



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

COMMUNIQUE

Board meetings 18 November and 2 December 2020

Cattle producers from around the country met online for the Cattle Council of Australia's (CCA) committee meetings in October and November 2020 followed by CCA Board meetings on 18 November and 2 December 2020.

At the November 18 meeting, the Board elected Markus Rathsmann of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA) to the role of President and Lloyd Hick from AgForce Queensland as Vice President. Alice Greenup also joined the Board for the first time after her election as Northern Independent Director at CCA's Annual General Meeting, replacing long-serving board member, David Hill.

Under CCA's constitution, Mr Rathsmann becomes an independent member of the Board, thereby creating a casual vacancy for the NTCA Director position. This position will remain vacant until the NTCA selects a replacement, which is likely to occur at the NTCA AGM in March 2021. The new director will hold the position up until the next CCA AGM and seek election to remain in the role.

The Board approved a new Pilot Policy Council structure to replace the five existing consultative committees. The Policy Council will be supported by working groups implemented at the direction of the Policy Council. CCA has initiated an open call process for positions on the Policy Council the working groups. The new structure will commence in 2021 and has been designed to improve collaboration between representatives working in different policy areas and modernise CCA's policy development processes. A review of this structure will be undertaken prior to the next CCA AGM.

The November 18 meeting also concluded an extensive consultation process with members about how CCA will lead a broader industry restructure discussion to deliver a stronger, more effective and engaging peak body for the beef cattle industry.

Due to the significant discussions about internal organisational structure and the broader industry restructure, the Board agreed to defer considerations of matters arising from CCA's consultative committees to a special meeting of the Board in December.

At the December 2 meeting, the Board reviewed CCA's work and policy positions on several portfolio areas including environment and sustainability, animal health and welfare, food labelling and drought resilience adoption. In summary:

- CCA adopted a new food labelling policy which has been deliberately aligned with consumer expectations. This policy provides the basis for advocating for improved truth in labelling so consumers can make well-informed decisions about what they eat including for improvements to public information campaigns regarding labelling regulations run by the Commonwealth Government.
- CCA adopted a new sustainable land management statement that recognises Australia's broad spectrum of landscapes and their varying land management requirements and the importance of good land management for the ongoing productivity and profitability of the beef cattle industry.

- CCA has taken an executive role with the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) and has developed a working plan to engage as effectively as is possible with its global partners.
- CCA is providing input into a draft policy on the use of vaccines to combat a possible outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Australia, use of lay-vaccinators, traceability of vaccinated animals and the implications for a return to market. CCA also updated its FMD Vaccination Policy where vaccination can form part of a response to an FMD incursion.
- CCA amended its Animal Welfare Statement, which is published on the website.

A sub-committee of the CCA Board will meet with representatives from Cattle Producers Australia in the coming weeks to start the broader industry restructure discussion. The full CCA Board will convene in late January 2021 to appoint members to the Pilot Policy Council. The first meeting of the Policy Council is scheduled for 3-4 March 2021.

Summary of outcomes

Marketing, Market Access and Trade Committee (MMAT)

CCA Labelling Policy – Agreed: That CCA adopts an overarching labelling policy, covering several key issues facing the industry, including Country of Origin, alternative proteins, product descriptions and animal welfare statements.

CCA acknowledges our customers expect truth in labelling, which forms the core of our policy, and supports the consumers right to eat what they want to eat and believes they deserve clear and concise information so they can make well-informed purchasing decisions.

CCA believes that Government needs to ensure that truth in labelling is applied across the food industry, so consumers are not misled. Government should achieve this role by drafting appropriate legislation, monitoring compliance, and ensuring enforcement of labelling guidelines. Government oversight must provide clarity for consumers and industry at a reasonable cost. Government also has an important role to play in safeguarding the reputation of Australian beef with our export trading partners to ensure truth in labelling in all exported products.

CCA also considers Government is responsible for educating consumers about labelling terms and what they mean so consumers can make the most informed purchasing decisions.

Labelling policies must be practical to be effective, with guiding principles to support labelling laws that achieve the desired outcomes. This includes consistent language, reasonable costs, clear and concise layout, monitorable and enforceable regulations, and labelling rules that do not hurt international trade.

The Animal Health, Welfare and Biosecurity (AHW&B)

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Vaccination Policy Agreed: The Board formalised a policy that acknowledges the potential role of vaccination as part of a response strategy in the event of a FMD incursion. CCA expects to be consulted prior to any decision being made to utilise vaccine in the beef cattle industry. Where possible, CCA will assist the Commonwealth in improving the current international-trade pathway should a decision be made to use a vaccine and retain vaccinates beyond the FMD eradication phase.

Animal Welfare Statement 2020 Agreed: The board adopted an amendment to CCA's Animal Welfare Statement which has been uploaded to the website and can be [viewed here](#).

Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) Agreed: Adoption of amendments to the J-BAS and supporting information. These amendments cover the completion of the five-year transition phase ending 30 June 2021 from the regulated Johne's disease management program to the deregulated, industry-driven program. These amendments will only affect new entrants to the program, with current self-assessed J-BAS levels remaining unchanged.

Environment and Sustainability Committee (ENVR)

Sustainable Land Management Statement – Agreed: The Board endorsed the policy statements as developed by the Committee considering it timely for CCA to have a national, overarching, and balanced position on sustainable land management. The policy was developed in consideration of the wide range of landscapes and land management practices that exist across Australia. *“This industry understands and accepts the important role it must play in conservation and regeneration of the landscapes under its stewardship – and in fact, this industry understands this better than anyone because our prosperity depends on it.”*

Industry Representation: Noted: The ENVR Committee provided industry input into a range of government, industry and private sector environmental sustainability initiatives including:

- Development of drought resilience tool – part of the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund program
- The Australian Government's Agriculture Stewardship program
- The GRSB Global Goals setting process – CCA has been elected to the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) board of directors and has established an engagement plan to guide our industry representation in this forum
- Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) Materiality Review consultation process
- NFF Natural Resource Management (NRM) Committees – primarily working on the EPBC Act Review.

Research, Development and Adoption Committee (RD&A)

Drought resilience adoption innovation hubs Noted: A competitive grants process, totalling \$64 million over four years, has opened for eight Drought Resilience Innovation and Adoption Hubs to be established in regional Australia.

These hubs will focus on collaboration becoming flagship precincts for agricultural innovation and will provide networks for researchers, primary producers and community groups to work together to enhance drought-resilient practices.

The hubs will service different regions, reflecting Australia's different farming and climatic zones:

- *Southern NSW*
- *Southern Qld and Northern NSW*
- *Southwest WA*
- *Top End NT and Northern WA*
- *Tropical North Queensland*
- *Tasmania*
- *Victoria*
- *South Australia*

CCA will remain engaged with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment as the program is implemented across the regions, providing input to make sure the innovation hubs benefit the beef cattle sector; and encourage industry consultation and collaboration between the hubs.

Enquiries:

Robert Herrick
0409 219 527

commsmanager@cattlecouncil.com.au