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EGG FARMERS DEMAND EXEMPTION FROM NEW FEDERAL TAX

Australia's commercial egg farmers have called for their industry to be exempt from a new tax on biosecurity fearing it would lead to higher egg prices for struggling Aussie households.

The Albanese government will impose the tax on all primary producers from July 1 in a bid to reap an extra \$50 million for national biosecurity programs.

Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto warned the extra tax burden was likely to push up egg prices for Aussie families who are already struggling with the cost of living.

"As we experience a nation-wide cost of living crisis, there's a good case as to why our nation's commercial egg farmers should be exempt from the new tax," Ms Hashimoto said.

"It adds another layer of cost to egg production and ultimately to the Mums and Dads around Australia who are already finding it hard to pay for food and for higher interest rates on their mortgages."

Ms Hashimoto said nutritionally, eggs are recognised as one of Australia's healthiest and most affordable sources of protein for human health.

"At a time when meat prices and other grocery items are soaring, eggs remain the most affordable protein for Australian households and therefore eggs must be exempt from further taxes."

Because they are so affordable Australians, on average, consume 263 eggs per person annually or 4.7 eggs a week.

The new tax will also drive up the cost of household staples, of which eggs are a key ingredient, like bread-type products, pasta and cakes. Indeed, the Albanese government will be directly responsible for causing the cost of making children's birthday cakes more expensive, Ms Hashimoto warned.

The CEO said other reasons the biosecurity levy should not apply to eggs includes the fact:

- Egg production generates one of the smallest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) revenues compared to grain, beef and other commodities, making another farm tax less affordable
- Egg farmers already pay compulsory levies to fund research and development
- Egg farmers already pay for biosecurity measures on their own farms
- Egg farmers already pay business income tax, payroll tax and GST to the government

Ms Hashimoto criticised the Federal Agriculture Minister Murray Watt for not disclosing exactly how the new biosecurity tax would be calculated.

"We do not know what formula they are using to come up with a taxable figure. Therefore, it's difficult to estimate exactly how many more cents the extra tax burden will add to the cost of a single egg in the supermarket," she said.

"Farmers are asking what happened to the days when the federal government provided services from general revenue? Egg farmers already pay for biosecurity measures and the new tax is merely a pirate's raid for even more cash to top up the government's treasure chest."

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