



Final report

Cattle Australia Limited Annual Service Agreement

FY2023

Project code: E.CA.2022
Prepared by: Cattle Australia
Date published: 6 March 2024

PUBLISHED BY
Meat and Livestock Australia Limited
PO Box 1961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

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Introduction

The Cattle Australia (CA) / Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Service Level Agreement (SLA) covers CA-MLA Consultation, CA-Animal Health Australia (AHA) Consultation in the areas of Animal Health & Welfare and Biosecurity, and CA-MLA Industry Leadership & Capability Building.

Key benefits and deliverables include improved grassfed beef industry and levy payer consultation and engagement and establishing a fit-for-purpose forum that enables MLA to effectively consult with, collaborate with and inform CA and its members. The SLA also provides a mechanism for active participation in animal health & welfare and biosecurity working groups, committees and programs like EADRA and AUSVETPLAN, to participate in and improve proactive engagement and consultation on emergency response(s) strategies where relevant for the grassfed cattle sector. In addition, the Industry Leadership and Capability Building elements cover key industry leadership and capability development programs for the grassfed beef sector including the Rural Awareness Tour and further development of the successful Rising Champions program.

During this financial year, 2023, on 12 December 2022, Cattle Australia has formally taken on its role as the new national representative peak industry body for all grass-fed levy payers in Australia. The new, democratically elected CA Board now has a responsibility to every grass-fed cattle producer to make this a success and deliver on its mission – to be the voice of grassfed cattle producers, leading the cattle industry to a stronger, more sustainable future. The CA Board acknowledges with great appreciation the former Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) Directors, Councillors and members for their time and effort to make this happen. For the remainder of this report, for simplicity, ‘CA’ will be used, noting both CCA and CA consecutively were responsible for delivering this SLA.

Consultation

Grass-fed Beef Industry Consultation

CA participated in MLA’s Annual Consultation, Red Meat Panel and Taskforce process providing MLA guidance on the beef industry’s priorities and areas of grass-fed levy investment. CA’s input was developed through consultation with and feedback from grass-levy payers via the Policy (Advisory) Council and the LSD&FMD, Sustainable Resilient Beef Systems, and Supply Chain working groups in place.

For the period, consultation has taken place on a wide range of priority issues, including:

- Approved five industry sustainability goals presented by RMAC and launched as part of the 2023 Australian Beef Sustainability Update.
- Grass-fed cattle industry input to Australia’s participation and key-messaging for the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), held in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. CA connected directly with the International Climate Negotiations Branch at the Department of Climate Change and the Australian Government Head of delegation to COP27.
- The Australia – United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (A-UKFTA) as well as the Australia – European Union (A-EUFTA) negotiations. This includes HGP Compliance and Traceability reforms related to market access to the UK and EU.
- Advice on several MLA projects and programs like the MLA Market Indicator Review, the MLA Lifetime Animal Wellbeing Index, and MLA Risk Register.
- Developed draft CA Industry Crisis Management Plan complementary to the red meat industry’s crisis response (CRIMAC).

- Had input to the Industry Research and Development (R&D) priorities through MLA's Red Meat Panel and an observer role at the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs).
- Engaged with the Review of the Cattle Transaction Levy (CTL); its quantum, the flexibility in portfolio balance, the return on current and projected investment and the possible need to increase this to meet industry priorities into the future.

Pilot Policy Council Review and implementation of review findings

The model that CCA used to consult with State Farming Organisation's (SFOs) and members was reviewed and revised. The newly elected CA Board chose to retain the important corporate knowledge and industry expertise from the members of the Policy Council by continuing that structure until June 2023. Through the new CA Constitution, with broader set of responsibilities, the Policy Council will be superseded by a new Policy Advisory Council (for noting 4 October 2023 CA members renamed this the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC)) by November 2023. The RCC consists of 15 democratically elected grass-fed cattle producers from 15 subregions covering the whole of Australia and 8 nominated representatives from the SFO's.

