



# CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

18 February 2014

## **Cattle Council investigates market opportunities for Grassfed Beef**

A delegation comprising of Central Queensland Producers, Howard Smith and Ian McCamley, and staff from the Cattle Council of Australia visited Washington DC and Nashville between 31 January and 8 February to investigate market opportunities for grassfed beef.

According to Meat and Livestock Australia, the United States is Australia's second largest beef export market by volume, with shipments in 2013 reaching 212,703 tonnes swt, valued at about AU\$1 billion FOB, with 70 per cent of this being manufacturing beef. Frozen grassfed beef continues to make up a majority of Australian beef sent to the US. However, chilled beef exports have been on the rise for the past decade.

Given the significance of the Australian grassfed market, the Cattle Council of Australia has developed the Pasturefed Cattle Assurance System (PCAS). PCAS is an assurance program that enables the industry to prove claims relating to pasturefed or grassfed production methods. One of the objectives of the trip was to investigate the possibility of PCAS becoming verified by the US Department of Agriculture, which would provide another level of assurance for importers about the quality and providence of Australian product.

"The scale of the US market represents huge potential for Australian Grassfed product," explained Rolleston beef producer, Ian McCamley.

"There is a real niche for a premium grassfed product such as that produced under PCAS. If we are successful in achieving USDA accreditation then we can offer a level of assurance around the quality of the product we produce in Australia."

"Applying for USDA accreditation is quite an extensive process and could take some time. However, without pre-empting any part of the process, I am confident that we will be able to work through it and provide the USDA with assurance in our system."

The trip also coincided with the US National Cattlemen's Beef Association Conference in Nashville. The delegation took the opportunity to meet with key figures in the US beef industry including Executive Staff and past and present Presidents of the NCBA. Attending the conference had further significance for the Cattle Council given its recent announcement of direct membership.

Howard Smith, President of Agforce Cattle, said "Attending the NCBA conference offered us the opportunity to see exactly how direct membership can work. The US does things on a scale and volume that is almost incomprehensible in Australia; over 8200 producers attended the NCBA conference in Nashville."

"The NCBA has a structure similar to that recently adopted by the Cattle Council, which provides for direct, state and affiliate memberships. It is probably the most politically powerful agricultural group in the USA and offers a demonstration of what can be achieved with a united front."

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