



Improvements to Biosecurity welcomed

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Cattle Council of Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia are pleased to see the Government's response to the long awaited Beale report.

"We need an overhaul of Australia's Quarantine and Biosecurity system. But there are some areas for concern and significant challenges that need to be addressed," said Kate Joseph, President of Sheepmeat Council of Australia.

The Beale review identified deficiencies in the current arrangements which were exposed during equine influenza in August 2007.

"Producers need a robust and thorough quarantine system that works efficiently to protect our industry from pests and diseases and facilitates export trade," stated Ms Joseph.

Protecting Australia's disease free status is of upmost importance to sustaining our competitive advantage in world export markets. Government is looking to use the Beale review to improve Australia's bio-security system, which is without question, a valuable step for the red meat industry.

"Cattle Council of Australia's submission to the Beale inquiry in April this year made several recommendations. One was that adequate resources are deployed to enhance the technical capacity and intelligence of our bio-security systems. We are pleased to see the government is responding to this need," said Greg Brown, President of Cattle Council of Australia.

"Both cattle and sheep producers are concerned that the phasing out of the 40 per cent assistance on inspection charges for red meat and live animal export will mean a 40 million dollar increased cost to exporters, which will undoubtedly be passed to producers.

"The Government must take into account any costs to producers resulting from the cessation of the 40 per cent program and those associated with the new Authority.

"We intend to work closely with the government on the establishment of funding needs for beef producers where new arrangements might incur new and escalating costs."

Cattle Council and Sheepmeat Council remain unsure how this new authority might operate. However, the Council expects close engagement with Government as the parameters of this authority are established. It must also encourage a culture for positive and constructive engagement with producers and industry stakeholders.

It is important that Government consult closely with beef and sheep industry sectors throughout the development of bio-security legislation. This will ensure practical implementation and regulation of measures across all states and territories.

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