

Dear Committee Secretary,

I did intend to set aside some time to prepare a proper submission but am fast running out before the closing date, so please excuse this concise expression of opinion.

I am a beef producer with about 30 years experience, I also work as a consulting engineer within the rural industries.

While I may have limited knowledge of the 'Free trade' implications of the proposal I consider there would be very limited benefits at the domestic level.

Currently the prices received by producers are at or lower than the cost of production. The anecdotal evidence is supported by profit statements by the major public cattle companies. Allowing imported beef will have a detrimental financial effect on the Australian beef producer.

Allowing the imports may allow a small reduction in the retail price of beef but at the cost of small retailers who could not import on the scale required to compete with the supermarkets. The housewife may see some temporary benefit but this must be weighed against the cost of BSE establishing in the community.

As producers we have an extensive trace back system, will the beef from imported countries be subject to the same level of scrutiny?

Will people who lived in England during the BSE era be allowed to give blood?

In conclusion I feel the Committee must demonstrate a substantial balance of benefit from the proposal.

Sincerely,

Michael Delahunty

Colac, Victoria.