

27 January 2026

Benchmarking the best of Australian dairy

Australian dairy producers are invited to put their finest creations and best flavours forward, with entries opening today for the 2026 Royal Queensland Awards (RQA) Cheese and Dairy and Ice Cream, Gelato & Sorbet competitions supported by King Street.

The competitions give producers the opportunity to benchmark their products against their peers while receiving expert feedback from some of the most experienced judges in the country.

International dairy expert and Chief Judge Russell Smith said both competitions were highly regarded within the Australian dairy industry, due to the highly skilled judges they attract.

“As we assemble the judging team for this year, I’m delighted to have so many experienced professionals to invite to our judging panels - the result of more than a decade of judge training programs sponsored by the RNA,” he said.

“The peer-to-peer feedback provided for each entry really is the best way for Australian dairy manufacturers to gauge how their products rate in the marketplace.”

Judges will assess 59 classes in the Cheese and Dairy competition across cheese, yoghurt, butter, milk, cream and dairy desserts, including lactose-free products. The Ice Cream, Gelato and Sorbet competition will feature 14 classes, including vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, fruit and nut flavours, along with single-serve, multi-packs.

With the Australian dairy industry facing ongoing challenges, Mr Smith said the importance of the RQA competitions had never been greater.

“In the current environment, it’s more important than ever for dairy manufacturers to enter these competitions to gain expert feedback, national recognition and valuable marketing opportunities.”

All Gold medal winners from the competitions are eligible to enter the Australian Grand Dairy Awards.

Judging will take place from Monday 27 April 2026 at the Brisbane Showgrounds, with the Awards Presentation to follow on Friday 1 May.

Entries close Friday 27 March 2026. To enter go to rqa.com.au

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