MEDIA RELEASE

RED MEAT ADVISORY COUNCIL LIMITED*

15 February 2010

RMAC CONFIDENT ITS BSE-RULE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE MET

Recent media reports that Red Meat Advisory Council Ltd (RMAC), and industry generally, will be excluded from the development of BSE-related import rules, and that equivalent-outcome requirements for traceability will be ignored, are totally incorrect.

Chairman of RMAC, Mr Ian McIvor, AM, said that RMAC has been assured by the CEO of Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ, the body responsible for developing the new rules) that: industry will be consulted; 'equivalency of outcomes' as requested by RMAC for traceability will be included; and in-country inspections will be undertaken, where necessary, to validate exporting country claims as part of the approval process.

"RMAC and its member bodies have written to and met with Government authorities and the Minister to convey in the strongest terms the conditions under which we would support the implementation of the new policy. These conditions are that the exporting country be required to:

1. comply with international rules regarding removal of specified risk materials, age of cattle, etc.
2. provide guaranteed 'equivalency of outcomes' in respect of cattle traceability, and
3. accept Australia's right for in-country inspection as part of a rigorous science-based risk assessment.

"Given the assurances provided by FSANZ, including RMAC being provided the opportunity to comment on the draft rules, I am confident RMAC's three conditions will be embodied in the new guidelines against which countries making application for access to the Australian beef market will be assessed", said Mr McIvor.

Contrary to recent media reports RMAC and its member bodies remain supportive of this policy change because the policy is based on sound international science.

"Finally, it would be irresponsible for industry to condone foreign countries having access to our largest single market, our domestic market, without a requirement for them to meet the high standards we set ourselves in supplying this market," Mr McIvor concluded.

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* Red Meat Advisory Council Ltd is the peak advisory body for the red-meat and livestock industry and has as its members Australian Meat Industry Council, Cattle Council of Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Australian Lot Feeders' Association and Australian Livestock Exporters' Council