



Northern muster

Information for rural business in north Queensland

Producing quality food and fibre
for a healthy bottom line

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Issue 24 April 2010

editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2010 *Northern muster*.

Many have had an exceptionally wet season. Yet others have had below average rainfall levels yet again.

With cost-price squeezing, it becomes even more important to plan better and work smarter. Breeder, bull and weaner management strategies become more important.

This issue of the *Northern muster* looks at some project outcomes, market outlook, Dalrymple diary, tick fever vaccination and more.

We thank our advertisers for their support and encourage you to look at their services and products.

Enjoy the newsletter and phone us on 13 25 23 for advice and contacting extension staff. Please fill out the feedback sheet and send it in.

We need to know what you are seeking.

Alan Laing
Editor



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New beefo for north Queensland

Kiri Broad started work in January 2010 with the FutureBeef team at Kairi Research Station including Bernie English, Joe Rolfe and Rebecca Matthews (now based at Cloncurry). She will be working on beef cattle projects across north Queensland from the Tablelands to Cloncurry. Kiri has an interest in all things beef, with a particular interest in herd nutrition.

Kiri hails from Kangaroo Valley on the south coast of NSW. After gaining her degree from Sydney University, she spent a year working for Landmark in Narrabri on their graduate program before seeing the light and moving north.

‘The beef production systems up here are very different to back home with greater challenges including nutrition, distances to markets, larger properties and herds, but I am keen to learn and make a contribution to the beef industry’s ongoing development’, says Kiri.

She has brought the old brigade in the north up to speed with technology by starting a ‘Northern Beef’ facebook page and is organising a webinar on reproduction and genetics in northern beef herds in April.

Kiri has recently spent three weeks in Cloncurry and the north-west to get a feel for the country and industry out there. While in the Curry, Kiri attended a Nutrition EDGE training course, trained in the use of a P8 fat scanner and then put this into practice with the Flinders Beef Group weigh day with Rebecca Matthews.

Kiri is passionate about issues affecting rural Australia and is competing as a finalist in the Rural Achievers competition being held by the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales at this year’s Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Kiri is an enthusiastic rugby union fan but the beef team has set their sights on turning her into a fellow league supporter for the Queensland State of Origin team this season.

Kiri is looking forward to meeting and working with producers in the Northern Gulf and north-west Queensland. Her role will also involve working with producers in Cape York Peninsula and the wet coast and tablelands.

Bernie English
Far Northern FutureBeef Team
07 40919440

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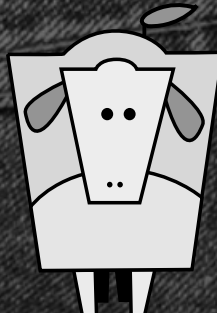
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Water quality project moving ahead during late 2009

The DLC's project – *Piloting Adoption of Grazing Best Practices for Improving Water Quality in the Burdekin Rangelands* is progressing well with all participants having commenced on ground works. Several projects have completed their works and negotiations are underway to enlist a tenth property to the project in 2010.

A number of participants recently completed MLA Edge Network® Grazing Land Management training in Charters Towers. Participants will also soon complete a Stocktake Pasture Monitoring course in April. Such training will better assist producers to recognise and document the improvements to land condition being achieved through the project.

Results of the project are being compiled and on ground results will be presented at future DLC general meetings in 2010. Details about these events will be advertised in May and August, with the management of gullies and basalt springs likely to be a focus of the days, as well as the overall project achievements.

This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and NQ Dry Tropics NRM.

DLC online – just a click away

Intensive development of the Dalrymple Landcare Committee website has been underway during early 2010. Set to feature a range of 'useful' information to producers, the site is coming together well.

A preview of the website was held at the DLC general meeting in February with initial feedback being very positive. Several new areas will be added to the website in the coming months which should go online in April 2010.

The site has been designed with the producer in mind and is set to provide relevant and useful information on the following:

- Weed ID and control
- Training/education opportunities and tools
- Grazier focused publications
- Links to producer services in the region
- Upcoming funding/events
- History of projects/events
- Gallery of photos/Place stories

City Country Day 2010

Plans are being made to run the DLC City Country Day again in 2010. The event is scheduled to be run on Sunday 30 May 2010, and will feature two grazing properties and an intensive cropping property in the Charters Towers district. With over 60 people attending the event in 2009, this year the event will aim to repeat the success and push the outcomes to a wider audience. Efforts are being made to also push the sustainable management message as well as the role of families in modern day primary industries.

Any properties/families interested in hosting a group for the City Country day are urged to contact John Nicholas on the details below. Results of this year's event will be published in later editions of the *Northern muster*.

National Landcare Forum – Adelaide

The DLC is sending three representatives to the National Landcare Forum in Adelaide during March. The forum will highlight the success of Landcare over the past twenty years. Further, it is also envisaged that the conference will provide direction for Landcare in the future. Outcomes of the conference will be summarised in the next edition of the *Northern muster*.

Missing out on your DLC Emails? Update today!

It has come to the attention of the DLC that a number of producers have changed their email addresses in recent months as the National Broadband Network gets underway. Any producers who would like to receive regular updates and are currently not receiving them from the DLC should email John Nicholas (details below) to ensure that your contact details remain up to date.

John Nicholas

Project Officer

Dalrymple Landcare Committee Inc.

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The next DLC General Meeting is proposed for the 5 June 2010.

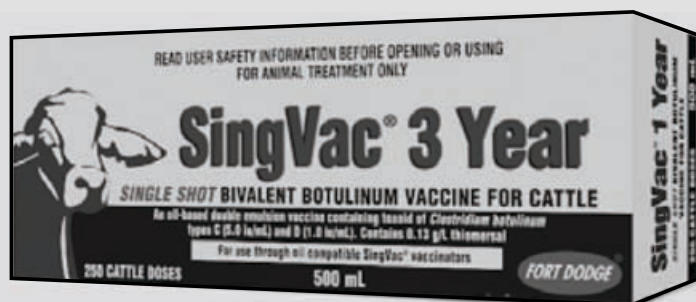
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AgInvest forum



AgInvest 2010, Cairns Australia

profiling agribusiness opportunities in North Queensland

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, (DEEDI) is pleased to invite you to this investment forum for agribusinesses and investors.

