

## VICTORIA'S BUSHFIRES



### Dairy Industry Update 18 February 2009

Over the last week, Dairy Food Safety Victoria (DFSV) has maintained close contact with dairy manufacturers and farmers in areas that have been severely affected by Victoria's bushfires.

There are currently ten fires burning around the State. Most of these are contained with no imminent threat to communities or property at this stage.

The overall situation for dairy factories has improved. Following clean-up operations, production quickly resumed at factories that were impacted by smoke and power outages. Road closures have been lifted for essential vehicles and tankers have been able to access the majority of farms for milk pick-up.

Those factories and farms that were under threat in the Gundowring and Tangambalamba areas were removed from high alert late last week and there is no reported damage to property or stock. Milk was diverted to other factories during this period to maintain supply.

Many dairy farms around the State have been affected directly by the Victorian bushfires. While there has been no widespread loss of property or animals, there has been significant destruction of haysheds, silage stacks, fencing and water infrastructure in some areas. The final toll on dairy stock is yet to be determined.

DFSV has been provided with information on six farmers suffering severe circumstances and others requiring immediate assistance. These farmers have been referred to local support networks including Dairy Australia, the Victorian Farmers Federation and United Dairyfarmers of Victoria.

We are currently working with the Department of Primary Industries and other organisations to determine the specific needs of farmers during the recovery phase of this disaster and will provide assistance and support as required.

DFSV's CEO Dr Anne Astin and staff wish to take this opportunity to offer their deepest sympathies to those who have lost family, friends and homes as a result of the devastating fires in Victoria.

#### Contact for further information:

Dr Anne Astin, CEO  
Phone: 9810 5900 Fax : 9819 4299  
Email: [aastin@dairysafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:aastin@dairysafe.vic.gov.au)  
[www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au)