A fit-for-purpose engagement forum that enables MLA to effectively consult with, collaborate with and inform CA and its members

In future, representing the interests of all Australian cattle producers, Cattle Australia (CA) is the national peak body for the grass-fed cattle industry, providing a visible, unified, and influential voice for cattle producers and beef lovers everywhere. It will provide clear leadership and direction by developing and driving contemporary policy, guiding research, development, and adoption (RD&A) and marketing investment for the sector, and advocating on all matters important to the Australian cattle industry.

To represent the interests of all Australian cattle producers, CA is the democratic Peak Industry Body (PIB) tasked with:

- Uniting levy payers
- Engaging with cattle producers and industry stakeholders
- Advocating on all matters important to the Australian cattle industry
- Leading and directing policy development and its implementation
- Protecting the profitability, competitiveness and future of the cattle industry

From November 2023, the new Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) will be a central component of CA's engagement and consultation and will provide a pathway for MLA to consult and collaborate with CA and its grass-fed cattle producers more effectively and efficiently.

Until that time, and for the purpose of the FY23 SLA, to inform current and future MLA strategies and programs ensuring the maintenance of industry systems and programs that underpin beef industry RD&Adoption, marketing, market access and product quality, CA gave timely, researched, considered and expert input on a regular basis to MLA. CA participated in the regular forums; MLA Quarterly updates, three MLA Taskforces, Red Meat Panel, attended the quarterly RAC meetings as observers, and provided MLA opportunities to present their work programs to the Policy Council and wider membership.

Animal Health & Welfare and Biosecurity

Active participation

CA participated in Animal Health Australia (AHA) led consultation Industry Forums and Committees providing valuable expert input into surveillance and biosecurity initiatives.

Threats for LSD and FMD incursion

Immediately after the confirmation of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in March 2022 and foot and mouth disease (FMD) in April 2022 in Indonesia, CA organised a LSD&FMD working group with representatives from the whole beef supply chain to advise on future actions in the interests of grass-fed cattle producers.

The Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) formed an Industry Taskforce with industry bodies National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF). The Taskforce coordinated industry's role in advising its members and government on prevention, planning and communication actions.

The Industry Taskforce formed 4 working groups with representatives from PIB's including CA, SFO's, state and federal governments, AHA, and other technical experts. CA was represented by members from the installed CA LSD&FMD working group as mentioned above.

Key areas of focus included¹:

1. Overseas in-country support – to develop proposals for providing support to Indonesia and other neighbouring countries in their mitigation and management of FMD/LSD and to contribute to proposals for support in overseas markets put forward by other parties.
2. Trade and protocols – to undertake specific market risk analysis and market prioritisation and determine protocol and health certificate needs, both pre-emptive and reactive
3. Domestic containment strategy – to develop effective strategies to inform the containment and management of the spread of FMD/LSD should it arrive in Australia, complementing existing processes and plans, such as AUSVETPLAN, as well as other work being developed.
4. LSD diagnostic capability and vaccine development – to develop strategies for the development of diagnostic capability and vaccines to diagnose, prevent and manage the spread of LSD, should it arrive in Australia.

The Taskforce and associated working groups have exemplified the collaborative efforts of industry and government to strengthen Australia's robust Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) response capabilities.

Activity has taken place in this priority area concerning possible threats for a FMD or LSD incursion, on a wide range of issues, amongst others:

- Formal request from CA with Dairy Australia and ALFA to AHA to re-categorise LSD under EADRA (Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement).
- As a member of AHA and a signatory to the EADRA, CA was actively involved in evaluating Australia's response strategies for both LSD and FMD as outlined in their AUSVETPLAN's (Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan), and the Valuation and Compensation directives in case of an outbreak.
- Train beef industry representatives with AHA for both EADRA awareness and Livestock Liaison Livestock Industry officers (LLI's).
- CA representatives attended a multitude of other meetings relating to LSD&FMD prevention and preparedness.

