



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Free entry to International Dairy Week 2007**

International Dairy Week (IDW) in partnership with the Greater Shepparton City Council is this year providing free entry for visitors, farmers, and buyers attending Australia's largest dairy cattle sale and show.

Held annually in Tatura, Victoria from 14 to 18 January, IDW showcases five breeds of dairy cows to the industry both nationally and internationally, opening doors for Australian farmers into new markets.

IDW co director David Blackmore said despite experiencing the most severe drought in 100 years organisers were expecting to see record crowds.

"During times of drought it's important to come together as a community and support each other. This year has seen a record number of first time exhibitors attending the event, total of 27. IDW offers farmers the chance to take time out from the daily struggles to catch up with friends," Mr Blackmore said.

IDW co director Brian Leslie said cattle numbers entered in the shows were down on previous years but were still up on the numbers that attended during the 2003 drought.

"During lean times exhibitors tend to bring quality and not quantity," Mr Leslie said. "IDW 2007 will see more than 900 of the best quality cattle exhibited, so we're expecting a good show."

Rob and Kerrie Anderson from Drouin West in Victoria have been attending IDW for more than 10 years and are this year exhibiting a team of seven Jersey cows.

"We've been coming to dairy week since Jerseys were introduced in 1997 and have only missed two years in that time," Mrs Anderson said. "IDW is the premier show to attend because it helps us increase our profile in front of the international judges and visitors, and allows us to benchmark our cows against other breeders in the industry.

"It's a family affair, our three children, ages 5, 7, and 10 attend and it gives us a chance to catch up with friends. Farming's a full time job and finding the time to get the whole group together tends to happen only once a year at IDW."

Mr Leslie said Australia was the world's largest and most successful exporter of commercial livestock.

"The live trade of cattle is a significant contributor to the Australian rural economy and provides an important market for Australian cattle producers."

According to Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Limited, Australian live cattle exports in the 2005-06 fiscal year ended on a positive note, with exports during June jumping 15 per cent on the previous year, to 69,288 head. The value of live cattle exports for June was also up, increasing 18 per cent, to \$43 million FOB (free on board).

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Mr Blackmore said this year would see a slightly enhanced program of events to provide more social time for farmers. The Jersey and Holstein shows on Wednesday and Thursday respectively will be brought forward to allow for an extended two hour lunch break.

"IDW is a good time for farmers to plan for the year ahead. Many farmers attend IDW to research bloodlines and see what new technology and innovations are on offer."

For the first time this year, IDW will introduce another event during the youth day called 'Judges on Parade'.

"For a bit of fun, we'll be putting the judges under the spotlight and give the youth of IDW an opportunity to see how the experts operate. Judges will be called upon to take over the cattle leading in the show ring to demonstrate just what they meant when they said 'she walks up hill' or 'displays great heart room'," Mr Blackmore said.

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**Note to Editor:** Please contact Danielle for a list of IDW exhibitors in your local area. Further information including the program of events is available on Fact Sheet.