

## Senate Committee - Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport

### Meat and Livestock Australia – Questions on Notice

#### ***DEXA Technology***

**QUESTION:** When did the MLA first start giving consideration to objective carcass measurement (OCM) technology?

**Answer:** MLA has invested in the research and development of objective measurement systems since the company's establishment in 1998. More recently, the development and adoption of objective measurement technologies to facilitate processing efficiencies, information exchange along the value chain and a transition to value based pricing has been a priority in each of MLA's recent Strategic Plans (2010-2015 and 2016-2020). It is also a key objective within the Meat Industry's Strategic Plan (MISP2020).

**QUESTION:** Given that processors were already starting to introduce technology to support OCM, why did MLA decide that taking the lead (using producer's funds) was the most appropriate course of action?

There have been conflicting reports about how far advanced the development of the DEXA technology is, when it will be available for installation.

**Answer:** DEXA technology for both beef and lamb is available for commercial installation now.

It is one of a range of objective measurement technologies within the suite of MLA research and development investment that the company has made utilising producer levies, research partner and private investment and matching Federal Government research funding since its establishment in 1998.

Specifically, the use of x-ray platforms for objective whole of carcass measurement was first initiated by MLA in 2005 and MLA has utilised producer levies, as well as the other sources listed above, in subsequent research and development of the technology.

As the development of the technology progressed, MLA entered into a collaborative research partnership in 2012 with Murdoch University and Scott Technology to develop the application of DEXA as an objective measurement tool for measuring meat, fat and bone in lamb carcasses. JBS was engaged and the company's Bordertown processing plant facility was used as a host location for development work. JBS subsequently applied DEXA technology within another of its lamb facilities to facilitate automation and include the opportunity for DEXA grading of lamb carcasses.

During the lamb development work, Teys Cargill and MLA along with Scott Technology and Murdoch University, initiated research and development on the application of DEXA technology to beef processing. This work, which JBS subsequently joined, has culminated in Teys Cargill installing a full-scale beef DEXA unit in the company's Rockhampton plant.

Aside from the development and installation of the technology within JBS and Teys Cargill, the balance of the Australian red meat processing sector were not introducing or planning to introduce the technology at a rate that would make a significant difference to the Australian industry.

Given the potential economic benefit to the whole of industry, as well as the imperatives set out in MISP2020 for industry's adoption of objective measurement systems and transition to value based pricing, MLA announced a plan in November 2016 to accelerate the adoption of DEXA technology in

Australian processing plants and increase the accessibility of the resulting data across the value chain.

**QUESTION:** Please provide an update on the development and installation of DEXA technology. Where are things at?

It has been reported that OCM is still being trialled, and there is a "lack of definitive results".

**Answer:** DEXA technology comprises two main components; hardware and an algorithm and there are definitive results in both beef and lamb.

For beef and sheep, the hardware research and development is completed and ready for mass adoption.

For sheep, the algorithm has been developed across the full range of expected smallstock specifications. The lamb algorithm is ready for mass adoption.

The beef algorithm has been developed, to date, on a range of carcasses within the spectrum of expected Australian beef specifications. The beef algorithm is ready for mass adoption by processors who process within the beef specifications of the algorithm. MLA expects to have the beef algorithm finalised for all specifications by early 2018 through Teys Cargill's Rockhampton processing plant installation.

Like all technologies, DEXA will continue to be further refined over the years ahead.

**QUESTION:** Why did MLA decide not to wait until there are definitive results and reliable empirical data from pilot programs before backing expenditure?

Concerns have been raised about the independent regulation of the new technology – for example, who is going to calibrate the system, conduct audits and be responsible for a complaints resolution process?

**Answer:** as referenced above, there are definitive results in both beef and lamb.

It is anticipated that AUS-MEAT will regulate the application of DEXA technology and be the responsible body for both industry auditing and complaints resolution. An Objective Carcass Measurement (OCM) Adoption and Commercialisation committee has also been formed, under the chairmanship of industry expert Gary Burrige and including all peak industry councils and the major processors, to progress the adoption and commercialisation of OCM technologies including DEXA.

In terms of calibration of DEXA systems, each system will have its own calibration block and process that will be automatically undertaken by the DEXA control system. Research is still underway to ascertain the best calibration frequency and, once agreed, this will be implemented into DEXA units before any data is supplied to producers for commercial feedback and on-farm decision-making. The calibration blocks will be developed by Murdoch University in conjunction with AUS-MEAT.

