



Queensland Country Life

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Beef producers: Get involved and be heard

Government policy affects all beef cattle producers. Without producers' involvement in the government's policy-making process, policy will not function effectively to sustain a profitable industry.

Take the Federal Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). Essentially, the CPRS represents a potential cost on production and subsequently could slash the value of farm production in the beef industry by 21.7 per cent (ABARE). The Cattle Council has publically stated many times that the CPRS is clearly not an appropriate mechanism for beef producers to manage emissions.

So how do we as beef producers communicate this to the Federal Government?
For thirty years the Cattle Council of Australia has lobbied the Government on issues pertinent to producers' profitability, such as climate change policy.

The Federal Government has ratified the Kyoto protocol, an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore has committed itself to taking action. Cattle Council is lobbying for alternative options that demonstrates our positive contribution on-farm.

The Government is not out there mustering cattle, drafting in the heat of the day, marking calves or trucking bullocks and essentially working hard to produce livestock. That's why beef producers volunteer, as members of State Farming Organisations, such as AgForce, to represent the interests of the industry to the Government as a Councillor of the Cattle Council.

The 21 Councillors make decisions on the myriad of issues affecting on-farm operations from animal welfare regulation to livestock quality assurance. The Cattle Council ensures that policies initiated by Government and affecting your profitability has your mark clearly printed on the envelope and letterhead.

It is clear why producers' engagement in the policy-making process is critical at the outset and Cattle Council continues to seek better ways to engage individual producers in the consultation process.

Cattle Council proactively seeks out industry opportunities of national value to the beef industry which are then advocated to stakeholders and activated through the industry's service company, Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

For example, Queensland beef producers saw an opportunity for a pasture-fed beef standard and advocated its value through AgForce to the Cattle Council. Cattle Council recognised the potential for a pasture-fed beef standard to drive profit for the nation's beef producers and consequently ensured its robust development and progression through to the appropriate channels.

All producers, be they the younger generation or the not so young, male or female, large or not so large land holders – now is the time to consolidate. Cattle Council is comprised of state farmer organisations, all of whom have travelled a similar but different journey, as has the Cattle Council. The opportunity for change and advancement through the Cattle Council is real and the channel exists for every beef producer to raise their hand and have their voice heard.