AgInvest 2010 will assist both businesses seeking to invest in North Queensland agriculture and regional agribusinesses seeking investment by:

- profiling North Queensland's current agricultural situation, capability, and infrastructure
- providing business discussion on agribusiness sectors and potential opportunities.

Participants will:

- have investment-matching opportunities
- meet trade exhibitors
- be profiled in a business directory
- network with investment contacts.



When

8 – 9 September 2010 Cairns Convention Centre

- Seminar: 8:15am to 5:30pm
- Forum dinner: 7:00pm
- Exhibition: during two-day forum

10 September 2010 Infrastructure inspections, Cairns and Atherton Tablelands

Participants are encouraged to hire an exhibitor's booth. Welcome drinks, lunch and coffee breaks will be held in the exhibitor hall to maximise business linkages.

Program

The following program themes are proposed:

Agribusiness: Northern Australia perspectives

North Queensland is one of the most diverse and productive agricultural regions within Australia. Explore the current and forecast industry trends of the region's key primary industries.

Looking forward, looking north

Northern Queensland generates in excess of 3 billion dollars in farm gate value and is growing at 5% per annum. Asian markets will become a significant opportunity. Why, where and how will be explored.

Bio-base industries: A new agri-economic future

Bio-base industries are globally growing at 5% per annum - where and what are the implications for North Queensland? Where does North Queensland position itself? What and where are the opportunities?

Why and what are the agribusiness opportunities in North Queensland?

Food, fibre, forestry, processing and value-adding case studies will demonstrate the benefits of investing in agribusiness in northern Australia.

Capital infrastructure opportunities

Infrastructure will play a critical component in future northern agricultural growth. Where and what is required? Current and potential investment opportunities will be addressed.

Tropic agricultural expertise: Our knowledge skills and the tropical world

Our tropical agricultural skills are renowned. How do we promote, foster and develop investment opportunities for the north?

(Note all themes have presentations, case studies and panel sessions)

Contacts For more information on the forum:

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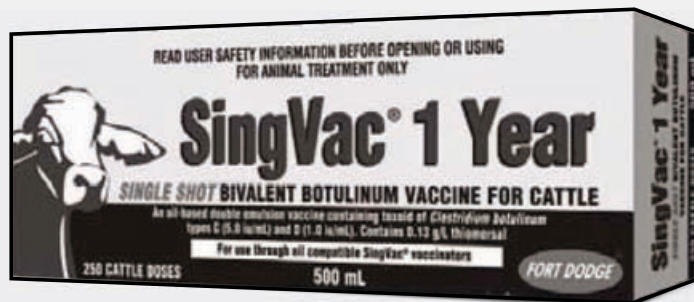
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Market report March 2010

The cattle market situation has changed quickly since the start of this year with widespread summer rain across most parts of the State. Market prices for live export and slaughter stock have risen with the tightening supply of cattle, plus the rain will stimulate the market in general as previously droughted districts will be looking to restock.

The situation is still very ordinary on the export front with our dollar still hovering around 90 cents and demand from our key export beef markets fairly subdued. However both Japan and USA import prices have started 2010 on a firmer note mainly due to our dollar value staying below 90 cents for a number of weeks and lower beef supplies out of Australia. The global economic environment is forecast to improve during 2010 according to the latest 'World Economic Outlook' put out by the International Monetary Fund. Hopefully this will flow on to improved demand for our beef exports.

For 2009, our beef and veal exports were worth A\$4.3 billion, the lowest figure since 2003. Japan was our most important destination valued at A\$1.84 billion, followed by the USA A\$974 million, Korea A\$534 million, Indonesia A\$179 million, Taiwan A\$139 million, E.U. A\$102 million, Hong Kong A\$56 million, and China A\$28 million.

MLA predicts good domestic demand in the year ahead but expects our total beef production and export tonnages to fall. The ABS is telling us the Australian beef herd is back to 27 million head with Queensland down 1% to 11.76 million head.

With recent drought in north-west Queensland and severe flood damage and subsequent high cattle losses to southern gulf properties in 2009, cattle numbers for the boat trade will be under pressure this coming season. Live export buyers may have to source cattle further south in the State which in turn will put processors under pressure.

As well as the sluggish export market and our dollar value, hides and offal values have been at rock bottom levels over the last year which puts further pressure on the processors grid prices. In February the Indonesian Agriculture Ministry announced that it plans to ban imports of beef offal as part of its move towards beef self-sufficiency. Indonesia took 12% of our offal exports in 2009. The first few months of this year has seen a welcome lift in hides and offal values.

A lot of abattoirs in eastern Australia have been dropping kill days because of cattle shortages due to the widespread wet weather, plus their inability to raise prices that much, to attract more cattle.

Last month our local export abattoir at Townsville put off 267 staff and dropped weekend shifts which will reduce through put by approximately 30%.

Our largest Australian processor Swift's is rapidly expanding its Meat Standards Australia (MSA) grading into its various abattoirs. This has allowed them to come into the market with four premium brand products including both grass and grain fed products. They are reported to be putting approximately 2400 MSA bodies through a week now. This will rapidly rise once Beef City and their Rockhampton works begin MSA grading.

Live export

As per usual there has been a lot of boat cattle activity out of north Queensland over the tradition wet season months as our cattle access during this time of the year is often a lot better than the Northern Territory. Prices have rapidly improved since January and best steers late February are now about \$1.70 delivered Townsville or Charters Towers.

Our total live exports for 2009 were up 9% to 948,240 head valued at A\$662 million. Indonesia again was our biggest customer taking just under 800,000 head followed by Israel 36,956 head, Jordan 36,693 head, China 26,043 head, Saudi Arabia 18,346 head and Japan 16,039 head. Live export numbers by States is lead by Western Australia at 37.7%, NT 34.9%, Queensland 20.7%.

Darwin again leads the port of loading figures with 355,301 head, Fremantle 136,176 head, Townsville 124,365 head, Broome 96,629 head, Wyndham 75,474 head, Geraldton 43,910 head, Port Headland 22,895 head, Karumba 18,007 head, and Brisbane 15,279 head.

Local live export agents often have to source either goats or sheep as well as cattle to secure a boat contract, and a recent boat out of Mourilyan was cancelled because of the difficulty of securing enough goats.

Korea

The USA has started 2010 on a strong note with their 39% share of January imports into Korea. Total January imports 17,256 tonnes, Australia accounted for 46%, USA 39%, New Zealand 14%, Mexico 1%.

