

Tuesday 9 March 2010

PR/042/10

Time to ensure future on beef imports

The NSW Farmers' Association says labeling on any future imported beef must be 100% accurate to support the local industry and keep consumers well informed.

Following debate on the first day of the Association's Executive Council meeting in Griffith, NSW Farmers' Association Cattle Committee Chair Richard Chamen says the Cattle Council of Australia and the Red Meat Advisory Committee must work to ensure this accuracy.

"One of the key consumer concerns to come out about the debate on allowing beef from BSE infected countries, or indeed any country, is that of accurate country of origin beef labeling," he said.

"The cattle industries ultimate aim is to provide a quality product to our consumers. People also need to be kept well informed, and while we wait for the Import Risk Analysis on the importation of beef from BSE infected nations, that information needs to be freely available," he said.

The Association today also passed policy that no beef or beef by products be imported into Australia unless the importing country has the equivalent production protocols to those that Australian producers are subject to.

"This includes full lifetime traceability, residue testing and food safety declarations. We also want to see full Import Risk Analysis and In-Country inspection undertaken before importations can commence," Mr Chamen said.

"These are basic protocols and practices that should be undertaken to ensure consumers can keep their confidence in the Australian beef industry, and have the ability to identify what they're eating," he concluded.

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