



MEDIA RELEASE

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Cotton waste not on the menu for cattle

Australia's cattle and cotton industries have joined forces to ensure that cotton gin trash, failed crop and cotton crop residue cannot enter the beef cattle or human food chain.

Cattle Council of Australia acting president, Greg Brown, says that the approach, which is formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), prevents livestock access to cotton fields that may have been treated with endosulfan and prohibits the use of cotton waste in feed.

"Export markets have a strict no-tolerance policy regarding endosulfan residues. As a nation that exports 70% of our beef we just cannot think about using high risk feed."

"The MoU has worked successfully to make sure that cotton waste products are simply not fed to cattle. I would like to emphasize the inferior nutritive value of cotton trash, it is a very poor feed."

Australian Lot Feeders' Association vice-president, Kevin Roberts, endorsed Mr Brown's comments.

"Cotton seed is a very useful product for both extensive cattle producers and lot feeders, but we should never feed cotton gin waste products like cotton trash or motes.

"If slaughter cattle record unacceptable residues the impact would be condemnation of the carcass and non payment to the farmer. On a larger scale, it could lead to the loss of international markets.

"The cattle industry has world leading food safety systems like NFAS and LPA in place, and all cattle producers need to be mindful to follow these program rules at all times. Feeding cotton trash risks that product integrity."

The MoU is signed by The Cattle Council of Australia, Australian Lot Feeders Association, Cotton Australia and Cotton Ginners Association. It brings together the strategy of the beef industry, to protect beef markets by preventing residues in Australian beef, and the strategy of the cotton industry, to achieve best management practices that exceed regulatory standards.

Under the MoU individual cotton growers ensure that livestock are not allowed access to cotton fields and irrigation infrastructure during the growing season and for an appropriate time after the crop residue has been ploughed at the end of the season. Failed cotton crops are not to be

fed to livestock, and cotton ginners will adhere to the industry code of practice, which specifies a three-year quarantine period before cotton trash can be used as mulch.

Mr Brown says that the drought places pressure on livestock producers as feed becomes harder to find and producers look to non-traditional feed products.

"All producers must be very careful when using any novel stock feed and should always insist on a Commodity Vendor Declaration (CVD) when buying any stock feed.

"But help is out there and I very strongly encourage any producer with questions to contact their local Department of Primary Industries.

"It can be tough for producers to assess their options, but the departments of agriculture have excellent resources that can help guide producers through the challenge of finding safe stock feeds."

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For further information contact Greg Brown on 0427 769 434, Kevin Roberts on 0427 649 321 or Selena Jensen at Pegasus Communications on (03) 9329 6447.