Korea has had an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and their 6th case was reported at the end of January, and 3,500 head have been destroyed as a precautionary measure.

During 2009 currency movements lifted the price competitiveness of USA beef imports and Australian imports declined 9% to 115,482 tonnes. Korea has implemented a domestic beef traceability system and country of origin labelling, and consumption of their domestic beef has risen with record prices.

Their beef slaughter was up 10% to 195,000 tonnes and the herd has grown to 3,032,000. Average domestic price for a 600 kg Hanwoo steer with the right marbling was A\$7.31/kg. Korean domestic production in 2009 represented 47% of their total beef market, Australia 31%, USA 14%, NZ and Mexico 8%.

An interesting trend in Australian imports has been the chilled grass fed beef imports (15,369 tonnes) which was up 34% on 2008 figures. Average price per kg for all Australian beef imports into Korea dropped from A\$5.52/kg in 2008 to A\$4.63/kg in 2009.

Market analysts expect a tough 2010 in this market with USA product having a currency advantage and domestic production expected to rise again.

Japan

The Japanese consumed 840,649 tonnes of beef in 2009 up 3% on the previous year but still 10% lower than pre BSE levels in 2003. Imported beef made up 481,624 tonnes of this and Australia's share of this was 356,567 tonnes comprising of 201,379 tonnes of grass fed and 155,187 tonnes of grainfed beef. The Japanese eat more pork and poultry than beef. Fast food retailers McDonald's have had a record sales year but are shutting down 433 outlets in poor locations and opening 13 new generation stores.

The future outlook for this market will depend on the pace of their economic recovery, the value of the Australian dollar and the absence of any new health scares.

The regular MLA market reports from Japan use an interesting way to report meat consumption, it's a weekly figure that reports meat consumption per 1000 persons and for the 3rd week of February it increased 5.9 kg to a total of 81.1 kg. Of this Australia's imported beef consumption increased by 1.3 kg to 10.2 kg for the week.

USA

The USA is the world's largest producer, importer and consumer of beef but their situation is far from ideal at present. Their economic woes and subsequent falling beef consumption especially the higher quality cuts has their industry in decline. The cost price squeeze and ongoing negative returns for the feedlot sector is impacting on their national herd figures. Our latest information has the USA total cattle numbers down to 93.7 million head, the lowest figure since 1959. Cow numbers at 40.5 million are down to 1949 levels. With ongoing low domestic beef demand and poor prices, analysts see no quick turnaround in the situation except producers need to become more efficient.

The USDA anticipates that the ethanol sector will use up to 30% of this year's corn crop which will

maintain upward pressure on corn prices which will continue to impact on the feedlot sectors profitability. Of the 34 million head processed each year 27 million go through a feedlot, and it's unknown what direction their industry might take to improve the profitability situation. One option is to export more of their expensive cuts of beef as their low value dollar will keep their product very competitive.

South America

The Brazilians have live exported 530,226 head during 2009 at an average value of US\$837. Their next door neighbour Venezuela is their main customer taking 395,746 head followed by Lebanon 122,839 head.

Brazil's beef exports for 2009 were down 9% to 1.555 million tonnes. Russia was their main market destination importing 327,221 tonnes followed by Middle East 223,329 tonnes, Hong Kong 100,996 tonnes. The forecast is for exports of 1.87 million tonnes in 2010. They have also had difficult trading conditions with the rising value of their currency, the real making their exports more expensive.

Bernie English

Kairi Research Station

Greg Brown

Meadowbank Station

Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
Agri-Science Queensland



Cattle reproduction and genetics WEBINAR

Far North Queensland FutureBeef team is hosting a webinar on beef reproduction and genetics, presented by John Bertram, DEEDI Goondiwindi.

The webinar will be held on Tuesday 20 April, at 7:30 am.

A webinar is a seminar which you can attend in the comfort of your own home over the internet and telephone, FREE of charge!

To register your interest or for more information contact Kiri Broad at Kairi Research Station.

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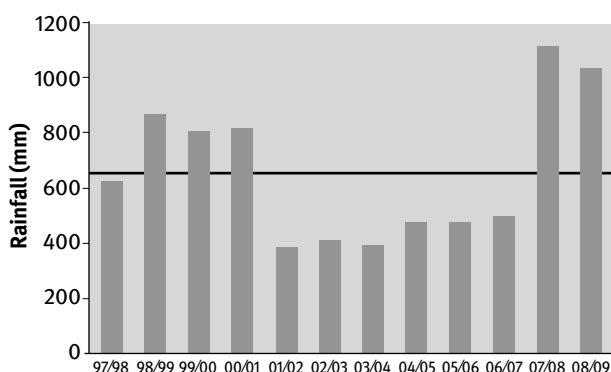
Good rainfall or not, it doesn't pay to overstock

In December 1997 we started a long term grazing trial on the Lyons family property *Wambiana* near Charters Towers, comparing the profitability and sustainability of different stocking strategies. In this article we present some results from the heavy stocking rate (HSR) treatment (4 ha/animal equivalent (AE)) and the moderate stocking rate (MSR: 8 ha/AE). Results from the rotational wet season spell and the two variable stocking strategies will be presented in a later article.

The first 10 years of trial results showed that heavy stocking led to pasture degradation and was unprofitable in the longer term. The stocking rate in the HSR also had to be reduced by about 30% in 2005 due to reduced carrying capacity. Moderate stocking in contrast, was sustainable, maintained pasture condition and ensured long-term profitability.

These results were however from 1998 to 2007 which included six consecutive below-average rainfall years. With the good rainfall in recent seasons do these conclusions still apply?

Fig 1. Annual rainfall between 1997/98 and 2008/09 at the Wambiana grazing trial and long term average rainfall (LTA).



The very good rains in 2007/08 and 2008/09 allowed pasture cover and productivity to rebound significantly in the HSR. Animal performance was also very good and individual animal production in the HSR was higher than the MSR for the first time in 12 years. This occurred because of the extended wet season and short, high quality pasture in the HSR. Gross margins also recovered strongly in these wet years and in 2007/08 the gross margin in the HSR was the highest of all treatments. This is a dramatic change given that the HSR had run at a net loss for the previous six years.

This recovery is impressive, but does not alter the conclusions reached previously. First, after 12

years the HSR is still \$9000 to \$10 000 per 100 ha in accumulated cash surplus behind the MSR. Assuming a property size of 20 000 ha, this equates to an advantage of more than \$1 million in favour of the MSR relative to heavy stocking.

