

I am responding to the inquiry into beef being allowed into Australia from countries that have BSE.

I disagree with any beef being allowed here from these countries as we have gained a well deserved reputation of being clean and green.

We have enough beef to easily supply our domestic market as well as our export market. We have a national traceability system that we were made to implement for our export markets which no other country as a whole has. Why should we be made to jeopardise our industry for the sake of red meat imports that we don't need?

When the equine flu came into Australia it was proof of how vulnerable we are. That 'only' cost Australia about \$ ½ billion, if either BSE or FMD gets in then the cost will be astronomical. The government **will** be held accountable for the relaxation of the regulations and they **will** be made to pay compensation to all livestock owners.

The general public see the importation of beef to be against their better interest, they see it as a danger to their health, and that will in itself make them fearful of buying meat in general regardless of its country of origin. This will affect domestic consumption and cattle sales. Economically, we, as an industry cannot afford this, we are struggling with all the costs and fees that we pay, the droughts and floods we endure and the rules and regulations we are forced to follow.

The government of the day have been bombarding the media and general public about climate change and carbon emissions. If they were genuine in the beliefs, they would not even dream of importing anything into this country that we already produce or can make here. It is hypocritical of them to talk about carbon footprints, when they want to import beef to Australia thus adding to the problem.

Once a disease is in a country it is very difficult to control. Any risk is too great and it has been proven mistakes happen eg. Equine flu. The Health and Ag officials in England believed that BSE was harmless to humans, but they were wrong, vCJD or nvCJD proved that. The blood banks around the world had to implement strategies and procedures on the run. Eg. If you were in England for a 6 month period between 1980 and 1996 then you can not donate blood.

We cannot risk the health of Australians nor the health of our livestock.

From
Harlie Smith