



**CATTLE
COUNCIL
OF AUSTRALIA**

Cattle Council of Australia Executive meeting summary - Sydney (9 – 10 February 2010)

Cattle Council hold two Executive and two Full Council meetings a year. Cattle Council is committed to communicating to members, producers and stakeholders on the key issues affecting the Australian beef industry, some of which are discussed at the face-to-face Council meetings.

Upcoming meetings include:

May 18 - 19 CCA Full Council Meeting, Brisbane

August 16 -17 CCA Executive Meeting, Canberra

November 15- 16 CCA Annual General Meeting, Tasmania

Executive meeting 9 – 10 February

Greg Brown, President of the Cattle Council, and David Inall, the Executive Director delivered their reports. A key focus of both reports were Cattle Council's messages around BSE import protocols and the NSW Food Amendment (Beef Labelling) Bill 2009.

Cattle Council will demand the highest level of consultation in the development of the BSE import rules and expects the Federal Government to stand firm on its previous commitment to undertake rigorous risk assessments for any country applying to export beef to Australia. Cattle Council also expects that traceability will be front and centre in this assessment process.

Meat labelling legislation is an ongoing and concerning issue for the Council and this concern has been voiced to Government, producers and stakeholders. Cattle Council supports truth in labelling. However, eating quality must be underpinned by science. The Council continues to press the issue and work with the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) to influence the Bill, which is yet to be ratified. RMAC also provided an update on the Bill.

Other key discussions items

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Annual Operating Plan

Cattle Council will evaluate Meat and Livestock Australia's Annual Operating Plan and it's content debated with State Farming Organisation (SFO) members at the Full Council in Brisbane on 18-19 May 2010.

Research, development & extension

Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) to drive productivity growth will be a focus for Cattle Council in 2010. CCA has been working with the MLA RD&E adoption manager to discuss coordination on R&D initiatives. Building on relationships with NABRC SABRC is of continued importance. There are a number of key events CCA will contribute to:

1. Rural R&D Council investment strategy
2. Possible productivity Commission review of Research Development Corporations
3. Beef industry's future involvement in beef CRC programs

Pasture-fed beef standard

The pasture-fed standard is progressing well. A template has been drafted to underpin the standards of which Justin MacDonnell, AgForce member and Cattle Council Councillor had key



input. The draft will be trialled on-farm in coming weeks. AUSMEAT will review the standard in coming months.

Animal health and welfare

Animal Health and Welfare consultant for the Cattle Council, Justin Toohy provided an update on the Animal Health and Welfare Standards and Guidelines, a Government initiated process to replace the 22 Model Codes of practice currently governing animal welfare on-farm in Australia. Cattle Council is engaged to ensure a practical and cost effective outcome is reached for beef producers. The Writing group held a Teleconference focusing on the language of the Guidelines and a Reference group meeting is scheduled for March 2010 to further define the Guidelines (guidelines are non-legislated). For further information on the process visit: www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/aahc/australian-animal-welfare-standards-and-guidelines/cattle

MSA grading and marketing

Following resolutions passed around the use of MSA in meat grading and marketing at the Cattle Council Annual General Meeting, David Thomason, MLA General Marketing Manager discussed three options for the promotion of MSA or Eating Quality Assured (EQA) in the market place. This will be a priority for CCA to work closely with MLA and Peak Councils over the next 3 months.

Trade policy

Paul Fry, Cattle Council Policy Officer, provided an update on the free trade agreements (FTAs) and Andrew McCallum (MLA) WTO Doha Round that began in 2001. 154 different members sitting around a table with different agendas negotiating deals – it's no wonder the WTO is taking time. Fortunately, we are making better progress in the FTAs, notably ASEAN, which comes into effect January 1. Korea FTA negotiations are progressing well.

Key presentations

- Gregg Doud from National Cattlemen's Beef Association presented on the US financial systems and economic outlook as it relates to beef. The financial crisis is having a huge impact on US beef sales domestically. Reduction in herd size may trigger higher prices in coming years.
- Michael Finucan Manager of Livestock Exports, MLA provided an update on the livestock export trade and programs.
- David Palmer, Managing Director of MLA discussed a variety of issues with the Council, including economic and seasonal factors influencing cattle markets and Research, Development & Extension in 2010.
- Jed Matz, Deputy Director of the Cattle Council and Justin MacDonnell, AgForce member and Cattle Council Councillor, reported on the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. An outline of the process and key achievements from Cattle Council's involvement in the NFF delegation to Copenhagen was presented. Future challenges were highlighted. A full report is available. Please contact the CCA office for a copy.
- Heidi Dennis, Media and Communications Officer for the Cattle Council reported on the 'Young Ranchers Forum'. A Forum that brings global beef representatives together to discuss how industry can work together to solve the issues impacting all of us. Contact the CCA Office for feedback on the Forum. Ideas were discussed around a 'CCA Youth Initiative Program' to build on youth initiatives of State Farmer Organisations. Social media was discussed in relation to facebook and video updates from the Council to stakeholders.

For further information, please contact the Cattle Council of Australia.