



Media Release

Saturday 18 June 2011

New Zealand is not the Territory

The NT Cattleman's Association says Dr Patricia Peterson, coordinator of the national day of action to ban live exports, is misleading Australians with claims that:

- New Zealand's move to ban exports has been good for cattle farmers and beef sales in that country,
- The NT Cattlemen's Association does not support stunning of cattle in Indonesia.

"Clearly she is an academic masquerading as an authority," says Executive Director of the NTCA Luke Bowen.

"If she had her way, she would destroy the livelihoods of thousands of Australians who are well beyond the leafy suburbs of Ipswich and the electorate she's campaigning to represent.

"What does she really know about northern Australia and, for that matter, Indonesia when she thinks the cattle industry in the tropical north bears any relationship to the way things operate in New Zealand?" he said.

"By the time her economic and social experiment is shown to have failed, she will have burnt and bankrupted the whole of the north of Australia," he said.

"Dr Peterson is claiming that industry does not support the use of stun guns," Mr Bowen said.

"For a start, she has not spoken to the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. In fact, when I rang to respectfully correct her statements she hung up in my ear," he said.

"Secondly, it is industry that is pushing for the use of stun gun. This has been our position for a number of years and there are many abattoirs already using them in Indonesia. The uptake of stun guns in all abattoirs in Indonesian is a complex mix of legal issues around firearms legislation, the need for religious approvals, cost and regulatory enforcement of welfare standards.

"The attitude and policy of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association is that animals be afforded the best animal welfare practices including the use of stun guns. However this requires a two way commitment and buy in from Indonesian Government and industry to ensure it is implemented," he said.

Dr Peterson is also saying that we should abandon the live export industry and follow New Zealand's lead in sending only boxed beef to Indonesia.

"What baffles me about this is that she does not understand that cattle bred in New Zealand are not suited to the Indonesian market as they are not tropically adapted," Mr Bowen said.

"They are English and European breeds such as Angus and Hereford. It is like claiming you can replace the Manly ferry with a motorbike," he said.

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“She also fails to mention that Australia exported more than 60,000 tonnes of boxed beef to Indonesia last year, so we do it already. But this meat goes into the premium market with a refrigerated supply chain for hotels and up market supermarkets and the beef comes from southern Australian cattle finished on pasture and in feedlots which we do not have in the North

She is also purportedly arguing on the side of animal welfare. But exiting the Indonesian market does nothing to address animal welfare, simply vacates the space. Or are we saying we care only about the welfare of Aussie cattle?”

Some other points that need to be understood:

- There is a growing middle class in countries like Asia that can afford good cuts of beef and that would buy boxed beef. This is a growing market but the majority of Indonesians are poor and cannot afford expensive premium meat. So our live cattle, fattened further and processed in Indonesia, provide affordable access to much-needed protein.
- The north of Australia relies on breeds such as Brahman cattle, which have been bred specifically for the Indonesian market and the tropics. New Zealand and southern Australian cattle are not adapted to this environment. To suggest that New Zealand’s live export industry was in the same place as we are when they banned live exports is an outright misrepresentation ;
- Currently there are no abattoirs in the north. While there is at least one planned, it is a long way off and is not in a position to address the current crisis;
- It is not an option to simply send all our beef to southern markets. The logistics are cost prohibitive, the animal type is also not generally sought by processors for the premium meat market and the cattle require further feeding on grass or feedlots prior to slaughter. Northern Australia does not have the improved pasture or grain industry to support fattening and finishing of cattle. While Australia sells boxed beef to Indonesia which equates to 300,000 head, live export supplies another section of the market where there is no access to a refrigerated supply chain and there is a legitimate demand for protein in a country of 240 million people;
- The sudden cessation of the live export industry was a knee-jerk reaction to an emotive television program. While we all agree that the cruelty shown was unacceptable, it has misrepresented what happens in Indonesia as the rule and not the exception and unfairly penalised both cattle producers across the north of Australia and the large number of processors in Indonesia who are operating to good standards.



NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Media Release

Background information:

The Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association is the peak primary industry group in the Northern Territory representing over 90% of the Territory's cattle herd. With over 220 pastoral leases, our industry manages a landmass in excess of 620,000 square kilometres and a herd of over 2 million head. Annual turnoff is around 600,000 head to live-export and domestic markets.

The pastoral industry is the Northern Territory's third largest GDP earner, accounting for more than 50% of primary production in the NT and generating over \$400 million in direct income. In 2010, over 300,000 cattle were exported live through the Port of Darwin. Live cattle exports are of critical importance to the northern pastoral industry and the northern Territory economy as a whole.

The industry directly provides in excess of 1800 jobs, mainly in rural areas of the Northern Territory. By area, employment and economic contribution the pastoral industry is the dominant industry in land management in the NT, with a predominant focus on long-term sustainable production. Over 85% of all NTCA members are active participants in Conservation, Environmental and Landcare groups throughout the Northern Territory and the Association encourages members to join their local groups.

NTCA members include all of the country's largest beef producers including the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), Consolidated Pastoral Company (CPC), S Kidman & Co, Heytesbury Beef, North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO), Georgina Pastoral Company, The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) and Paraway. These companies operations extend beyond the Northern Territory to cover vast tracts of northern, eastern and western Australia.

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