

Dear Editor,

When I was at school, back in the sixties, we were given little bottles of cows' milk every day. By the time recess came around, they were warm and probably swarming with bacterial infections, but we were told they were good for us. Good for the dairy industry, more likely. The program was ended in 1973, after the Coombs report stated that it could not be justified on nutritional grounds.

Commented [DB1]: <https://education.qld.gov.au/about-us/history/history-topics/free-milk-scheme>

Now Dairy Australia and their lobby group Dairy Connect want to bring the program back into schools. Studies have shown that the industry believes they can hook children on their product and make them lifelong consumers, despite being aware that large sections of the population are lactose intolerant, which may involve symptoms of abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Commented [DB2]: <https://education.qld.gov.au/about-us/history/history-topics/free-milk-scheme>

Commented [DB3]: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/rural-history/article/school-milk-in-the-context-of-the-australian-dairy-industry/D53B5147E79CD168B7CF8F3E42FD9998>

Commented [DB4]: <https://healthengine.com.au/info/lactose-intolerance>

This proposition is the act of a desperate business. Sales of milk are plummeting and dairy farms closing down; of the 22,000 dairy farms in Australia in the 1980s, there are now fewer than 6,000 remaining. People are realising the cruelty involved in repeatedly forcibly impregnating cows, only to rip the calves away from their distraught mother within hours of birth, the boys slaughtered for veal and the girls conscripted to replace their mothers, who are 'spent' and butchered for hamburgers, while still barely grown.

Commented [DB5]: <https://www.news.com.au/national/dairy-producers-exiting-the-industry-before-its-too-late/news-story/7e1029f7baa2974125bca7504111c20a>

Commented [DB6]: <https://www.peta.org.au/news/dairy-is-scary/>

Do we want to risk our children's health to prop up a dying industry? What's next – free cigarettes to support the tobacco industry?

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