

# Farmer toolkit

## Social media and the animal welfare debate

As passionate dairy people, we understand why it is tempting to react strongly to the inflammatory and emotive statements coming out of the small but vocal vegan minority.

Just like vegans are entitled to their opinions, we're entitled to feel proud of the work we do to build an ethical and sustainable supply chain that puts animal welfare at the forefront and healthy, nourishing food on the nation's tables.

However, unless we respond in a considered way, we risk giving the vegan message a bigger audience and focussing the anti-animal industries campaign on our industry.

Instead of going toe-to-toe, we're asking dairy people to balance negativity with positive and proud messages that tell the real story about our industry and help people feel good, not guilty about the foods they love. This resource has some tools and information to help you do that.

### Social media

With vegan activities gaining little traction in the mainstream media, many activists use social platforms like Facebook and Twitter to spread their message.

It's important we avoid engaging directly with activists online, instead focussing our social media activity on filling people's newsfeeds with positive, fact-based dairy-related posts.

Veganism means abstaining from the use of animal products. Being vegan is a lifestyle choice some people make for a range of reasons, for example, health, religion, concerns about animal exploitation or the environment.



**“Share great content that is being posted by other farmers or industry groups such as your local RDP/ Dairy Australia. The more visual, the better!”**

**Here are the messages we need to be spreading**


- › Dairy farmers care for their animals and the land.
- › Looking after cows is top priority for dairy farmers; healthy, happy cows produce top quality milk.
- › Dairy farming families are proud of the healthy, delicious food they put on tables all around Australia.
- › People have been drinking cow's milk for thousands of years and there are lots of proven health benefits.
- › Milk, cheese and yoghurt have natural nutrients to fuel our bodies every day.
- › Most Australians aren't eating enough from the dairy food group. Eating more dairy is good for health and the dairy farming community.

**Here are some ideas for posts that get those messages across**

facebook


**Post**

Like every farmer, I love my cows. I look after them and they look after me and, together we put healthy delicious food on plates all around Australia [#legendaairy](#)




Like Comment

Did you know that 90% of Aussies enjoy dairy daily and have been for thousands of years! Seems like [#aussies are pretty](#) [#legendaairy](#)



Like Comment

Dairy farming is a vital contributor to regional Australian communities: it creates jobs, provides food and supports the local economy. That's why we like to call it [#legendaairy](#)



Like Comment

**General social media do's and don'ts**

**Do**

- › spread positive messages about dairy so that consumers are informed about dairy farming and understand the health benefits of dairy foods
- › be active but don't over-do it. Be active on your social media, but don't post so often that you overwhelm people
- › share great content that is being posted by other farmers or industry groups such as your local RDP/Dairy Australia. The more visual, the better!
- › contact your local RDP/Dairy Australia if you're unsure about how to respond to a direct attack on your social media.

**Don't**

- › deliberately target or directly engage in back and forth with animal activist campaigners on social media.
- › post without considering the broader industry impact. Remember to pause and think before making comments online.
- › ignore or delete comments. Address these in a respectful and responsible way. If unsure, contact your RDP/ Dairy Australia for advice.

Remember, engaging online should not be taken lightly. There is always a risk that your positive messages will be met with counter viewpoints. However, if you feel an attack crosses the line, here are some steps to help you address the situation.

 **Help Centre**  
About online behaviour

 **Help Centre**  
How to deal with harassment on Facebook

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