¹ Copied from ALFA Final Report to MLA Service Level Agreement

CA submitted a response to and attended hearings for the Senate Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport inquiry into Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness, in particular in respect to FMD. The response and testimony summarized CA's strategic response to the serious threat of LSD&FMD incursion, and reiterated the industry's need and support for:

- Increased domestic border measures in-line with the increased threat level.
- A focus on early detection, particularly for exotic disease transmitted by airborne vectors such as LSD.
- Continued support for Indonesia to contain and eradicate FMD and LSD.
- The development of livestock vaccines and rapid diagnostic testing.
- The development and implementation of a sustainable long-term funding model for biosecurity.
- Implementing nationally consistent livestock traceability (meeting national standards)
- A focus on pre-incursion measures, such as feral animal control, to reduce domestic risk factors.

Proactive consultation and engagement

CA engaged with the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry regarding Australia's Sustainable funding for Biosecurity, supporting the following principles:

1. Biosecurity is a shared responsibility, to which everyone must contribute.
2. Biosecurity funding and resourcing must increase in-line with increased threat levels in our region, with funding and resourcing directed to the areas of greatest threat.
3. All biosecurity beneficiaries (the public, agricultural industries and the environment) should invest in their own biosecurity activities, as well as collectively, and maintain a flexible approach to their contributions into the future.
4. Risk creators, such as container freight importers, need to pay for the inspection and enforcement associated with their risk creating activities.
5. All increases in funding for biosecurity, irrespective of the source, must be invested directly into improved biosecurity measures.

For the period, further consultation and engagement has taken place on a wide range of priority issues, including:

- The Australia's Animal Sector Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan 2022 – 2027, with CA hosting an 'anti-microbial usage in Australian cattle' webinar with 25 attendees from CA Policy Council, SFO representatives and associate members, to assist AgVet Projects to deliver MLA's project to develop suitable metrics and data collection systems to estimate the quantity of antimicrobial medicines currently being used in beef production.
- Made material contributions to national AHA initiatives and priorities at the AHA Members' Engagement Week, incl. Industry Forum and EADRA Training.
- CA participated in industry consultation to inform decision making and investments through: National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee, National Wild Dog Action Plan Co-ordinating Committee (CISS), Animal industries' Antimicrobial Stewardship RD&E Strategy Steering Committee (DAFF), National Disease Surveillance Project working group (AHA/DAWE), Screw Worm Fly Surveillance and Preparedness Program Steering Committee (AHA), Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Freedom Assurance Program Steering Committee (AHA), National Arbovirus Monitoring Program Steering Committee (AHA), National JD Control Program Steering Committee (AHA), Cattle Health Declaration working group (AHA), Animal Welfare Collaborative Stakeholder Group (TAWC), SAFEMEAT Advisory Group (DAWE) and Integrity Systems Company Taskforce.

Awareness building with cattle value chain participants

It is vital that beef value chain participants have a good understanding of animal health & welfare and biosecurity priorities such as EADRA roles and responsibility, pathways to strengthen biosecurity through beef value chains, AHA's role, understanding of our national animal health and biosecurity system and industry roles and responsibility. In consultation with AHA, CA contributed to awareness building to NFF via many of their Committees, SFO's and other beef value chain partners including RMAC, SAFEMEAT, ABSF and government.

Industry Leadership & Capability Building

Board governance and staff development

Continuous development of Board and Staff capability is critical for an organisation like CA working in a high-pressure environment. The restructuring of CCA to CA has been a complex process, wherefore the CCA Board hired the expertise of Alan Parker, an internationally renowned negotiator, facilitator, communicator, and trainer. When the inaugural CA Board was elected, they developed their strategic plan, long-term goals and strategic vision, with the assistance of Your Business Momentum. In addition, two CA Board Directors were part of a NFF delegation of Australian farmers to France to further discuss the A-EUFTA, funded via ATMAC. This trip was very successful in developing robust relationships to support ongoing international engagement by the CA, NFF, Australian agriculture and the Australian Government.

