



The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
PO Box 6022, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: Minister.Littleproud@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Minister

RE: Reform Recommendations for Australia's Traceability System – Final Report

I write today to present you with SAFEMEAT's report '*Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system*' (the report). Over the past two years SAFEMEAT has been working with its stakeholders to develop a range of reform recommendations to enhance the existing National Livestock Traceability System (NLIS) at the request of the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC). This work has culminated in the final report which presents five reform recommendations that seek to deliver enhanced biosecurity and traceability outcomes for livestock industries, jurisdictions and the Commonwealth government.

The report urges immediate action to address deficiencies in Australia's livestock traceability system to increase our biosecurity preparedness. In addition, the report highlights the growing threat of international trading partners becoming increasingly aware of these deficiencies, thus exposing our sector to unacceptable risk. Importantly, the report offers a feasible pathway forward and recommendations to address these issues and is a demonstration of an unprecedented level of national industry consensus on the need for reform.

SAFEMEAT presented the report to the NBC for consideration at their meeting on 11 March 2020. Upon presentation of the report SAFEMEAT also recommended that NBC provide necessary resources to commission and undertake scoping work on options for implementing the intent of SAFEMEAT's recommendations for presentation to the Agriculture Ministers Forum (AGMIN) by the end of the year. It is our understanding that NBC agreed to this recommendation and we look forward to the commencement of that work.

This process has generated an enormous amount of goodwill across the supply chain however, it is important to note that further consultation with state-based stakeholders is required. This is necessary to ensure that the need for reform is clearly communicated and that the measures recommended in the report are demonstrated as both necessary and justifiable. SAFEMEAT is keen to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity hence recommendations to undertake both a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) and a pre-RIS scoping study.

In the interests of transparency and accountability, SAFEMEAT Partners have also agreed to support Peak Industry Councils (PICs) to distribute the final report to their stakeholders to assist them with their ongoing consultations with their members. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAFEMEAT believes that PICs member organisations must have the capacity to engage in honest discussion on reform with their members. Ensuring they have a better understanding of the current state of the system will assist that process.

As such, the final report has been distributed as livestock-industry-in-confidence and is accompanied by a covering page and talking points, developed to give appropriate context to the recommendations and assist PICs and their members to address stakeholder queries. These documents are also attached for your information.

Our red-meat and livestock industries are crucial to our state and Commonwealth economies alike and are poised to do much of the heavy lifting as we progress through and emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. The value of these industries is underpinned by a traceability system that has been the envy of the world, [REDACTED]

As the report outlines, *“There is a sense among SAFEMEAT members that this is a once in a generation opportunity to address long standing barriers to effective traceability. There is also a strong sense that the consequences of missing this opportunity are not acceptable.”*

The complexities of livestock traceability dictate that an unprecedented level of collaboration and cooperation between industry and government, and between the jurisdictions and the Commonwealth will be required to continue this work. As such I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you either in person or virtually as the situation permits to discuss the final report and its recommendations further.

On behalf of SAFEMEAT I thank you for your commitment to maintaining our status as world leaders in the production of red meat and livestock, and to ensuring the integrity of the systems that safeguard our sector.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Andrew Henderson
Chair, SAFEMEAT Advisory Group

14 July 2020

Attachment:

- a) Final report ‘Reform recommendations for Australia’s livestock traceability system’ with covering page and talking points.



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: Minister.Littleproud@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Minister

RE: Evidence to support National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) livestock traceability reform recommendations

I write today to present you with two key reports recently completed and endorsed by SAFEMEAT to be used as evidence to support the NBC traceability reform process and SAFEMEAT's report *Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system*:

- National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Sheep & Goats Traceability Evaluation report: *A comparison and evaluation of traceability of electronic and visual identification in NLIS (Sheep & Goats) in a segment of the supply chain* (Evaluation Report)
- Centre for International Economics (CIE) report: *Improving traceability for sheep and goats - Update of the 2010 NLIS (sheep and goats) Business Plan* (CIE Report) and response to the report by the SAFEMEAT Sheep Traceability Working Group (STWG Response).

[REDACTED] and further demonstrate that the electronic identification (eID) system operating in Victoria does in fact have the capacity to meet the National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reinforcing the rationale behind SAFEMEAT's recommendations for system wide reform, presented to the NBC in March 2020.

Both reports highlight that individual eID, in conjunction with broader whole-of-system reform, provides a viable opportunity for the sheep and goat industries to strengthen traceability for biosecurity, food safety and emergency response, and for supporting market access.

This work has been conducted through SAFEMEAT at the request of Sheep Producers Australia as part of that organisation's ongoing consideration of traceability improvements in sheep. SAFEMEAT's broader membership has had visibility, and where appropriate, input into the development of the reports to ensure the process has been open, transparent and accountable. SAFEMEAT has also ensured that its Peak Industry Council members have the capacity to share these bodies of work with their respective State Farm Organisation members for the purposes of transparency and consultation on what are significant issues for both industry and government.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank your departmental officers who have actively participated in these processes.