**QUESTION:** How will MLA provide transparency and surety to producers?

**Answer:** The purpose of DEXA is to provide an objective scientific measure of lean meat yield which is calibrated against a known standard, which is agreed by industry.

MLA will ensure that any processors which install DEXA systems utilising producer levies via MLA and matching Federal Government research investment must provide this scientifically measured lean meat yield information back to the producer whom the processor purchased the livestock from. This

is a non-negotiable requirement of any processor contract with MLA. The contract will also contain non-negotiables pertaining to operation of the DEXA system, calibration and duration of obligations.

**QUESTION:** Could you provide an overview of the current funding model for the installation of DEXA – and a breakdown of the proposed funding model - what is each sector of the industry expected to pay?

**Answer:** There is one model that is currently being utilised by some processors and a second model under industry consideration through the peak industry councils and the Objective Carcase Measurement (OCM) Adoption and Commercialisation committee.

Under the first model, processors are working directly with MLA one on one to install DEXA units in their facilities. This model requires the processor to provide 50% of the cost of the system and MLA providing the other 50% utilising matching Federal Government research investment. Under this model, a processor can also seek up to 50% of their required contribution (hence up to 25% of the total cost of installation) from any available private processor levies that processor may have held within AMPC. This is through a funding mechanism known as a 'Plant Initiated Project', or PIP.

The second model, which is now under consideration by the industry, is a whole-of-industry offer similar in very broad terms to that originally proposed by MLA in November 2016. This would involve the provision of an incentive, in the form of a cost offset of up to 100%, for any AUS-MEAT registered processing facility to install DEXA technology. MLA, under direction from the Industry Objective Measurement Adoption and Commercialisation committee, is currently finalising the budget for such an opt-in approach, which was previously estimated by MLA at up to \$150 million. Once this budget is finalised, the committee can ascertain how this budget could be funded. Some examples, but they are only examples, could be:

1. 50% MLA (via Fed Govt R&D\$), 25% producer levies (split by species), 25% processor levies.
2. 50% MLA (via Fed Govt R&D\$), 25% producer levies (split by species), 12.5% processor levies, 12.5% private processor contribution.
3. 50% MLA (via Fed Govt R&D\$), 20% producer levies (split by species), 10% processor levies, 20% private processor contribution.
4. 50% MLA (via Fed Govt R&D\$), 15% producer levies (split by species), 15% processor levies, 20% private processor contribution.

It should be noted that the second model consideration by the industry may never eventuate if industry agreement cannot be reached on the funding model.

**QUESTION:** Did MLA undertake meaningful consultation with the industry re the new OCM technology? Please give details regarding who was consulted, when they were consulted and how their views were taken into consideration.

**Answer:** MLA's statutory Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth specifies MLA's responsibility to communicate and consult with levy payers, MLA members and the peak industry councils. Accordingly, within MLA, decisions on levy investments across all levy streams, are never made in isolation. MLA consults with and reports to the peak industry councils quarterly on strategy, budget allocations and key performance indicators. These councils (Cattle Council of Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Goat Industry Council of Australia, and Australian Lot Feeders Association) are the prescribed industry organisations for their respective sectors under the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*. The industry also provides MLA with advice on strategic direction for a wide range of programs including marketing, research and development.

In 2015, MLA also implemented a new regional consultation framework for directing research, development and adoption (RD&A) investment for grassfed cattle and sheepmeat levies. The framework was developed following an independent review of MLA's levy investment systems for on-farm R&D. MLA commissioned the review in early 2013 as part of our regular drive for continuous improvement in the way we engage stakeholders in setting RD&A priorities, implementation of strategy and two-way industry communication.

Livestock producers can also influence the investment of their levies through a number of industry consultation mechanisms. For example, the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) is the peak body that represents the collective interests of the Australian red meat industry. RMAC is responsible for the development of the Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP2020) which provides the overarching strategic framework that enables the direction, measuring and reporting of overall industry progress for government and industry stakeholders.

Levy payers are consulted by RMAC during the development of the five-year MISP. The peak industry councils subsequently develop sector specific (grassfed cattle, feedlot, sheepmeat, goats, live export) industry strategic plans.

