

LETTERS

The facts about the Torbay Bill can be readily ascertained by reading the bill and the second reading speeches in the NSW Parliament.

I trust that you will set the record straight by publishing this letter so your readers do not continue to be misinformed about the content and effect of the Torbay Bill. - **Norman Hunt, Hunt Partners Solicitors.**

Editor: Norman Hunt is a lobbyist for Inverell, NSW, based processor Bindaree Beef.

Torbay bill lacks beef knowledge

ANY cattleman worth his salt is aware that not all aged cow meat is low grade ('Torbay Bill Slaughters Cow Prices' QCL p9, 3-12-09). In fact much of it is superior in eating quality to the younger beef presented at retail outlets.

Having slaughtered a large number of different breeds of cattle in the past 45 years I believe my observations have some credibility.

John R McDonald wishes to "develop a plan to take the industry in a forward direction".

Mr McDonald, may I suggest that if you are not dedicated to the "illusion of progress" then priority should be given to moving all slaughtering facilities out into the cattle country, thereby reducing the stress of sustained travel for cattle and when transporting chilled beef to the coastal areas, eliminating bruising.

May I also inquire if your support of the Torbay Bill has anything to do with supposedly cheaper aged cow prices since, after all considerations, you or your company are beef processors.

I suspect that Richard Torbay had minimal knowledge of the beef industry and further suggest he also has been manipulated by other "vested interests" to propose such a Bill.

If Mr Torbay believes that the industry is prepared to accept his trumpeting with bovine complacency and profound stupidity he has mismeasured his mark.

I am neither prophet, given to inspired gushes or gifted with ministerial infallibility and would remind Mr Torbay and Mr McDonald that power and self indulgence go hand-in-hand and suggest they butt out and allow the industry self regulation. - **G**

Rackemann, Kingaroy

Meat grading not mandatory in bill

I DRAW your attention to manifest reporting inaccuracies in the article by John Condon and Matthew Cawood ('Torbay Bill slaughters cow prices' QCL p9, 3-12-09) and the editorial ('Retrograde beef grading move must end', 3-12-09).

The Torbay Bill does not contemplate a mandatory grading system. The bill allows the minister to promulgate regulations to introduce a voluntary beef grading/labelling scheme which will impose penalties on retailers who adopt the scheme and then cheat by labelling beef as a particular grade when the beef does not comply with the standards for that grade.

The contemplation is that the voluntary grading/labelling scheme will be underwritten by MSA science.

The bill, as evidenced by the recently published AusMeat Domestic Retail Beef Register, contemplates that MSA-graded cuts, tenderloins and mince from eight-tooth animals will be exempt from the requirement to describe beef from eight-tooth animals as "budget low quality/low grade".

Rod Polkinghorne, the founder and current chairman of the Meat Standards Australia Committee, advises that any cuts from an old cow that fails to make an MSA grade will not eat well, however cooked.

Claims, in the context of the Torbay Bill, that cow meat failing to MSA grade will make 'an outstanding meal if prepared and cooked properly' are nonsense and misleading.

The Torbay Bill recognises and embraces MSA science.

The statement in the QCL editorial that the Torbay Bill requires all table beef from eight-tooth animals to be labelled as either "low quality" or "low grade" and the claim that the Torbay Bill "falls well short of sound meat science" are therefore manifestly incorrect.

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