

Buy Local to Support Dairies

Kimberley Vlastic

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Tablelander

FAR Northerners are urged to buy local milk to avert a crisis among Tablelands dairy farmers similar to their southern counterparts.

Thousands of farmers face massive losses after Australia's largest dairy processor Murray-Goulburn announced it would retrospectively slash milk payments last month.

Another major player, Fonterra, followed suit before public outrage caused it to backflip and increase payments for milk supplied in May and June.

The price cuts don't affect the Far North's 50-odd dairy farmers who supply the local market through either Lion Dairy at Malanda or Mungalli Creek Dairy at Millaa Millaa.

But Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation state councillor and Millaa Millaa farmer, James Geraghty, fears there could be a flow-on effect.

"We're definitely concerned and thoughts and prayers go out to people adversely affected in Victoria," Mr Geraghty said.

"It's just terrible what's happened.

"I think something needs to give, but the Federal Government and Opposition have refused to support a levy and/or re-regulation of the industry." Mr Geraghty said margins remained tight. He urged people to buy local milk – Dairy Farmers, Mungalli Creek and Misty Mountains.

"The branded products are where farmers are being paid a realistic price, generic products are just processors trying to cut their overheads," he said.

Malanda Falls Caravan Park manager Janine Rielly made a similar call to arms on Facebook last week: "In the past I have been guilty of buying 'cheap' milk but since moving to the country and realising how hard farmers work I will never do it again," it read.

Her post went viral, shared more than 3000 times and attracted nearly 6000 likes.

"I was quite blown away by the response," she said. "People do want to do the right thing and they don't want to see farmers go under."