Second, the density of 3-P (palatable, perennial and productive) grasses in the MSR is still 3 – 4 times greater than in the HSR. This suggests that the increased production and profitability in the HSR reflects the recent good seasons and the flush of short, annual pastures and will not continue in the longer term.

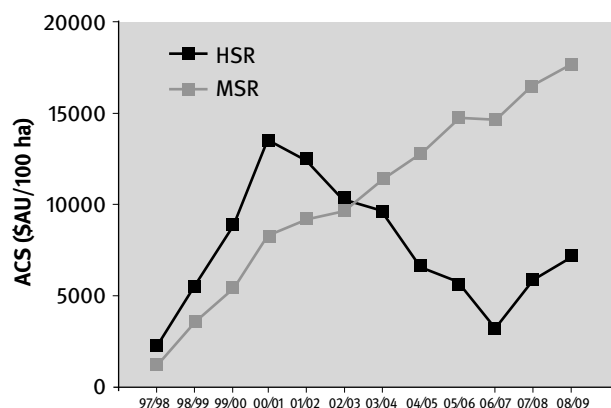


Fig 2. Accumulated cash surplus (ACS) at the Wambiana trial from 1997/98 to 2008/09. HSR=heavy stocking rate, MSR= moderate stocking rate.

After 12 years and some very good seasons, it may thus still be concluded that:

- 1 Moderate stocking is sustainable, profitable and maintains pasture condition.
- 2 Heavy stocking is generally not profitable, is unsustainable and leads to pasture degradation.

Results from the other treatments at the trial will be presented in more detail at a later date, but briefly, both the variable and rotational spell strategies performed substantially better than the HSR.

The *Wambiana* trial will be continued with ongoing MLA funding. In this new phase, the heavy and moderate stocking treatments will remain unchanged but some modification to the variable stocking and spelling treatments will occur. We look forward to sharing these results with the grazing industry both in future editions of the *Northern muster* and in field days at the site.

Peter O'Reagain and John Bushell
 AgriScience Queensland, DEEDI
 Charters Towers
 Ph 07 4761 5161



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Using MSA feedback to improve market compliance – NQ experiences

MSA (Meat Standards Australia) is the leading quality, grading and labelling system to identify eating quality of beef.

In MLA (Meat and Livestock Australia) Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) and other producer groups, producers, MSA, MLA, JBS Swift Australia and Agri-Science Queensland extension officers are working together to improve the percentage of cattle that reach MSA targets.

This is known as improving compliance rates.

With some understanding of the system, processes and strategies, producers can make changes to their herd and/or management that will make a positive impact on compliance as well as productivity.

Improving performance

Using individual property and animal feedback and benchmarked with the meatworks and national

averages, producers are learning how to increase the percentage of cattle grading MSA.

Sharing of data and analysis with other producers and other groups has increased the knowledge gained.

Strategies are being identified to assist performance of not only cattle grading MSA, but also for other markets and price grids.

Reducing ungrades

Producers in north Queensland have made progress in reducing the percentage of ungrades due to pH and meat colour.

Changes to management and nutrition have included

- draft sale cattle at least two weeks before consignment and run that consignment on their own until then
- give sale cattle a high plane of nutrition as long as possible right up until muster and truck
- do not send any temperamental ones in a consignment intended for MSA
- put more emphasis on temperament in sires and breeders
- maximise muscle glycogen at consignment
- reduce all sources of stress.

Nutrition

Nutrition has been improved including

- give the best feed (and ensure it is a rising plane) to animals soon to be turned off
- assess stocking rates for efficiency and performance
- use strategic supplements
- minimise periods of nutritional stress, try to maintain a positive growth pathway.

Genetics

Use of genetics to improve weight for age, carcass and fertility traits is in early stages of adoption in North Queensland. Sires and strategies are being identified and some steps taken.

This is a longer term strategy and is one which is likely to play a larger role in the future. The first season's progeny of a genetically better sire perform better.

Important traits are

- Growth EBVs
- Carcass traits – Eye Muscle Area (EMA), Rump and Rib Fat, Intramuscular fat (IMF) – EBVs where possible
- Fertility EBVs – SS, Days to calving, gestation length.



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Tropical breed content

Tropical breed content (TBC) is a necessity in the tropics. All breeds have cattle grade MSA. The level of TBC can be managed to balance environmental adaption and meat quality.

This is being monitored by hump height.

Hormonal growth promotants (HGPs)

HGPs provide an economic performance level in the tropics.

There is an increase in ossification caused by HGPs.

However, ossification can be reduced by increased weight for age (genetics and nutrition), increased marbling and fat cover, and avoiding nutritional stress periods. Use of HGPs in the final wet season rather than start at branding and keeping animals charged with HGPs will also often be more profitable.

MSA targets

Specific targets to maximise numbers of cattle grading MSA.

- pH less than 5.7
- meet company specifications

- Ossification < 200
- MSA marbling > 300
- Hump height < 120
- Rib fat > 5 mm
- Increased wt for age.

Strategies

Not all strategies are suited to all producers. However, attention to management, genetics and nutrition will bring about benefits in MSA results and market targets generally.

Specific strategies

- increased weight for age from better genetics and nutrition
- increased nutritional strategies (stocking rates, improved pastures, strategic fertiliser use, supplement use, minimise or avoid setbacks)
- improved genetics for growth, carcass traits and temperament along with fertility (balanced traits) – use EBVs
- management (calving time, stocking rates, allocation of pasture resources, temperament)

Alan Laing

Beef Extension Officer, DEEDI

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Is your property registered?

Livestock owners, including those that keep livestock as pets, should be aware that it is a legal requirement under the *Stock Identification Regulation 2005* that any premise where livestock are held must be registered with Biosecurity Queensland.

The recent animal disease emergencies of Equine Influenza (EI) and Hendra Virus (HeV) and the potential risk of other animal diseases that can impact upon livestock and communities have received considerable media attention. In the case of an animal disease emergency it is important that we know where livestock are located. This is necessary to enable disease control strategies to be implemented and to assist in identifying and tracing livestock movements.

Any premise that is carrying one or more head of cattle, horses (includes ponies & donkeys), sheep, goats, pigs, buffalo, camels, llama, alpaca, or 100 or more poultry (including caged birds) must be registered by law.

The maximum penalty for a breach of the legislation is \$4000.

