



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

COMMUNIQUE

Board meeting 3 May 2021

Policy Council meeting 19 May 2021

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) held its latest Board meeting at Beef Week in Rockhampton on 3 May 2021, followed by a meeting of the Policy Council in Canberra on 19 May 2021. The Board made progress on building a more robust industry representative body and the way forward for a broader cattle industry restructure discussion. The Policy Council (PC) set out its key strategic priorities for the grass-fed cattle industry.

Board Meeting

Implications of cost recovery arrangements on the live cattle export industry were discussed, CCA's positioning in UK and EU trade negotiations confirmed, and the recent outcomes of a Plant-based Alternatives Labelling and Marketing Working group noted. Independent RMAC Chair John McKillop provided an update on its activities including work to combat the manufactured plant-based proteins sector.

Cattle industry restructure discussions were again a key area of deliberation for the Board. A review of the process to date and the next steps needed were addressed. With these pivotal industry processes underway, the Board also undertook a half day facilitated governance session to enhance governance effectiveness and decision making.

Policy Council Meeting

The PC put substantial work into defining its policy priorities, providing specific details on how success would be defined and the steps that will need to be taken to achieve the desired outcomes. In short, the five policy areas included:

Priority 1: Industry Systems

CCA will promote a national, whole-of-industry integrity system that delivers consistency in policy across the whole supply chain and guarantees food safety and global consumer confidence in Australian Beef while enhancing biosecurity capability.

The PC considered a high level of adoption and compliance critical to achieving this objective. Further work should be undertaken to ensure everybody working in the industry understands both the value proposition of a robust integrity system and the ramifications of system failure.

The PC considered it highly valuable to establish a value proposition to producers and work towards national recognition of our integrity and traceability systems.

In the long-term the PC also considered an assured funding model would be a critical foundation for Australia's integrity systems.

Priority 2: Market Access and Live Export

CCA will support free and open markets and actively campaign to ensure that the beef industry benefits from international trade agreements.

The PC considered a sustainable, ongoing live export industry would need to ensure Australia had a regulatory framework that was fit for purpose and robust assurance programs in place including the Livestock Global Assurance Program (LGAP) to demonstrate compliance with the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS).

The PC also considered engagement with the international industry would be crucial to our success as an exporting nation, potentially with producer groups in the UK and EU, as Australia works through free trade agreements with both.

CCA should continue to advocate for the term ‘beef’ to be legally recognised as food derived from cattle, and for improvements to food labelling standards to clearly distinguish a true beef product from a plant-based protein.

Priority 3: Carbon

CCA will ensure that the beef industry can be part of the solution to climate change by ensuring that all grass-fed beef producers can access the environmental, production, and economic benefits associated with reducing and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions from beef production and storing carbon in soil and vegetation on their land.

The PC considered it important CCA pursued policies that ensured producers can access a broad range of benefits from reducing their environmental impact, including economic benefits, which may include producers receiving value from participation in carbon neutral supply chains, product premiums for the carbon abatement work they undertake, and access to financial incentives to help them with the cost of practice changes. This also includes working with government to make markets for selling carbon credits more accessible to the average producer.

The PC also considered CCA would need to advocate for greater R&D that focuses on the northern industry and technologies and techniques that can be applied in both northern and southern production system.

CCA will continue to advocate for GWP* to be used to report on emissions from beef production alongside the more recognised international benchmark GWP100 as it provides a clearer picture of the industry’s contribution to global warming. Further the PC considered that CCA should pursue a standardised and robust carbon accounting framework.

Priority 4: Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) and Best Management Practice

CCA will advocate for the industry to continue investment in leading science to encourage and support Australian beef producers in best management practices for profitable businesses, highest standards of animal welfare, a skilled and capable workforce and environmental sustainability. The ABSF demonstrates the beef industry’s sustainability credentials to consumers and stakeholders.

The PC identified it was important the ABSF had greater producer support and ownership which could be achieved by raising awareness through the supply chain and the community. Good data, indicators and consultation would be crucial to ensure the ASBF maintains credibility.

The PC discussed the recent goal setting process in the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, CCA's involvement and ability to influence this process, and will explore a greater focus on goal setting in our domestic frameworks.

Priority 5: Communications

CCA communication policies and procedures are designed to lead to a more effective framework to communicate with and advocate on behalf of grass-fed cattle producers.

The PC considered it important to develop strategies that engage more producers by extending the reach of CCA's messaging and using reliable metrics to measure that reach. This would include working with all parts of the supply chain. The Council also discussed selecting additional spokespeople based on expertise, experience and impact.

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