia through employment-based arrangements or pathways that do not accommodate immediate farm ownership and operation. This is not practical for established farmers who intend to invest significant capital and operate their own businesses from the outset.

The closure of the former business investment visa settings has removed the only viable mechanism that previously enabled this type of migration. As a result, Australia now lacks a pathway for experienced agricultural investors to enter, establish and operate farm enterprises. This is creating a clear barrier to investment, production growth and regional development.

The implications are immediate and material. Without an appropriate pathway, this investment is at risk of being redirected to competitor nations such as New Zealand that actively support agricultural migration. This represents a missed opportunity not only to increase domestic food

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production, but also to strengthen regional communities, address ageing farmer demographics, and improve productivity through the introduction of globally proven farming systems and practices.

In the absence of such pathways, there is also a risk of continued consolidation and movement away from family farms towards corporate ownership models, with reduced local economic investment. As data shows family farms invest in community more than a corporate ownership and the profits more likely retained within Australia.

This cohort represents the type of migration outcome Australia is seeking; skilled operators bringing capital, capability and long-term commitment to regional Australia. Enabling these families to invest and operate within the dairy industry would deliver immediate and enduring benefits to both the sector and the broader economy.

ADF respectfully seeks your support to explore practical options to address this issue, including consideration of mechanisms that would allow experienced farmers with demonstrated capability and capital to purchase and operate farms upon arrival. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you discuss this matter further and identify a pathway forward. We have met with your department who have confirmed the current limitations we are trying to overcome.

This is a ready and immediate opportunity to bring productive investment, skills and families into regional Australia. The constraint is not demand, but the absence of a policy mechanism to enable it.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at the earliest possible time. Copied is the Assistance Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry given the implications for the Agricultural workforce. Please contact ADF CEO Stephen Sherridan on 0408 664 841 to make meeting arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Ben Bennett**  
President  
Australian Dairy Farmers

CC: The Hon Anthony Chisholm MP, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry