



Media Release

Hold your horses on carbon Bill, NT cattlemen urge

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Northern Territory cattlemen are calling for Senators to hold their horses when it comes time to vote on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill during Parliamentary sittings, which begin today.

"News from International Federation of Agricultural Producers conference in Denmark is that other OECD countries can't believe Australia and New Zealand are considering including agriculture in their emissions trading schemes because of the pressure it would put on food production," NT Cattlemen's Association President, Rohan Sullivan, said.

"Should Australia and New Zealand proceed down this track, they will be the only countries in the world to include agriculture in a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

"There is good understanding overseas that the Kyoto accounting rules are not written with agriculture in mind and do not appropriately recognise sequestration elements provided by natural production systems.

"The rules as they stand only allow half the story to be told."

Mr Sullivan said it was critical no decision be made to pass the Bill until Northern Territory cattlemen have assurances their international competitiveness will not be placed in jeopardy.

"The world appears to be coming to its senses on this issue and it is likely to be one of the key topics up for discussion in negotiations in Copenhagen in December," he said.

"Other countries, including all of Europe, are acutely aware of the danger of tampering with food production systems and the supply chain, yet despite Australia's heavy reliance on agricultural exports this message still seems to be falling on deaf ears here."

Mr Sullivan said one of the most worrying aspects of the push to include agriculture in an emissions trading scheme was the unbalanced view that the industry was an "environmental vandal" due to emissions from livestock.

"This conveniently ignores the natural carbon cycle existing in healthy systems, which sees capture of carbon in the soils, plants and water," he said.

"It is an absurd situation where natural emissions from animals that are essential to food security are counted, yet the carbon that is locked up in these systems is ignored.

"Kyoto rules take no account of carbon capture methods other than the planting of trees, which is not a practical option for our rangelands, which are already covered by natural vegetation.

"As it is becoming more and more evident the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, as it stands, is inappropriate for agriculture and our industry looks forward to working with government to look at how agriculture can play a positive role in removing carbon from the atmosphere.

"Passing this Bill in its current form would be folly."

Enquiries: Luke Bowen, Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Available for interview over weekend on 0427 815 990. Business hours: (08) 8981 5976.



NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Media Release

Background information

The Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc (NTCA) is the peak primary industry group in the NT.

It represents 95% of the NT cattle herd – from small family operations to the large corporate organisations. NTCA membership manages more than 2 million cattle, producing more than 550,000 quality animals per year to supply local and overseas markets. In 2008, more than 365,000 cattle were exported live through the Port of Darwin.

Members successfully manage a landmass in excess of 620,000 sq kms, 9.6% of the Australian landscape and 45% of the NT. The pastoral industry generates more than \$400 million in direct benefits for the Australian economy, with flow on benefits worth around \$800 million. The pastoral industry accounts for over 60% of the NT gross value of Agricultural production.

The industry directly provides in excess of 2000 jobs annually. Indirectly it supports around 3000 jobs in related goods and service supply and support industries.

The industry has contributed to the growth of the Territory for almost 150 years. It continues to increase in size, productivity and efficiency while more than 85% of members are active participants in conservation, environmental and Landcare groups.

By area, employment and economic contribution, the pastoral industry is the dominant industry and land steward, with a focus on long-term sustainable production.

For more information go to www.ntca.org.au