

Hello my name is Phillip Christensen.

My wife and I are dryland dairy farmers in the Freestone valley near Warwick Queensland. I milk 250 cows and employ one full time and 3 part time employees.

On our farm, we must budget for the future. We have to try and put money away to help with drought, flood and fire. We are constantly struggling with rising costs of fuel, electricity, vet supplies, machinery and parts and dairy maintenance.

Our margins struggle to stay above our cost so it gets more and more difficult every year to prepare for the Australian climate and to keep on top of rising costs. Most of us are now getting the best we can out of our farms with the help of nutritionists and agronomists.

We feel we are at the top of our efficiency with no more room to move. If that is not enough to cope with, we then have to deal with greedy processors, who market and sell our milk, and when the markets fail, they want to burden the dairy farmer with more problems by cutting back our income so as not to affect their income, costs and profitability.

Processors can make huge profits for their company most years and do not pass it on to the dairy farmers, so why not put money away for when markets do fail and take some responsibility. Processors could take a pay cut like we have to when times get tough. They could go without food on the table like we have to when costs get more than our income.

Dairy farmers don't farm just to try and get rich, we do it because we love our cows and we love the lifestyle. If we didn't love our job, we certainly wouldn't work 7 days a week. We would sell up and find something easier to do.

Thank you.