

Dairy industry seeks access to Pacific seasonal workers

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Labour shortages facing the dairy industry have led the peak lobby group Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) to push for involvement in the Government's Seasonal Worker Program.

The industry, which currently employs 140,000 people nationwide, has been [hampered by new regulations on 457 visas](#) along with a lack of access to seasonal workers.

The main issue ADF has faced in its efforts to gain access to the scheme has been whether or not dairy can be classified as a seasonal industry.

In [an interview with ABC Rural](#) this month, ADF President Noel Campbell said, "we are currently not deemed as a seasonal-type industry, but it certainly is in Victoria and Tasmania, where there's more seasonal calving".

What constitutes seasonality may be the defining factor in determining whether dairy is afforded access to the scheme.

Another consideration on the Government's behalf should be whether adding new industries to the scheme is appropriate at a time when the four existing trial sectors (accommodation, aquaculture, cotton and sugar cane) are currently experiencing [underwhelming participation numbers](#).

As of yet, there have been no firm commitments from the Government on whether dairy will be allowed to enter the Seasonal Worker Program, and a decision will now not be possible until after the elections.