

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This submission:

draws to the attention of the House that we as cattle farmers strongly object to the lifting of restrictions to allow beef to be imported into Australia. We have a 'Clean and Green' country, free from diseases such as BSE (Mad Cow Disease) and Foot and Mouth Disease. Allowing beef into the country from countries that do not have our National Identification Livestock System (NILS) will be putting the whole industry at risk and we make the following points:

1. Farmers are decent hardworking people. who do it tough enough as it is.
2. This could jeopardise the Japanese market, when they realise that there is a risk that we might not be so 'Clean & Green?'
3. Even a "miniscule" risk is too much.
4. Any outbreak of abovementioned diseases would destroy the industry; people would stop eating meat and even dairy cattle could be affected, killing the dairy industry.
5. The Red Cross Blood Bank refuse to accept blood from anyone in Australia who spent 6 months in the UK during the period 1980 - 96.
(What does that say about their concerns?)
6. We produce enough of our own beef and do not need to import from other countries, especially those with no traceability. Fair Trading is one thing, but this is not fair, as other countries do not have our high standards.

Dr. John Mathews was given only 18 days to compile a report to determine if the importation of beef from BSE affected countries is safe. He based his assumptions on the importation of 10% of domestic consumption. This equates to 356,000 head of cattle, which could cause the closure of at least two major beef processing plants and the loss of 1,000 jobs. Who is the Labour Party working for if not for Australian workers?

We therefore ask the House to reverse the decision to allow beef imports into Australia putting our beef industry and the health of our nation at risk.

Signed.....Anne Thompson

Signed.....John Thompson