

Leanne Mundy
A/g Assistant Secretary
Renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
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AAWS development and consultation process

Dear Leanne, I'm writing on behalf of the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) regarding the development of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). AMIC supports the intent of the Strategy and the benefits that could come with regards to a more harmonised and modern regulatory system. I recognise the leadership position the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has taken in this process and welcomed the release of the National Statement on Animal Welfare in December last year.

AMIC is the peak body representing Australia's post-farm gate red meat industry. Our members include livestock processors, smallgoods manufacturers, boning rooms, cold stores, wholesalers, exporters and independent retail butchers. These businesses interact with customers and are directly responsible for implementing animal welfare practices under both regulatory frameworks and commercial standards.

While we support the objective of a national strategy that improves animal welfare outcomes and builds community trust, AMIC shares several concerns raised by other industry bodies, including the National Farmers' Federation (NFF). These concerns align with our June 2024 submission and relate particularly to the consultation process and development of the livestock and production chapter. We outline below the key concerns

AMIC holds regarding the development of the livestock and production animals chapter of the Strategy.

Key Issues

1. *Lack of purpose and scope*: the livestock and production animals chapter lacks a clear statement of purpose and scope. There has also been no articulation of the responsibilities of animal welfare stakeholders in relation to action items. A shared understanding of these foundational elements is essential if the Strategy is to achieve improved animal welfare outcomes.

2. *Uncertainty around implementation of action items*: the current approach does not provide confidence that action items will be implemented based on contemporary, independent, evidence-based scientific advice and practical industry experience.

3. *Lack of transparency in consultation*: stakeholders must be given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the livestock and production animals chapter before it is finalised. This is essential to ensuring transparency in the development process and to maintaining confidence in the outcomes of the Strategy.

4. *Stakeholder representation*: AMIC supports inclusive consultation, but the value of stakeholder input must be based on the expertise and intent of those involved. Greater clarity on how stakeholder input is considered and treated is essential to maintaining trust in the process and ensuring the Strategy remains focused on practical animal welfare outcomes.

What we ask

To ensure the Strategy is workable, evidence-based, and supported by industry, AMIC requests that the Department:

- Clearly articulate the purpose and scope of the livestock and production animals chapter, including the responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Commit to further, more transparent consultation, including an opportunity for stakeholders to review and provide feedback on a draft version of the chapter prior to finalisation.
- Confirm that interpretation and implementation of action items will be guided by independent, evidence-based science and practical industry expertise.
- Use future engagement to test a draft chapter with stakeholders and work collaboratively to define key concepts and action items, to provide clarity on their practical application.

AMIC remains committed to constructive engagement and to supporting the development of the Strategy that reflects sound animal welfare outcomes and the realities of livestock production.

If you would like to discuss these matters further, please feel free to contact Sue Viana, Manager – Animal Welfare & Integrity Systems at sviana@amic.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Ryan

CEO

Australian Meat Industry Council