MLA's five-year corporate planning is cascaded out of the MISP, industry strategic plans and the Australian Government's Science and Research Priorities and Rural Research, Development and Extension Priorities. MLA's five-year corporate plan is translated into annual investment plans that define MLA's marketing and research and development strategies and programs.

In addition to its producer peak industry councils and prior to MLA's AGM announcement, MLA also sought the views of a wide range of processing companies on the use of DEXA technology for grading and producer feedback and beef boning automation throughout October and early November 2016. These included Teys Cargill, Kilcoy Pastoral Company, Nippon, Nolans, NCMC, TFI, Australian Country Choice and Sanger. After MLA's AGM announcement, MLA visited the following companies: Fletchers, John Dee, Stanbroke Beef, Midfield Meats, Harvey Beef, V&V Walsh and Ralphps. MLA invited AMPC to all of these meetings and AMPC attended one of these.

The views sourced from all MLA's consultation were considered in the preparation of MLA's AGM announcement.

**QUESTION:** Has MLA consulted with producers regarding the funding model for DEXA – specifically, were producers consulted prior to the MLA's announcement regarding the \$150M expenditure on the installation of DEXA?

**Answer:** Further to the answer above, MLA has routinely reported on the progress of its objective measurement research and development programs, including DEXA, relative to the imperatives set out by industry in MISP2020 and each of peak industry councils' sector-specific industry plans.

**QUESTION:** Is there a cost benefit analysis in relation to the installation of the new DEXA technology? How was the figure of \$150 million reached?

**Answer:** An independent economic assessment commissioned by MLA and the Australian Meat Processing Corporation (AMPC) and published in March 2017 identified a \$420 million potential annual benefit to the industry from the full adoption of objective measurement and associated pricing signals by 2030. The report ('Development of supply chain objective measurement (OM)

strategy & value proposition to stakeholders’) found the benefits related to measuring lean meat yield account for around 65% of the potential \$420 million annual impact, shared between producers and processors. However, the report found that unless the rollout of the technology is fast-tracked, only \$72 million per annum of benefit is likely to be realised by 2020 on current rates of adoption. The report noted that if the adoption of objective measurement technology is ‘fast-tracked’ – similar to MLA’s proposal for DEXA rollout – more of the benefits will be realised and sooner. The report is publicly available on the MLA website [here](#).

An analysis of MLA’s proposal to accelerate the adoption of DEXA conducted by financial services firm EY for AMPC and released in June 2017 recommended that industry advance objective carcass measurement initiatives and that AMPC and MLA work together in taking these initiatives forward.

The initial budget estimate of \$150 million to install DEXA technology across the processing industry was ascertained by drawing on the list of AUS-MEAT registered Australian slaughter floor facilities (<https://www.ausmeat.com.au/docs/AUS-MEAT%20Accreditation%20Listing.pdf>) and then categorising each of the 79 resulting facilities into both a species (beef and smallstock) and a processing throughput (small, medium and large) classification. An estimate of the cost of DEXA for each one of those six classifications was ascertained, including an indicative allowance for room readiness, installation and other IT infrastructure. The six unique prices were then used against each of the 79 registered processing facilities to obtain a cost within each of the six classifications, and a total budget of \$150 million if all 79 plants were to opt-in to the offering.

**QUESTION:** Producers have raised concerns about whether the cost of DEXA installation will mean an increase in the levy. Are producers right to be concerned?

**Answer:** The decision for any increase in the levy is one for industry and any decision to do so must first be preceded by a vote which must be endorsed by levy payers.

If industry, through the peak councils and Objective Measurement Adoption and Commercialisation committee, agree on a whole of industry opt-in adoption model and that model includes the use of producer levies, MLA’s view is that the levy contribution made will come from existing levy income. Given the funding models under consideration by the Objective Measurement Adoption and Commercialisation committee, a likely funding model – if agreed – will require less than a 25% contribution from producer levies. This amount will not have any significant impact on MLA’s other research and development activities and so will not justify a levy increase for the sole purpose of adopting DEXA industry-wide.

**QUESTION:** Given producers’ funds have been used in the development (and potential installation) of DEXA, will they actually own any part of the technology? Who will ultimately own both the machinery and the Intellectual Property rights in relation to DEXA?

