

## SUBMISSION AGAINST IMPORTATION OF BEEF

From: Paul and Anne Jones

We are against the importation of beef and present our submission as an 'Australian' cattle producer.

We believe that lifting the ban is based on trade, not science based as claimed. For some time the Federal Government has been keen to keep the food component of the CPI down—if this means sacrificing Australian producers, so be it. We import food from countries that have cheap labor, subsidized production costs and questionable chemical and OH&S standards.

In the past we have been involved in an agricultural exchange from Europe and Canada. In Canada we saw first hand the effect of BSE and the way the US reacted to the Canadian beef producers who found it—impossible to believe that in the US there was no major breakout of BSE. The banning of Canadian cattle into the US will take many years to recover, if ever, as all Canadian aged cattle went into US feed lots

If a disease occurs overseas, bans should be first installed on country of origin, until the source is found. If they have an NLIS system as in Australia, then you would have to be sure that cattle can not be moved from area to area or country to country in order to avoid a ban into Australia.

Australia has led the world in NLIS tracing and the ban of feeding waste, dead animals and blood and bone as a form of protein. Should imported products be able to skirt around our guidelines. NLIS will be irrelevant, consequently the consumer as well as the cattle industry will not be protected from imported diseases.

BSE is only one of the many diseases that could be introduced. It would nearly be impossible to combat due to the nature of our continent unless we make stringent protocols.

Regarding the introduction of pork imports—we were told that it was only 400t per year, now it is over 60% of our market. Even then, an Australian company was inserting Australian ham bone into imported boneless ham and selling them to leading supermarkets as 'Australian hams'. Luckily it got out to the media and the practice stopped that day. So there are cowboys in Australia as well as the US and South America.

Should BSE come into Australia by imported beef, you will not have to worry about what beef is left on the shelf because the Australian consumer will panic and not buy **any** beef products—full stop. So where will that leave the cattle producer??

It is of great concern that a lot of the information is done by desktop assessment, all due respect, by people [scientists] who may never have been out in the real world of cattle. Should their judgment be incorrect, it will have no effect on their employment--quite the reverse for cattle producers and their families. Then there may be people who are affected by the disease—which ever one may come to our clean country.

It is paramount that Australian beef Producers have a nationwide traceability. There should be the same treatment for all producers no matter what country of origin. This is for the **health** of Australian consumers, the **future** of our cattle industries as well as grain producers who depend on feed lots purchasing some of their commodities.