SAFEMEAT considers that the findings and recommendations contained in these reports will assist your consideration of system wide reforms that will facilitate genuine improvement in livestock traceability performance. SAFEMEAT believes that these reforms are necessary for the betterment and prosperity of Australian sheep and goat industries and the entirety of our red meat and livestock sector.

I would appreciate the opportunity to brief you further on this work at your convenience and again, thank you for your consideration.

Also, as it is this time of the year, please allow me on behalf of the SAFEMEAT Advisory Group to wish you and your family a very enjoyable Christmas and safe festive season and good wishes for the new year.

Kind regards



Andrew Henderson
Chair, SAFEMEAT Advisory Group

Attachments:

- A. NLIS Sheep & Goats Traceability Evaluation report: *A comparison and evaluation of traceability of electronic and visual identification in NLIS (Sheep & Goats) in a segment of the supply chain* (Evaluation Report)
- B. STWG response to the CIE Report (STWG Response) and CIE report: *Improving traceability for sheep and goats - Update of the 2010 NLIS (sheep and goats) Business Plan* (CIE Report)



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref: MC20-010618

24 AUG 2020

Mr Andrew Henderson
Chair
SAFEMEAT Advisory Group
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Henderson

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 July 2020 sharing SAFEMEAT's report on recommended reforms for Australia's livestock traceability system. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this report to my attention.

I understand the *Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system* report and its recommendations are being considered through the National Biosecurity Committee and other forums. Traceability is integral to Australia's continued access in key export markets, ability to respond to pest and disease outbreaks, and to ensure food safety. It is encouraging to see industry investing in this important issue, and that you have a high level of support for reform.

I look forward to an update as this work progresses.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



The Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref: MC20-019927

13 JAN 2021

Mr Andrew Henderson
Chair
SAFEMEAT Advisory Group
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: safemeat@awe.gov.au

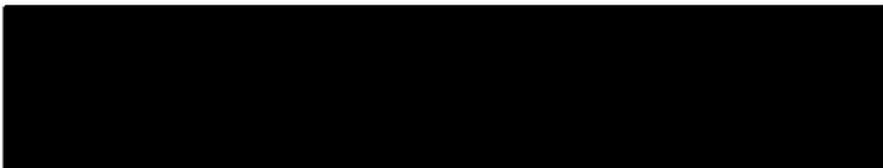
Dear Mr Henderson

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 December 2020 sharing the recently endorsed National Livestock Identification System sheep & goats traceability evaluation report '*A comparison and evaluation of traceability of electronic and visual identification in NLIS (Sheep & Goats) in a segment of the supply chain*' and CIE report '*Improving traceability for sheep and goats – Update of the 2010 NLIS (sheep and goats) Business Plan*'. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring these reports to my attention.

I understand work is underway to enhance national livestock traceability through the National Biosecurity Committee and other forums. These reports will assist in informing this very important agenda.

I acknowledge the work SAFEMEAT has undertaken to date and would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss this work further. I have asked my office to arrange a time.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



The Hon. David Littleproud MP

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
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Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600

Mr Andrew Henderson
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The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref: MS21-005907
27 August 2021

Mr Alan Bloxsom
Chair
SAFEMEAT Partners
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: safemeat@awe.gov.au

Dear Mr Bloxsom

I write as follow up to my meeting in February this year with SAFEMEAT Advisory Group Chair, Mr Andrew Henderson, to discuss recommendations SAFEMEAT provided to the National Biosecurity Committee about enhancing livestock traceability.

I discussed with Mr Henderson the Australian Government's strong support for efforts to enhance national livestock traceability arrangements. I also reiterated that, with state and territory governments having primary regulatory responsibility for domestic traceability, it is critical they, alongside industry, lead this change.

I have since written to my state and territory counterparts, affirming my own commitment to the work underway to strengthen Australia's national livestock traceability system to ensure it is fit for the future; and seeking the same of each of them. Having now received responses from most of counterparts, I'm pleased to say they too have affirmed their strong support for this important agenda. This demonstrates a national commitment toward improving livestock traceability as a national issue.

I have been advised there is some concern about the visibility of progress by governments on this matter. I note most change programs are significant undertakings and, as well as a clearly articulated case for change, there needs to be thorough exploration of potential solutions toward an agreed objective. While I acknowledge this may cause frustration, long term success and benefit is far more likely to be achieved through a considered approach.

I understand, in this fashion, the National Biosecurity Committee National Livestock Traceability Enhancement working group is building upon SAFEMEAT's report with exploratory work to support ministers settling a practical way forward. I am also aware the Committee has asked the working group to share regular communications with SAFEMEAT's Advisory Group.

I was pleased to note National Biosecurity Committee recently agreed the next steps for this agenda, including evaluating the costs of implementing individual electronic identification for sheep and goats in line with SAFEMEAT's recommendations. I encourage SAFEMEAT to continue to engage with National Biosecurity Committee and its working group on efforts across its member industries to support this agenda so that key issues and views can be considered. I am confident that good progress is being made to progress development of proposals for agriculture ministers' consideration.