**Answer:** Ownership and intellectual property (IP) rights should be considered with respect to the various aspects of a DEXA solution. A DEXA solution requires:

1. x-ray hardware components,
2. other infrastructure and designs that integrate the x-ray hardware components into a processing facility,
3. an algorithm to convert DEXA output into a meat:fat:bone (lean meat yield) result, and
4. the installed system as a whole, comprising the previous three components.

The x-ray hardware IP and right to manufacture is owned by those companies who manufacture the relevant pieces. An example is Varian (<https://www.vareximaging.com/replacement-x-ray-tubes>). Integrators, such as Scott Technology purchase these components from companies such as Varian.

The IP behind the DEXA system design and the integration of the various components to form that working DEXA system will be owned by the supplier. However, where MLA has partnered with such a company, MLA has a commercialisation contract with that company to control how that IP is used and not used. This also assists in measuring the benefit to the Australian red meat industry.

The algorithm IP is owned by MLA on behalf of the Australian red meat and livestock industry. MLA issues the use of this algorithm to any DEXA solution provider wishing to install a DEXA objective measurement (OM) solution in an Australian red meat processing facility.

When any system (whether it be DEXA or some other non-OM solution) is installed into any facility, ownership will be dictated by the terms and conditions of the commercial arrangement. It is anticipated that for any DEXA system installation, ownership of the system will reside with the host site. However, MLA and the industry as a whole has a lien over the x-ray hardware items such that, on a contractual basis, MLA can repossess the hardware. For example, this might occur if the hardware was not being used for the purposes agreed by industry in return for industry's investment in the installation of the technology in a particular processing plant.

### ***Price Transparency – Milestone Reports***

It has been suggested that a case for price transparency was clearly made in Milestone reports 2, 3 and 4. It seems, however, that MLA has backed away from these benefits in Milestone report 5.

**QUESTION:** Could you please comment on the noted difference in the tone of the Milestone reports – particularly between 4 and 5.

**Answer:** The research project 'An assessment of price transparency in the beef supply chain' was initiated by CCA to consider options for increasing price transparency in light of concerns that a lack of price information along the beef value chain was affecting marketing and investment decisions in the industry. MLA was engaged to manage the project, which was overseen by a project steering committee comprising representatives from CCA, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, industry and ABARES. The project was divided into five progress sections – referred to as 'Milestones' – with each section designed to build on the last. In summary, the goals of each section were to:

1. Engage contractors to execute the project
2. Review other systems available in other markets, including the US
3. Investigate price transparency at each stage of the Australian cattle supply chain
4. Use information from sections 2 and 3 to examine the theoretical benefits of improved transparency
5. Investigate the practicalities of implementing particular price transparency systems across the Australian cattle supply chain.

Milestone Four identified the potential benefits to producers from improving price transparency. Milestone Five provided options to deliver greater price transparency at identified points along the Australian beef supply chain.

**QUESTION:** Could you please explain why the Milestone 4 report was published at the same time as Milestone 5 (even though it had been completed over 12 months earlier)?

**Answer:** While Milestones Four outlines in theory the benefits that full price transparency could provide, Milestone Five provides context, outlining critical factors like cost and practicalities

surrounding implementation. Price transparency is a complex matter and, implemented to its fullest extent, has many implications for the beef industry. Given this, the price transparency project was designed to be considered in its entirety, rather than viewing the individual progress sections independently.

MLA would traditionally publish a report only on the completion of a project and projects are contracted on a milestone basis. Given the interest in 'An assessment of price transparency in the beef supply chain' project, progress reports on project milestones were also published. The final project report, milestone five, represents the conclusion of the research project and contains recommendations.

Milestone Four identified the potential benefits to producers from improving price transparency. Milestone Five recommends options to deliver greater price transparency at identified points along the Australian beef supply chain. For this reason Milestones Four and Five need to be considered together and were released in close succession. While Milestones Four outlines in theory the benefits that full price transparency could provide, Milestone Five provides context, outlining critical factors like cost and practicalities surrounding implementation.

For example, one of the objectives of the project was to examine the US system of price reporting and the application of that to the Australian industry given there are key differences between both industries and systems. The US industry is feedlot based, of which 80 per cent of product is sold on the US domestic market. In contrast, the Australian cattle industry is predominantly export focussed, with our product sold to more than 100 international markets. Milestone five also acknowledges that a reasonable amount of cattle and beef market information already exists in Australia but does suggest a range of further initiatives.