At present there is no charge for registration. Upon registration, the place will be issued with a Property Identification Code (PIC). This PIC is linked to the real property description (land parcel) of the premise.

Similarly cattle, sheep, goats and pigs must be identified accordingly with a National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) device prior to movement off the premise where they are held. This device is related to the PIC.

You can register your property by one of the following means:

1. Call us on 13 25 23
2. Register your premise online at the DEEDI website <http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au>, or;
3. Contact your local animal biosecurity inspector in Townsville on ph 4760 1501 or ph 4760 1595.

When your application has been processed, a letter of confirmation of your PIC will be forwarded to you. All information you provide in your application is considered confidential under the privacy legislation.

Do you know someone else this applies to? Please pass the information on.

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Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or 'mad cow disease' is a disease of cattle which it is believed can be transmitted to humans and cause variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) via the consumption of BSE contaminated food.

BSE requirements in the Food Standard Code

Since BSE was first identified as a major risk to human health, Australia has had comprehensive arrangements in place to protect Australians from exposure to the BSE agent via the human food chain. In respect of food safety, these arrangements are prescribed in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Food Standards Code), which is administered by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

Standard 2.2.1, Clause 11 of the Food Standards Code states that only those bovine meat and meat products derived from animals free from BSE can be sold on the Australian domestic market. Food ingredients and products that are exempt from these requirements are;

- collagen sourced from bovine skins and hides (including sausage casings produced from this type of collagen)
- gelatine sourced from bovine skins and hides
- a minor ingredient of a processed product when that ingredient comprises bovine fat and/or bovine tallow at no more than 300 g/kg of the food
- dairy products sourced from bovines.

This Standard came into effect on 27 February 2003 (an early version came into effect on 30 August 2001) and remains unchanged.

New BSE food safety policy

On 20 October 2009, the Australian Government announced a change in Australia's BSE food safety policy for imported beef and beef products which sets new requirements for countries that wish to export beef and beef products to Australia. The new policy came into effect on 1 March 2010.

Under this policy, certain beef and beef products may be imported from countries that apply and are assessed by Australian authorities as being able to demonstrate they have in place, and appropriately monitor, controls necessary to ensure that beef and beef products exported to Australia are derived from animals free of BSE. This measure is administered

by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service informed by risk assessment advice prepared by FSANZ. The FSANZ advice will be based on a risk assessment of a country's submission to be classified for BSE Risk (country categorisation on BSE risk). The FSANZ advice will be supported, where warranted, by in country inspections.

In addition, the importation of beef and beef products for human consumption into Australia from a country is subject to a market access request and quarantine requirements determined by Biosecurity Australia. These are detailed in the document published by Biosecurity Australia: *Handling of Market Access Requests and Quarantine Requirements for Beef and Beef Products for Human Consumption*.

Transition requirements

Countries that currently export beef and beef products to Australia under the previous policy may continue to do so after 1 March 2010 but will also be subject to a risk assessment under the new policy. Beef or beef products may continue to be imported into Australia from these countries after 30 June 2011 if an application for assessment as Category 1 or Category 2 has been submitted to the Australian BSE Food Safety Assessment Committee and provided no new BSE-risk factors are reported by the country during this period.

Further information on the new policy can be found in the document *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE): Requirements for the Importation of Beef and Beef Products for Human Consumption – Effective 1 March 2010*.

The latest Australian review on the current science and control measures relating to BSE in support of Australia's new policy can be found in the document *Review of Scientific Evidence to Inform Australian Policy on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)*, October 2009.

Importation of beef and beef products

Australia relies on a system of country categorisation and certification to implement the BSE requirements in the Code for imported food.

Countries wishing to export beef and beef products to Australia must apply to the Australian BSE Food Safety Assessment Committee (the Committee) for assessment. A request for assessment must be accompanied by the completed Australian Questionnaire to Assess BSE Risk. Requests for assessments will be prioritised by the Committee and will be largely based on applicants with the most recent history of exporting beef and beef products to Australia; completeness of data;

willingness to engage in an in-country inspection, general history of trade and knowledge of infrastructure and veterinary services.

A risk assessment is undertaken by FSANZ and reviewed by the Committee prior to a draft report being provided to the Applicant Country for comment over a 60-day period. At this time, verification of in-country control measures, if deemed required by the Committee, is undertaken through an in-country inspection by Australian Government officials. Evidence obtained during the in-country inspection will be considered by the Committee prior to completing the assessment. Further details on the assessment process can be

found in the document of The Australian Assessment Process to Assess BSE Risk.

The documents mentioned above and links to information about the risk assessment process can be found at the Food Standards website: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/bovinespongiformencephalopathybse/>

Further information can also be obtained from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) imported foods website (www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/food/notices) or from Dr. Scott Crerar, FSANZ on phone +61 2 6271 2222, email BSE@foodstandards.gov.au

Beef industry – Guidelines for feeding travelling cattle

Background

Animal welfare has become an important issue for all sectors of the cattle industry. Attention to animal welfare is critical in maintaining a positive industry image and in meeting the legal requirements for the sale and transport of livestock.

Queensland’s animal welfare legislation (the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*) places a **duty of care**

on all people in charge of animals. This means providing for the needs of animals in a way that is appropriate, and includes the provision of suitable food, water, handling facilities and yards.

The definition of a **person in charge** under the Act includes the owner, representatives of the owner, or any person with custody of the animal/s. This places a legal requirement on producers, transporters, saleyard superintendents/agents, spelling establishment operators and processors to ensure the welfare of cattle throughout the supply chain.

The Act also recognises codes of practice as agreed standards of animal welfare for the various livestock species and types of animal use.

The following feeding guidelines for cattle held over in saleyards, spelling centres or transit centres should be read in conjunction with the relevant codes of practice.

Feeding recommendations

It is recommended that cattle spelled in saleyards, spelling centres or transit centres be fed at the **travelling cattle rate** (outlined below) for each 24 hours they are at the facility.

