

Shelf life expansion for Aussie meat to UAE signals new opportunities for producers

Representatives of Australia's cattle and sheepmeat producers have joined with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) to welcome an expansion of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) market for packaged meat which could be worth up to \$60 million annually.

The expansion is a result of successful negotiations by the Australian Government and industry with their UAE counterparts to extend the accepted shelf life of vacuum-packed beef and sheepmeat exported to the UAE.

NFF President, Fiona Simson said the news was an example of the value of pursuing solutions to non-tariff trade barriers.

"The Middle East, including the UAE, is a crucial market for our beef and sheepmeat with combined exports to the UAE alone valued at \$295.8 million per annum.

"The breaking down of non-tariff trade barriers is acutely important for all agricultural exports with seemingly 'simple' barriers often costing sectors significantly as a result of limited or no market access.

"The positive outcome for beef and sheepmeat demonstrates the value of industry and government working together to achieve tangible results for Australian farmers, food processors and manufacturers."

Sheepmeat Council of Australia President, Jeff Murray said the UAE was one of the largest markets for Australian sheepmeat and any increase in UAE market share was welcomed.

"The liberalisation of restrictive sheepmeat shelf life regulations (70 days to 90 days) in the UAE is a great outcome for Australian sheep producers and a testament to the close working relationship between government and industry."

"Going forward, industry will continue to work in partnership with government in an effort to reduce other technical barriers to trade within the Middle East and North Africa region for the benefit of both consumers and sheep producers."

Cattle Council of Australia President, Howard Smith welcomed the efforts of this Government in providing both the commercial and scientific rigour to successfully make the case for extended shelf life.

"A multi-pronged approach to trade, including the negotiation of free trade agreements and the reduction of non-tariff barriers, such as shelf life parameters, is required to maintain current market share," Mr Smith said.

"Specifically, the shelf life extension for beef from 90 days to 120 days will open new opportunities for producers to cater for this growing market."

Media Contact: Laureta Wallace on 0408 448 250 or lwallace@nff.org.au