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Cattle Council statement regarding pandemic risks

Overarching claims the meat industry increases the risk of a pandemic by international investment group, the Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return Initiative are irresponsible and do not apply to Australian beef.

Cattle Council CEO Travis Tobin said the organisation had ignored Australia's contribution to improving global biological safety.

"This absurd, overreaching statement that ignores the facts of animal farming in Australia," Mr Tobin said.

"The coronavirus pandemic is clearly a human issue and is spread by human to human contact.

"The authors of this report have been running a concerted campaign against factory farming which is highly limited in Australian beef production.

"Australian grassfed beef cattle producers use world's-best practice in maintaining on-farm biosecurity.

"If anything, our industry is the best equipped to slow the spread of a virus because of our standards and experience in biosecurity.

"The world's population is growing, and it will need food. Australian beef producers are rising to that challenge in a responsible way.

"The Australian beef industry has a track record of raising welfare standards and sustainability and we measure our progress through the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework.

"Our industry's commitment to this even extends beyond our own shores through the world-leading Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System.

"We are also committed to working with the Federal Government to use our substantial natural resources to help improve biodiversity.

"Frankly, it is irresponsible for an investment firm to make simplistic, uninformed and wide-reaching statements like this.

"If anything, COVID-19 highlighted how robust Australian beef supply chains are and how capable our industry is of continuing to supply product to domestic and international markets in the face of adversity - that makes us a good investment.

"The world will keep producing meat and investing in Australian know-how will only make it stronger.

"We are committed to putting food on plates, whereas the sort of information put out by the Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return Initiative will leave more people to go hungry."

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