

In response to the inquiry of beef imports into Australia from countries with BSE.

I am against importing beef into Australia from countries that have had BSE as I believe the risk for our industry and the risk to consumers to be too high.

I am a cattle producer and have been for many years. I have seen the industry suffer through many ill thought out government decisions, but think that this is the worst one that has ever been implemented. The science behind this decision is flawed, but like most decisions that are made this won't be realised until there is an outbreak of BSE or FMD and then it will never be admitted to.

Australian cattle producers are not prepared to take the risk of any further diseases getting into our country. We have a clean green image and don't want to risk our quality of meat. It is our democratic right to insist that the government of the day protect our industry and our health. We have NLIS traceability which was forced on to us, so that if we ever got a disease we would know where it came from, and we now expect no less from any country that wants to import to us. But, if these countries have these diseases then traceability alone will not stop the disease, that will be up to each countries bio security measures and as seen with the equine flu, Australian security leaves a lot to be desired.

Any risk is too great, with BSE, FMD, vCJD & nvCJD all being potential threats to producers and consumers, it is ill advised to import beef from infected countries where their health regulations are often below our standards.

It is too late once the disease is here to say 'sorry'.

We will be holding the federal government solely responsible and accountable for any 'mistakes' and 'sorry' doesn't cut it.

Jim O'Neil