I am responding to the inquiry of the importation of beef into Australia by countries that have BSE.

As a beef producer I am not in favour of it at all.

We have seen the demise of the pig industry when the government had a similar idea years ago. Australian cattle farmers grow enough beef to adequately supply our domestic market as well as our export one and we do not need or want overseas meat here.

We have built a reputation of being clean and green and feel that any importation from BSE infected countries will jeopardise this.

In Australia we were forced into NLIS, as we were told that the "world" wanted full traceability. Well, if it was good enough for us then it is good enough for the rest of the world to do the same. we will not accept any thing less.

BSE is not the only disease that we will be put at risk from; there are a lot of other ones as well. FMD is of great concern to the livestock industry, if that came here that would be enough to destroy our industry.

AQIS has shown, with the outbreak of equine flu, that all it takes is one little mistake and it can bring an industry to its knees. It has also shown that it cannot be relied on to stop all diseases coming in. They say that their record is good, 'only one disease in 100 years' but that is not something to be proud of, that one mistake cost Australia about $ ½ billion. How much would a little mistake cost us in the cattle industry or the whole livestock industry? It would be catastrophic.

Australian cattle producers are lumbered with all the industry and government costs, which we can't pass on, then we are told to compete with producers from overseas who are government subsidised. Where is the level playing field that we are always told about?

If the government does relax the rules of importation, then they, along with AQIS and whoever is importing the beef will be held accountable for any losses incurred in our industry and any future losses of income.

It is too late once the disease is here, hindsight is a wonderful thing.

Regards
Ron Moore