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Traceability Could Be FMD Super Power

A nationalised traceability system that includes individual electronic identification could spare Australia's livestock and associated industries from the worst of a Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak if rolled out across all red meat species.

Currently, electronic identification is required across the beef supply chain but is yet to be broadly implemented in other sectors such as the sheep and goat industries.

The Federal and state governments must commit to implementing the traceability reforms agreed by industry and governments through SAFEMEAT.

Cattle Council of Australia President Lloyd Hick said the red meat industry is frustrated by the lack of progress by governments on these reforms.

"Electronic animal identification lets you track down any animal no matter where it moves in Australia," Mr Hick said.

"This will be a critical tool if we need to get on top of a foot and mouth disease outbreak.

"Electronic identification will allow us to quickly trace all movements of livestock and track down any potentially infected animals.

"This would reduce infection rates, losses of livestock and food supply disruptions by speeding up eradication of the virus.

"This could save the Australian red meat sector and the economy tens of billions of dollars in the event of an outbreak.

"This technology is available now and has been in place in the beef for years, but we need it to be used in all red meat industries.

"The previous Federal Government committed \$68.4 million to improved traceability across all of agriculture, and we must see the new government follow through on this.

"The State and Federal Governments must commit to getting the job done, to help protect our industry and food supply chain from serious diseases.

"The technology exists, and it works, it just needs to be put in place in all red meat industries.

"Producers can help improve traceability by adopting the electronic identification technology, ensuring National Vendor Declarations and waybills are filled out accurately and ensuring that all electronic tags are active and transferred on the database to their new property.

"Everyone in the system needs to play their part."

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