**QUESTION:** Producers have long argued for price transparency across the supply chain, yet their funds are being used pursuing DEXA. How do you account for this?

**Answer:** MLA provides a broad suite of market information services and – within the company's remit – continues to drive improvements in transparency and competitiveness within the red meat industry by further enhancing its market reporting and prioritising objective carcass measurement technology.

The Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP2020) called for the development of "systems and policies to underpin the industry's need to differentiate prices according to defined performance against key quality, yield and integrity attributes (value-based marketing), as assessed by objective measurement and assurance systems." Within the MISP2020 objectives to be achieved include:

- The development of tools to provide objective and accurate measurement of all key attributes included in the meat language.
- Performance against key quality, yield and integrity attributes is made available across the entire supply chain, packaged to facilitate optimal business decisions.

The adoption of DEXA technology across the Australian red meat processing sector as proposed by MLA contributes to the achievement of these and other MISP2020 objectives.

MLA has also been working through those recommendations of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) 'Cattle and beef market study' that are within the company's remit

in consultation with industry, noting the ACCC's view that the Red Meat Advisory Council should be responsible for overseeing their implementation and monitoring compliance.

Amongst its 15 recommendations, the ACCC report welcomes improvements made by MLA to its market information services and notes that MLA's ability to continue to improve its reporting will depend on the information provided to it by live exporters, processors and retailers. This is because MLA does not have the legal authority to compel these entities to supply information or the power to enforce mandatory price reporting.

The ACCC report also welcomed the moves made by MLA to introduce objective carcass measurement technology throughout the industry, and supports MLA's proposal that the data it produces should be shared for the benefit of the industry.

As a service provider to red meat and livestock producers, MLA is committed to working with industry to continuously improve our market reporting and insights services to provide the most comprehensive, timely and professional information.

### ***New Producer Representative Body (Cattle Australia)***

MLA will be aware that an Implementation Committee has been set up, and that the IC has been requested to develop a proposed structure for a new representative body (to replace CCA) and look at ways to fund the new body long term.

**QUESTION:** What engagement has the MLA had with the Implementation Committee?

**Answer:** The representation of the cattle industry is a matter for industry to resolve. MLA is a service provider as the declared industry marketing body and the declared industry research body under sections 60(1) and 60(2) of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*. As such, MLA has offered funding support of up to \$30,000 to the Implementation Committee to facilitate industry consultation.

**QUESTION:** What are the challenges in the current relationship that exists between MLA and CCA – in terms of roles and responsibilities?

**Answer:** The roles and responsibilities of MLA and CCA are very distinct.

MLA was established in 1998 as a public company limited by guarantee and is the declared industry marketing body and the declared industry research body under sections 60(1) and 60(2) of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997* (AMLI Act). MLA's roles and responsibilities are set out in the AMLI Act, the red meat industry Memorandum of Understanding, MLA's Constitution and in the statutory Funding Agreement 2016-2020 between the Commonwealth of Australia (represented by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) and MLA. The Funding Agreement, MLA's Constitution and MLA's Strategic Plan 2016-2020 are publicly available on the MLA website here: <https://www.mla.com.au/about-mla/Planning-reporting/corporate-documents/>.

CCA was established in July 1979 to represent all farmer organisations whose members had beef cattle enterprises and now offers direct membership to individual beef producers as well. CCA's mission is to represent and progress the interests of Australian cattle producers. CCA is the prescribed industry representative body for the purposes of section 59 of the AMLI Act, which

means an organisation that represents an Australian industry and undertakes agri-political activities or activities that aim to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions.

MLA's relationship with CCA is a mature business relationship and MLA is not aware of any challenges with the current relationship which is based on MLA delivering the KPIs set out in MIS2020.

**QUESTION:** Under the MOU, CCA (as the PIC) has oversight of MLA, but is not sufficiently resourced to fulfil this role. What structural changes should be made to ensure that MLA is adequately resourced?

**Answer:** The assertion is incorrect. First, MLA's Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth requires that MLA meets with prescribed industry bodies at least six-monthly to review industry priorities for research and development and marketing investments, and to report on MLA's performance against its Strategic Plan and Annual Investment Plan. MLA does this with each of its prescribed industry bodies, including CCA, on a quarterly basis.