As part of CA's development, staff completed the Decision Making Under Pressure: New Skills for the New Normal Masterclass. This course is being undertaken by DAFF to upskill industry and government decisions as part of Emergency Animal Disease preparedness training. The course is designed to assist participants to build individual and team capability in making decisions under conditions of high pressure, stress, and uncertainty.

Producer representatives received training in the event of an Emergency Animal Disease Response. CA has provided nominations for the Liaison Livestock Industry role (LLI) training and the Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease (CCEAD) and National Management Group (NMG) training. And at a global level, CA supported producer representatives to attend the Global Meat Alliance (GMA) online Networking Sessions.

Leadership in the environmental space

Through RMAC, with the other beef related Peak Industry Bodies, CA takes a leadership role in showcasing the beef industry's credentials by the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF). ABSF sets out the key indicators of performance in sustainability for the beef industry. It enables success to be recognised through evidence-based metrics and empowers the industry to continually improve and demonstrate its values to customers, investors and stakeholders². This is a forever moving space with specific attention given by CA to:

- Industry goal setting
- Australian Beef Sustainability Annual Update
- Alignment between ABSF and the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework
- Listening and engaging with customers, investors and other external stakeholders.

² <https://www.sustainableaustralianbeef.com.au/>

Further capacity building took place through an initiative of CA to discuss on a regular basis with the Australian Agriculture Counsellor – Europe, the European Union Deforestation Regulations. CA worked closely together with AMIC, NFF, MLA, customers and others to better understand and prepare. These Regulations will come into effect at the end of 2024 and may place an additional due diligence burden on Australian beef entering the EU.

A third area that asked for continuous engagement and leadership by CA is the role of agriculture, and beef production in particular, in environmental stewardship relating to sustainable land management and climate goals. CA was interviewed by ANU as part of research they are undertaking for the government to help better understand barriers to producer participation in the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). Also, CA urged the Australian Government Head of delegation to COP27 to ensure that Australia's climate change strategies encourage all sector to reduce their actual emissions not just ag, and engaged with the Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (DCCEEW) on the Nature Repair Market Bill, and made a submission to the Climate Related Financial Disclosure Draft Framework.

Leadership at global level

As member of the International Beef Alliance (IBA) and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB), CA provided input and leadership on global beef industry discussions directly relating to Market Access (incl. FMD&LSD), Animal Welfare, Traceability and Sustainability (incl. CN30). CA collaborated with the other Australian GRSB representatives, including MLA and ABSF, to discuss and coordinate positioning prior to attending GRSB Board meetings. Also, CA representatives attended the GRSB Conference, AGM, Communications Summit and IBA's CEO meeting in Denver and has been involved in planning and participating in the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL) Forum for the Oceania region.

NAB Rising Champions Program

CA delivered this grass-fed beef industry's flagship leadership program, which provides young beef enthusiasts (21-35 years) with the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence in leadership, networking, media and key issues affecting the beef industry and the wider agricultural industry. We are very proud to have seen all members of this year's Rising Champion cohort already actively involved in the beef industry, the 2022 program has again proven to present an unrivalled opportunity for young leaders to accelerate their personal career development and network with industry and government representatives. CA continuous to offer past Rising Champions opportunities to represent the industry on external committees and working groups through the Rising Champions Alumni.

Rural Awareness Tour

After a few years of being absent due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, CA reinstated the annual Rural Awareness Tour (RAT) again. The RAT provides government officials and key industry stakeholders involved an on-the-ground understanding of the beef cattle industry and the effects of government policy.

The 2022 Rural Awareness Tour took place from 31 Oct – 4 Nov 2022, in Northern Queensland and the Northern Territory, with an extended leg for international delegates sponsored by an ATMAC grant. In total 19 DAFF and 5 Indonesian representatives attended the tour. CA has begun to plan the 2023 Rural Awareness Tour which will take place in South Australia and Victoria.