



## Clearer cattle voice needed in Canberra

Queensland farm lobby group AgForce is urging all sectors of the cattle industry to commit to robust discussion of how to create a stronger national voice for cattle producers in Canberra and across the nation.

AgForce Cattle president Grant Maudsley said industry meetings in Longreach next week must map out a sustainable and effective structure for the Cattle Council of Australia (CCA).

“A number of influential cattle producers have floated ideas in the media in recent weeks on how to restructure CCA. There are some valuable concepts being debated and AgForce Cattle representatives stand ready to fully participate in the Longreach discussions,” Mr Maudsley said.

As by far the biggest beef-producing state, AgForce cattle members make the greatest financial contribution of all farm organisations to the CCA budget.

AgForce Cattle currently supports the following key principles on national representation:

- A reduction in the number of seats on the Cattle Council of Australia from 21 down to 14 SFO representatives
- Voting power to reflect cattle numbers (Qld 5; NSW 3; WA 2; NT/Vic/SA/Tas 1 each)
- The creation of 5 specialist CCA taskforces to generate specific policy in the following areas; Animal Health/Welfare and Biosecurity, R&D and Natural Resources, Marketing & Trade, Industry Systems & Food Safety and Rising Champions of the beef industry
- CCA requires a significant increase in its budget to manage, resource and better represent Australia’s \$15 billion industry
- CCA must investigate raising extra revenue from NLIS tag sales or other resourcing options
- A mid-2012 deadline should apply to finalising any new structure and funding arrangements for CCA

Mr Maudsley said whatever funding mechanism is chosen by industry, the importance of state farm organisations (SFOs) and their lobbying must be acknowledged.

“We are wary of models that allow cattle producers to become direct members of CCA as they fail to consider the critical work done by SFO’s on issues like coal seam gas and mining, local roads and infrastructure, leasehold land and biosecurity to name just a few.”

However AgForce will adopt an ‘open mind’ and encourages all stakeholders to take the same approach.

“The only way to achieve a CCA structure that will serve all beef producers, big and small, is for stakeholders to check their egos at the door, leave their baggage behind and consider a solution that is the best interests of the entire industry,” Mr Maudsley said.

Cattle industry structure is the subject of a special industry forum next Wednesday 15 November in Longreach to be convened by the Red Meat Advisory Council. Annual General Meetings of the CCA and Meat and Livestock Australia are also scheduled for 14 Tuesday November, and Thursday 16 November.

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**Who is AgForce?** AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture’s social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.