This is put in practice by:

- feeding cattle that arrive prior to 12 noon on the day prior to a sale (except where they have travelled short distances and have had no prior curfew)
- feeding cattle to be held for at least 24 hours after completion of the sale of the last pen – feeding should not commence until the entire consignment has been delivered to the purchaser’s pen, to ensure all cattle gain equal access to appropriate feed
- feeding cattle that are held for 48 hours or more after the sale, in a manner agreed to by the owner of the cattle and the saleyard operator/contractor – however, the overall feeding rate

Table 1: Daily minimum feed intake for maintenance and for travelling cattle

Liveweight (kg)	Energy for maintenance (MJ ME/day)	Protein for maintenance (g/day)	Example daily feed intake for maintenance on a diet of 8% protein and 7 MJ ME/kg	Required daily feed intake—travelling cattle rate (kg)
200	29	225	4.4 kg (2.2%)	2.2
300	38	295	5.4 kg (1.8%)	2.7
400	46	360	6.6 kg (1.65%)	3.3
500	54	420	7.7 kg (1.54%)	3.9
600	61	475	8.7 kg (1.45%)	4.4

Table 2: Indicative bale weights and feeding rates for travelling cattle

Liveweight (kg)	Hay (bale) feeding per day per 20 head travelling cattle			
	Small square bales		Round bales	
	Lucerne (25 kg)	Grass hay (20 kg)	4 ft (250 kg)	5 ft (330 kg)
200	2	3	.2	.15
300	2.5	4	.25	.2
400	3.5	6	.35	.26
500	3.5	6	.35	.26
600	4	6.5	.4	.3

should reflect the daily travelling cattle rate requirements

- feeding cattle in transit centres where spelling is required in line with the maximum travel times outlined in the *Model Code of Practice for the Land Transport of cattle*.

Feeding rates

Normally, a ration of approximately 1.5% to 2% of body weight of reasonable quality hay (approximately 8% crude protein) will provide a maintenance ration. The travelling cattle rate (see tables 1 and 2) does not aim to provide a maintenance ration. It aims to provide sufficient feed to ensure the animal travels safely to its proposed destination, without compromising its welfare and ensuring its rumen continues to function effectively.

Things to remember

As bale weights can vary significantly, a sample of the hay bales should be weighed to calculate an accurate feeding rate.

The hay must be palatable to the stock and should be of a reasonable quality (e.g. suggested minimum of 8% crude protein). If the hay is of a lesser quality, feeding rates should be adjusted accordingly.

Poor quality hay is usually not palatable, has little nutritional value and is unlikely to meet the aims of the feeding program.

Strong consideration should also be given to feeding cattle in racks or bunks to limit the potential risk of chemical residues, parasite infestation, wastage of hay and fouling of yards.

The above recommendations refer to cattle in a minimum strong store condition. Weakened or stressed animals may require additional feed to help cope with the added stress of transport. Feeding levels for this class of animal must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

These recommendations only refer to the short-term spelling of cattle. Where cattle are held for extended periods they must be fed a maintenance ration.

For more information on feeding and transporting cattle contact:

Paul Willett

Biosecurity Queensland (a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation), Ph: 5463 1188

Phone 13 25 23

Visit www.dpi.qld.gov.au and follow Biosecurity / Animal welfare and ethics

Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Animals (livestock series) at www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/sid/11.htm

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End of wet season a good time to vaccinate herd for tick fever

Cattle producers are reminded that the end of the wet season is a good time to vaccinate their animals for tick fever.

Weaners and young cattle that could be exposed to cattle ticks now, or in the future, should be given the one-off vaccine.

Tick fever can have a devastating effect on herds, killing animals and leaving others with loss of condition, loss of milk production and reduced fertility.

British and European breeds of cattle are most at risk of contracting tick fever, but the condition can strike any breed of cattle.

Cattle of any age can be vaccinated, but care needs to be taken when vaccinating pregnant cows. The optimum age for vaccination is less than nine months.

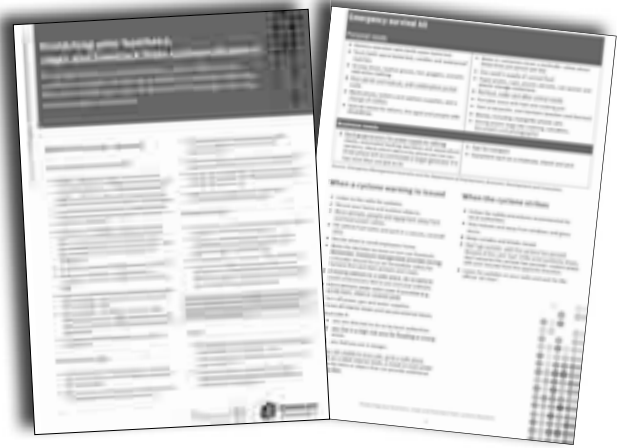
Tick fever vaccinations take the guesswork out of tick fever control – and producers with a vaccinated herd have the peace of mind that they have minimised any potential losses.

A vaccination program across the entire herd also safeguards the properties' disease status for access to the live cattle export trade, and provides essential protection for properties involved in tick eradication projects.

Two tick fever vaccines are available – chilled and frozen varieties. Both vaccines provide protection against all three types of tick fever and both are a one-shot application. Immunity develops within eight weeks of the vaccination.

More information about tick fever vaccination is available at www.deedi.qld.gov.au or by contacting 13 25 23.

Shane Laffey
Biosecurity Queensland,
Cloncurry 07 4742 1311



Protecting your livestock, business and crops during emergencies

Cyclones, floods and bush fires in the north and west have taken their toll on producers in recent years. These potential disasters can impact heavily on livestock, crops and livelihoods.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, has updated its cyclone fact sheet on the internet which can help producers to provide better personal, property and business protection as well as protection for their livestock and crops.

The cyclone fact sheet provides valuable information that can be used in preparation for floods and bush fires as well.

Being prepared can save lives and mitigate damage and loss to livestock. Planning for an emergency must focus on human safety first and then on the welfare of the animals on the property.

Ensure livestock and pets have some form of identification, such as a name tag or brand, to help facilitate their identification and return, should they become lost. Ensure that stock registers are up-to-date and kept in a safe place. If there is enough time, move animals to safer areas.

The fact sheet provides a checklist and simple planning tips that can help limit the damage and make recovery easier and quicker. The fact sheet can be accessed through the emergency disaster and assistance website under the Environment tab at www.dpi.qld.gov.au.

For more information contact

Ian Rodger
Biosecurity Queensland (a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation), Ph: 5453 5825 or 13 25 23
Visit www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Animal welfare responsibilities at saleyards

Biosecurity Queensland was recently invited to attend the Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA) industry awareness seminars at Dalby, Emerald and Roma to discuss current trends in animal welfare, biosecurity and traceability issues. It was a good time to discuss issues relating to the new national animal welfare standards and guidelines for the transport of livestock (to replace existing national transport codes of practice), animal welfare risks associated with saleyards and animal welfare responsibilities of agents and others within the supply chain.

