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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Via Email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

LIVESTOCK SA...

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Re: Definition of meat and other animal products

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee's inquiry into the definition of meat and other animal products. This is an issue of importance to Livestock SA.

Livestock SA works to inform government, businesses, and the wider community on the contribution of livestock producers to the food and fibre industries and to the South Australian economy. Established in 2012, to represent the interests of beef cattle, sheep, and goat producers across South Australia. Currently Livestock SA has more than 3,500 members.

Livestock SA is a member of Primary Producers SA, working with other commodity groups on issues affecting all farmers. Nationally, Livestock SA is the South Australian member of the Sheep Producers Australia, WoolProducers Australia, Cattle Council of Australia, Goat Industry Council of Australia, and the Southeast Australian Livestock Exporters Association. Through Livestock SA and the Peak Councils, Livestock SA is also a member of the National Farmers Federation.

Livestock SA understands that meat, dairy, and plant-based proteins can all coexist in the industry. However, there is a need to address the real concerns surrounding product labelling that will enable the growth of all protein-based sectors and the Australian agricultural industry. Consumers must be properly informed about what they are buying. This means accurate and honest product labelling, particularly when plant-based producers are using comparative advertising for their plant-based products and make claims that they have the same health or protein benefits over red meat.

The red meat industry invests hundreds of millions of dollars each year to supply the safest and highest quality premium meat to Australian consumers. Livestock SA strongly advocates for regulatory protection of the term 'meat' and all the associated terms, including beef, lamb, and goat to ensure that these investments are protected. We would like to see retailers shelving plant-based products separately from meat-based products and not placed side-by-side in the same display. This could mislead consumers into believing that plant-based products are directly comparable to meat-based products i.e., placing products side by side does not mean that they are the same.

Livestock SA is concerned about the potential impairment of the Australian meat industry from misleading product labelling manufactured from plant-based or synthetic protein brands. Livestock SA believes that product labelling for plant-based or synthetic protein products should not contain descriptors using references to animal flesh or products made predominately from animal flesh i.e., meat. Livestock SA also opposes plant-based protein products being retailed in packaging with livestock images. Livestock SA is concerned about the immediate and long-term social and economic

impacts of the appropriation of Australian meat category branding on businesses, livestock producers and individuals across regional Australia.

Livestock SA is also concerned about a reliance upon imported ingredients in many plant-based products and a potential negative knock-on impact on regional agricultural employment.

If meat, dairy and plant-based proteins are to coexist in the industry, these very real concerns need to be addressed. Plant-based protein products must be clearly identified so that the red meat industry is not unfairly negatively impacted. Misleading plant-based labelling that is specifically designed to get a market advantage should not lead to a consumer or business detriment for the red meat industry.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Keynes
President Livestock SA