Thank you for SAFEMEAT's advocacy for enhanced livestock traceability.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 310
Southport Business Centre, QLD, 4215

Email: Minister.Watt@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Minister

On behalf of SAFEMEAT I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

SAFEMEAT is a consultative partnership between industry and government that provides a platform for engagement and collaboration on key policy and strategic advice that ensures Australian meat products adhere to the highest standards of safety - from the paddock to the plate. SAFEMEAT consists of a senior decision-making Partners committee and is supported by an Advisory Group and associated issue-specific working groups.

My colleague Mr Andrew Henderson, Chair of the SAFEMEAT Advisory Group, and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and brief you on the work of SAFEMEAT, particularly on livestock traceability reform that SAFEMEAT has been progressing at the request of the National Biosecurity Committee since 2018.

This work includes the report '*Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system*' outlining five key recommendations and urging immediate action to address deficiencies in Australia's livestock traceability system to increase Australia's biosecurity preparedness and meet future challenges. Importantly, the report represents national industry consensus on a pathway forward, and an enormous amount of goodwill across the sector. I have attached a copy of the Report to this correspondence for your information.

Understanding that this is a busy time for you, we are happy to work in with your schedule and would appreciate the opportunity to meet online or in person at your convenience. The SAFEMEAT secretariat can be contacted on 02 6272 5570 or safemeat@awe.gov.au to arrange a meeting.

Kind regards



Allan Bloxsom
Chair, SAFEMEAT Partnership

8 June 2022

Attachment: *Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system*



Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 310
Southport Business Centre, QLD, 4215

Email: Minister.Watt@agriculture.gov.au

Dear Minister Watt

Invitation to attend a livestock traceability and integrity system field trip

On behalf of SAFEMEAT* I am pleased to invite you to join myself, Chair of the SAFEMEAT Partnership, and a small group of livestock industry colleagues on a livestock traceability and integrity system field trip. SAFEMEAT offers this invitation in conjunction with key Partners including Integrity Systems Company, Cattle Council of Australia, Sheep Producers Australia and the Australian Meat Industry Council.

With the growing threat of foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease, a robust livestock integrity system is critical to preserving Australia's enviable biosecurity status, and to enhancing the resilience, sustainability and prosperity of our red meat and livestock sector.

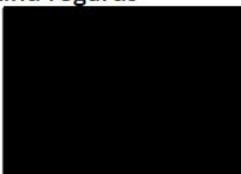
The traceability and integrity system field trip will be specifically aimed at providing you with an in-depth understanding of the livestock traceability and integrity system in operation from the farm to the processing establishment, [REDACTED]. It will also provide you with vital context around SAFEMEAT's recommendations** to strengthen Australia's livestock traceability system, delivered to the National Biosecurity Committee in March 2020 and currently being considered by senior agriculture officials and ministers. I would welcome an opportunity to brief you on this work at your convenience, as outlined in our letter dated 8 June 2022.

Pending confirmation of your availability, I will provide further details of the trip as soon as practicable.

I look forward to providing you with this valuable opportunity to observe the traceability system in action and build relationships with key livestock industry stakeholders.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or via the SAFEMEAT Secretariat on safemeat@agriculture.gov.au.

Kind regards



Allan Bloxsom
Chair, SAFEMEAT Partnership

16 September 2022

*SAFEMEAT is a consultative partnership between industry and government that provides a platform for engagement and collaboration on key policy and strategic advice that ensures Australian meat products adhere to the highest standards of safety - from the paddock to the plate. SAFEMEAT consists of a senior decision-making Partners committee and is supported by an Advisory Group and associated issue-specific working groups. The SAFEMEAT Secretariat is located within the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

** SAFEMEAT began working on reform recommendations to the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) at the request of the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) in 2018. In 2020, SAFEMEAT presented a report to the NBC outlining five interdependent recommendations to strengthen Australia's livestock traceability system and ensure we have the critical infrastructure in place to enhance Australia's biosecurity preparedness and meet future challenges. This work generated an enormous amount of goodwill across the sector and presents national industry consensus on a pathway forward. SAFEMEAT is working collaboratively with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to ensure the implementation of these recommendations reflects the urgency of the work in the current environment.

In response to the question on notice* SAFEMEAT received at the public hearing on 13 October 2022 regarding briefing the Minister for Agriculture on national livestock traceability reform, please see below:

**Senator CICCONE: You mentioned that you briefed the previous minister. You can probably take this on notice: are you able to provide the committee with when you briefed the minister? Were there any outcomes that came out of those discussions that you had with the minister about the work that you've done to date?*

Mr Henderson: We are happy to take that on notice.

SAFEMEAT meetings with the Minister's office

- 27 February 2019 – Mr Andrew Henderson met with Minister Littleproud's advisor to discuss national livestock traceability reform.
- 7 November 2019 – Mr Andrew Henderson and Dr Jane Weatherley, CEO Integrity Systems Company met with Minister McKenzie's advisors to discuss national livestock traceability reform.
- 24 February 2021 – Mr Andrew Hendon met with Minister Littleproud to discuss SAFEMEAT/ National Biosecurity Committee national livestock traceability reform process.