Animal welfare in saleyards is often subject to scrutiny and criticism. This is due to the fact that saleyards are an area of high public exposure and the public often attend from an interest factor or to specifically assess the welfare of animals. Poor and injured animals at saleyards give a poor public perception of the saleyard sector and the industry as a whole.

A key focus at the seminars was to provide participants with a better understanding of their animal welfare responsibilities. Queensland's animal welfare legislation, the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (the Act), places a duty of care on the person in charge of animals. This means providing for the basic needs of animals including providing suitable food, water, facilities and veterinary treatment for injury and/or disease and ensuring animals are handled appropriately.

Under the Act, a person in charge may include the owner, representatives of the owner, or any person with custody of the animal. At saleyards, the responsibility as person in charge may shift or be shared—as livestock move through the supply chain—between producers, transporters, saleyard superintendents and agents, spelling establishment operators and processors.

Complaints regarding animal welfare at saleyards often relate to diseased, injured or poor conditioned/weakened stock being handled through the saleyards. Generally the decision made to consign these animals has been made on the property.

However once the animals arrive at the saleyard it becomes the responsibility of the saleyard manager and the owner's agent to make

appropriate welfare decisions about those animals.

Animals that arrive that are not fit for sale could result in complaints to authorities. These complaints are routinely investigated and if a breach of duty of care is found, court proceedings may be started.

Property owners/managers should not consign animals that have obvious injuries, deformities or are emaciated or malnourished. Only animals that are fit for sale and are fit for the intended journey should be consigned to saleyards.

For more information on animal welfare at saleyards contact

Paul Willett

Biosecurity Queensland (a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation), Ph: 5463 1188

Phone 13 25 23

Visit www.dpi.qld.gov.au and follow Biosecurity / Animal welfare and ethics

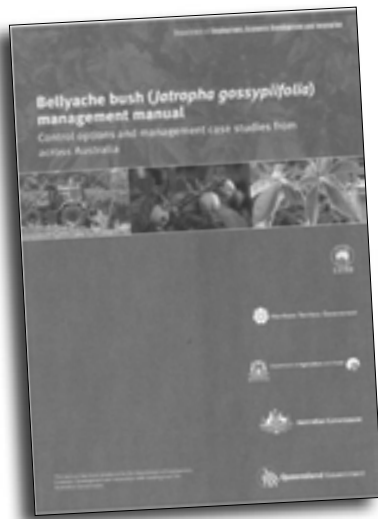
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Management manual available for bellyache bush

Bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*) is an increasing problem in northern Australia. It replaces pastures, reduces biodiversity and is suspected of causing significant stock losses due to toxic compounds.

A new national management manual funded by the Australian Government and produced by Biosecurity Queensland is now available to assist land managers faced with controlling this problematic weed.

The manual outlines the ecology and impact of bellyache bush and discusses a range of possible control methods.

The manual also captures the experiences of land managers tackling their bellyache bush problems. Case studies range from individual landholders controlling bellyache bush, to a community based approach to achieve control within a catchment, to the endeavours of a mining company treating bellyache bush and other weeds on their lease.

You will find this manual useful if bellyache bush is already a problem on your land or if you are in areas where bellyache bush could become a problem in the future.

To receive copies of the manual please contact the Tropical Weeds Research Centre (07 4761 5700) or email Debra.Haynes@deedi.qld.gov.au



Save \$: use NIRS DMD:CP ratio to determine start of urea supplementation

Cost effective supplementation depends on knowing when, what and how much supplement to feed. It is also about predicting the 'response' to feeding. In the instance of commencing urea supplementation NIRS analysis of dung samples can help determine the likelihood of a response.

The amount of protein in a pasture diet will vary depending on a number of factors, one of these being the amount of green 'leaf' available. Depending on the land type if there is more than 30% green in the pasture, the stocking rate is right and there is a good body of feed to select from, then it may be possible for cattle to 'select out' a diet that has adequate protein for maintenance. If there is already sufficient protein in the diet, there may not be an economic response to feeding urea, until diet quality drops further.

NIRS (Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy) technology was developed primarily to give us a better understanding of the quality of the diet cattle are grazing and from this we can determine their 'expected productivity'. Analysis of dung samples using NIRS is the best tool we have to estimate dietary crude protein (CP), dry matter digestibility (DMD), dietary non-grass proportions and faecal N (Coates 2000). Although NIRS technology has many applications, one of the key applications is as a decision support tool to assist with determining when to start feeding urea.

How can NIRS be used to assist with determining start of feeding? MLA funded Research (Dixon et al., 2008) showed that a response to Non Protein Nitrogen supplementation (i.e. urea) was most likely when the DMD:CP ratio was greater than 10:1 for spear grass pasture communities. For the Mitchell grass downs there is a greater likelihood of a response to urea when the DMD:CP ratio is 11-12:1 or greater.

For example if DMD is 55% and CP is 5.5% then the ratio is 10:1. As diet quality deteriorates and CP% then drops in relation to DMD the ratio will increase. For example if DMD stays at 55%, and CP% then drops to 5%, the ratio will increase to 11:1. If NIRS results show the DMD:CP ratio is between 8:1 and 10:1 there is increasingly likelihood of a response to urea, and this becomes more certain when the ratio is greater than 10:1 or 11:1 depending on the land type.

Note that on landtypes where there is quite high levels of native browse the NIRS results may show dietary CP levels well above that of the grass in the diet. These inflated figures present difficulties in assessing faecal NIRS predictions on high browse diets, which are high in condensed tannins. The tannins impact on digestibility and also the browse is often low in digestibility.

NIRS results should be used in conjunction with your own observations. These observations should include cattle condition, lactation status, pasture quality and quantity, pasture spoilage due to frost, grasshoppers, etc, plus recent rainfall events and how the rain fell.

Felicity Hamlyn-Hill
 Senior Beef Extension Officer
 Charters Towers
 Ph 07 4761 5157

Editor's note

Before the next *Northern muster* is mailed, the season is likely to turn to urea supplementation time. The above article highlights how to know when supplementation is likely to return a response.



