



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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Review results highlight the way forward for NLIS

The Cattle Council of Australia says that the Australian Government's review of the operation of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) confirms that Australia has a national livestock tracing system that is effective, operational and of great importance to the industry.

"The results show that the national framework is underpinned by the right logic and technology, and that the system has continued to improve as it has been progressively implemented in all States and Territories," says Cattle Council President, Bill Bray.

"Its capability to rapidly and effectively trace cattle has been proven without doubt as has been the industry's understanding of the issues that need to be managed in applying such technology across the value chain, from producer to processor.

"This is essential for an industry that exports 65% of its beef products to markets that are highly sensitive to disease and chemical residue contamination".

Use of the NLIS has been mandatory in all States and Territories since July 2005. Just 18 months later, the review demonstrates that the industry had adequately addressed issues relating to the introduction of new technology and that ongoing compliance marks the way forward.

"We look to the State Authorities to take a strong role in ensuring compliance with the system particularly with on-going training and education," Mr Bray said.

"The incentive for producers to comply with the system lies in the security of markets for their product and the Cattle Council is confident that experience and greater interaction with the system will ensure that the system only continues to grow stronger".

The review, carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers stated that all cattle industry stakeholders believed that the NLIS out-performs the previous paper-based system.

PricewaterhouseCoopers consulted a range of users, and the Terms of Reference ensured that all detractors were given an ample opportunity to put their views forward.

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The report also states that documentation relating to livestock disease and contamination incidents in the 1990s indicates that Australia would have lost access to a number of significant international markets had it not implemented a more effective livestock tracking system. The discovery of BSE in the USA and Canada in 2003 led to a ban on exports from those countries in many markets, reducing their share of beef exports to Asia markedly, which in turn increased Australia's market share from 38% to 70%.

"These findings have reinforced that our endeavors have not been in vein and shows that Australia has already brought traceability to a level that could never be achieved via the old system of tail tags and paper records," Mr Bray says.

Ends.

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