

FLETCHER INTERNATIONAL EXPORTS PTY LTD



ABN 64 003 213 652 ACN 003 213 652
Lot 11 Yarrandale Road, Dubbo, NSW 2830
Locked Bag 10 DUBBO NSW 2830 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 6884 5833
Main Office Fax: +61 2 6884 2965
Export Office Fax: +61 2 6884 6566
Email: mailbox@fletcher-international.com.au

2 May 2008

The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee – Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600.

RE: INQUIRY INTO MEAT MARKETING

Dear Secretary

On behalf of Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd, I wish to formally respond by way of submission for the requirement of "effective supervision" of national standards and controls applying to the branding and marketing of meat.

Commencing operations in Dubbo NSW in 1989, our single species "export accredited" processing facility has proven to be an industry icon. Be it our employment of people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, now in excess of 800 or our continued innovations in processing the team at Fletcher International work hard to establish and maintain the highest standards in all that we do. This is evidenced by our continual compliance of all levels of regulation and legislation either enforced by on plant veterinarian officers and AQIS inspectors or the many and varied audits we participate in each year.

For many years I have personally been witness to the indiscriminate purchase of both hoggets (two teeth) and young mutton (four teeth) from the Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets which adjoins our facility. Due to my background and experience in the farming and processing industry, I am well placed to appreciate the monetary value of all sheep lines and have been nothing short of bewildered to see both hogget and mutton lines attracting lamb prices to those processors situated across the border in Victoria.

FLETCHER INTERNATIONAL EXPORTS PTY LTD



ABN 64 003 213 652 ACN 003 213 652
 Lot 11 Yarrandale Road, Dubbo, NSW 2830
 Locked Bag 10 DUBBO NSW 2830 AUSTRALIA
 Telephone: +61 2 6884 5833
 Main Office Fax: +61 2 6884 2965
 Export Office Fax: +61 2 6884 6566
 Email: mailbox@fletcher-international.com.au

I offer the following points, which sum up in my view the "flow on" effects by the continuance of this illegal practice:

- Exports – Australia owes its prosperity to the many and varied export industries that inject much needed dollars into the economy. For many years the red meat industry has relied directly upon its reputation as a supplier of wholesome and clean products. Any legislation that does not guarantee the overseas consumer of such a standard is not only defeating but jeopardises this industry and in turn directly threatens our farmer's livelihood.
- Domestic Consumption - We have seen in our generation the emergence of the meat processing, retail, smallgoods and food service sectors. In total this industry supports 60'000 workers and produces GDP in excess of \$16 billion per annum. Lamb has been successfully marketed to domestic consumers and is part of the Australian staple. The massive combined efforts of farmers, M.L.A and promotional initiatives by way of improved husbandry and farming techniques has been directly undermined by this branding fiasco. Effective regulators and legislation are the vital link to ensuring product integrity and the survival of the "Lamb Brand" across the consumer base and maintaining the industry which relies on it.
- Processor Survival – By the lack of standards at a Federal Level, I clearly recognise the unfair advantage provided to the Victorian Processor. With stock availability at an all time low – to maintain the operation of a "continuous flow process" our organisation must aggressively compete with other processors to source suitable livestock. I can identify many occasions where hoggets were purchased for processing in Victoria and as a result various shifts at our plant were cancelled as numbers could not be competitively sourced.

I formally welcome this inquiry into the branding practices which impact greatly upon this industry. My personal input to the 20-20 Summit in Canberra last month suggested the harmonisation of state legislation. This I feel is yet another example of how such state legislation continues to hold this great country from achieving its full potential.

I personally support the urgent progression of this inquiry and if requested to appear to give evidence before the Standing Committee, am prepared to do so.

Yours Sincerely,

Roger Fletcher
 Managing Director.