DA
DAVID ANTHONY
S O L I C I T O R S

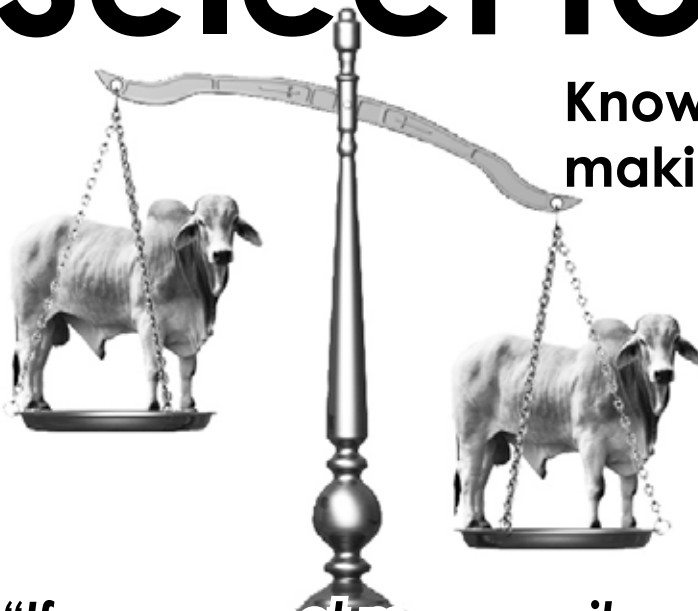
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How MLA is marketing red meat

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) promotes the high quality of Australian red meat to both the domestic and international markets – its versatility and enjoyment, and value for money, with a particular focus on the important nutritional role red meat has in a healthy diet.

Promotional activities are undertaken directly with retail consumers as well as foodservice outlets, such as hotels and restaurant chains.

Domestic marketing

The domestic market is the largest market for Australian beef and sheep meat. Building and sustaining this domestic demand is therefore a core focus for MLA.

Marketing activities undertaken on behalf of the red meat industry are focused on the consumer - the primary source of demand - and on those areas of demand generation where it is unfeasible for individual enterprises to take the initiative, either through lack of commercial incentive or insufficient resources.

MLA's three major consumer campaigns are:

- RED MEAT Amazing Food 
- Beef get into it 
- We love our Lamb 



Find great recipes, tips and techniques, nutrition information and an overview of red meat production in Australia on MLA's consumer website at www.themainmeal.com.au. Also available is the free *Entice* magazine.



The latest beef campaign showcases a variety of beef roast cuts and provides many cooking tips to help people cook the juiciest beef roast.

International marketing

Australia exports red meat and livestock to more than 100 countries. Exports represent 60% of the industry's trade, making it critical to protect and expand our access.

MLA works to develop brand recognition for Australian red meat in our export markets, and to

position our products as high quality, premium products offering enhanced customer enjoyment.

Australia's 'clean, green' image and our reputation as a supplier of safe, quality red meat underpin MLA's international marketing activities.

MLA designs and delivers marketing programs tailored to each key export market and distribution channel. Programs target retail, foodservice, trade, consumers and access with the overall objective of increasing returns to Australian red meat processors and livestock producers. Structured cooperative marketing programs with exporters and importers strengthen user loyalty and enhance new business opportunities.

Eating quality assured

It's taken 520,000 beef tasting samples by 75,640 consumers in six different countries, but now Meat Standards Australia (MSA) is ready to be taken to the world.

The program was designed for the trade; to support importers, distributors wholesalers and food service industry players using chilled MSA-graded Australian beef. The Eating Quality Assured (EQA) trade mark is underpinned by MSA Standards, and EQA certification will be used to underpin individual Australian beef brands. Find out more about EQA

MLA's consumer-targeted international websites:

- Korea – www.ilovebeef.co.kr and www.ilovelamb.com
- Taiwan – www.ilovebeef.com.tw
- USA – www.australian-beef.com
- Japan – www.aussiebeef.jp
- Eating Quality Assured – www.eatingqualityassured.com

Further information, including current commercials and brochures, is available from the MLA website www.mla.com.au, or you can email marketing@mla.com.au or phone (02) 9463 9188 with any marketing enquiries.



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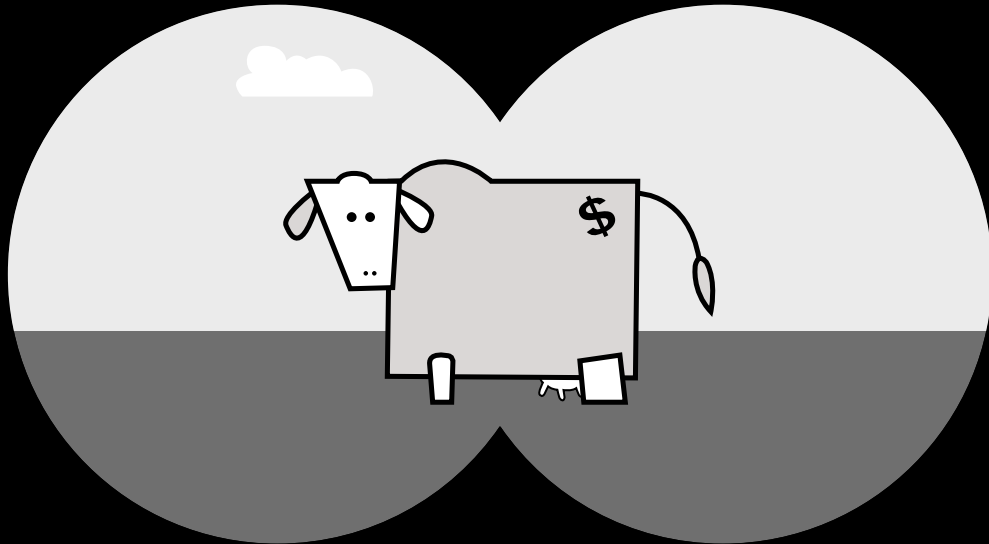
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[†]Rumensin is registered for improved feed efficiency and as an aid in the control of bloat in feedlot cattle; for improved feed efficiency and weight gain and reproductive performance in heifers; and as an aid in the prevention of coccidiosis caused by *Eimeria zuernii* and *Eimeria bovis*. *Elanco®, Rumensin® and the diagonal colour bar are trademarks of Eli Lilly and Company. Rumensin® is a trademark for Elanco's brand of monensin sodium. EAH1721

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