Second, MLA will invest \$1.9 million over the next two years in the 'Building capacity in the Grassfed Beef Industry' project which includes a provision for MLA to acquire industry knowledge to inform the company's strategies and programs through CCA. This involves the use of CCA's consultative committees to inform its research, development, adoption and marketing priorities. More detail on this project is publicly available on the MLA website [here](#).

**QUESTION:** Does MLA have a view on how the new representative body – Cattle Australia – could be structured and funded to avoid some of the 'contradictions' that currently exist between CCA (as the PIC) and MLA?

**Answer:** The representation of the cattle industry is a matter for industry to resolve. MLA is a service provider as the declared industry marketing body and the declared industry research body under sections 60(1) and 60(2) of the Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997.

**QUESTION:** Has the MLA offered any funding assistance to the Implementation Committee?

**Answer:** Yes, \$30,000 for industry consultative purposes. The Implementation Committee has not sought to access this offer of funding as yet.

### ***MLA Study to assess price transparency – Project G.POL.1503***

The Milestone 5 report – commissioned by MLA – was released in May 2016 and outlined various options for increasing cattle and beef price transparency, including:

- mandatory price reporting;
- voluntary price reporting;
- carcass cut-out reporting;
- an on-line board including final OTH carcass selling price system; and
- enhanced MLA and commercial market reporting and intelligence services.

The report gave an initial, broad outline of the costs associated with implementing each of these systems.

MLA is currently proposing to spend \$150M to jointly fund an accelerated roll-out of DEXA technology in up to 90 AUS-MEAT accredited facilities.

Question: The Milestone 5 report provided estimates of the cost for each of the identified options for improving price transparency in the beef supply. Could you provide the committee with a brief overview of those estimated costs?

Answer: The estimated costs are set out on pages 8-15 in the milestone 5 report which is publicly available on the MLA website here: <https://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/research-and-development/documents/industry-issues/price-transparency---milestone-5.pdf>

If industry, the ACCC or the Federal Government through legislation will make price reporting mandatory across the red meat industry value chain, MLA will have access to the mandatory data and will report the data.

Question: How do those estimates compare with MLA's current proposal to jointly fund an accelerated roll-out of DEXA technology – at a cost of \$150 M – given that OCM is only one aspect of price transparency.

Answer: With support from all red meat industry peak councils, MLA and AMPC are currently evaluating a collective funding model for the voluntary adoption of DEXA objective carcass measurement technology across the red meat industry. When MLA announced a potential funding model for accelerating the adoption of DEXA across the processing industry, MLA clearly stated that a decision around any funding model would be up to industry.

This initiative is paving the way for scientific measurement of saleable meat yield, value based marketing and industry-wide productivity gains through processing automation, genetic improvement and data-based on-farm decision making.

Question: The Milestone 5 report which was released in May 2016, outlined various options for increasing cattle and beef price transparency. Has industry made a decision regarding a preferred option, and if so, how was this decision made?

Answer: The research project 'An assessment of price transparency in the beef supply chain' was initiated by CCA to consider options for increasing price transparency in light of concerns that a lack of price information along the beef value chain was affecting marketing and investment decisions in the industry. Following consideration of the report, Cattle Council requested MLA develop value based marketing and investigate greater education options to enable producers to better market their cattle. Improving quality and compliance via enhanced supply chain information is also a key imperative within the Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP2020).

MLA is working with industry to facilitate the development and adoption of objective measurement tools across the value chain which, as well as enabling improvements in productivity and price transparency, will also enable the industry's transition from the current price averaging system to value based marketing. In terms of market information services and greater education options to enable producers to better market their cattle, MLA has also made a range of improvements over the last two years including:

- The addition of five additional saleyards to the National Livestock Reporting Service (NLRS) in 2015-16
- Launch of the Western Young Cattle Indicator (WYCI)
- Launch of the Market Statistics Database
- Quarterly projections updates – assisting the accuracy of industry forecasts, allowing adaptation to seasonal and external factors more easily
- Launch of myMLA online member services with enhanced Prices and Markets tools.

Question: What are the proposed next steps in relation to the G.POL.1503 project?

Answer: The G.POL.1503 project itself is complete, however MLA's work to improve its market information service, facilitate the development and adoption of objective measurement tools across the value chain and enable industry's transition to value based marketing is ongoing.