



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Questionnaires to benefit the future of the beef industry 21.07.09

Two questionnaires are currently being finalised for beef cattle producers, the results of which, will have a positive and lasting impact on the future of our industry.

The first will involve a 20-minute telephone survey of around 2,000 randomly selected producers Australia wide to gather information on the effect some management practices have on animal welfare in our sector. The results will assist the Cattle Council of Australia in making future welfare policy decisions.

The Federal Government, as part of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy, has initiated the process of replacing the existing Cattle Welfare Codes into a new set of standards and guidelines supporting the welfare of cattle in Australia.

These new standards and guidelines will have relevance to every Australian cattle producer. They will describe what is expected from cattle handlers when performing management tasks like castrating, ear-marking, dehorning, branding, spaying, immobilising and so on.

It's important that the Cattle Council gets an accurate reading on what is happening in all regions of Australia throughout the development process of the new standards and guidelines. I encourage your participation in the animal welfare survey if you're approached.

Cattle Council is ensuring that the cattle industry is tightly engaged throughout the development process and is consulting directly with state farming members to ensure that a practical and realistic outcome is achieved for all cattle producers.

In 2008, Cattle Council was fully engaged in the development of the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock – these have now been finalised with positive outcomes. The standards are being put into legislation later this year.

The second questionnaire is being designed by the Australian Veterinary Association to gather information from producers on what they expect of vets in terms of delivery of services.

Results from the survey will be used to help the veterinary profession improve its relevance to the beef-cattle sector throughout Australia, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Recent studies, partly sponsored by the Cattle Council, have shown there are enough vets in Australia but they're in the wrong places for servicing the beef-cattle sector. By improving its understanding of why the demand for vets is low in regional and remote areas, the profession can better tailor its services to suit producers' priorities. This has to be of long-term benefit to our sector, particularly when we understand how crucial vets are in the unlikely event of an animal disease outbreak. The questionnaire will be distributed via the Australian Farm Journal.

If you're a cattle producer who's reading this article, I'd encourage your participation in these surveys - your accurate and honest input will have a lasting impact on the future of our industry.

By Greg Brown