

Frequently Asked Questions – Land Management Commitment

The below questions on the Land Management Commitment were raised by attendees on the informative webinar that Cattle Australia held on the 18th of January.

1. What is the issue we are trying to solve?

Global consumers, policymakers, and corporations are putting increased pressure on supply chains to demonstrate that their products are ethically produced and land management, in particular, avoided deforestation is a key focus area. International deforestation definitions are not aligned with Australian legislation, and we lack the tools to demonstrate compliance.

This initiative aims to map the gaps between good land management in Australian Beef Systems and global requirements to provide a workable deforestation definition.

2. Why is Cattle Australia leading this work?

The beef producers that Cattle Australia represents own more than 50% of the country's land mass. Cattle Australia wants to ensure that our members continue to be empowered to appropriately manage their land for production and nature-positive outcomes.

3. What is the ability to change for an Australian context?

The International frameworks that define deforestation allow for national context.

4. What if we do nothing?

Commercial supply chains and global governments will continue to stipulate requirements that may be difficult to meet in an Australian context.

5. Is the government onboard?

Several government departments have been working with us to date and want to continue to do so, we had state government representatives attend the webinar on the 18th of January.

6. All states are currently different, how will it work?

That is one of the challenges, however, taking something like the Australian Land Use at the most common level is a starting place. We are seeking equitable outcomes for all producers in this space, as land management and production systems are different across this geographically diverse country.

7. Is a target outcome for this process a method to report to TFND and or ISSB standards?

Defining what a forest is or isn't will just be the starting point, it needs international alignment, scientific validation and the support of our regulatory systems.

8. Has there been engagement with SBTi so far and are they receptive to a new 'Natural Forest' definition localised to Australia?

An important component of this process is to understand the work that has already been undertaken by the many organisations within the supply chain.

9. If so how does/will it correlate or coordinate with other agricultural sectors?

Cattle Australia will leverage the existing governance models in Australian agriculture and through wide engagement to ensure alignment across commodities.

10. If Cattle Australia are leading this work will the result only be relevant for beef producers and beef production zones?

Although Cattle Australia are leading this work, we are highly aware of the importance of ensuring the result can be utilised and adopted across mixed enterprises and varying production zones in Australia to ensure we don't silo the beef industry to a definition and standard that is different to other commodities. The representation on our Advisory Board and engagement with industry will ensure we consider these intricacies.

11. The FAO definitions are not compatible with state-based regulatory definitions, how can you shift rules enshrined for several decades in multiple state and federal legislation?

Multiple definitions are not aligned to our legislative frameworks and all definitions will be considered.

12. What is the timeframe for completing this work?

By the end of June 2024, we will have a draft definition of deforestation for the Australian context for consultation.

13. What are the potential reporting metrics from this work?

Reporting metrics, data, and mapping will be reviewed so that the necessary policy and process can be implemented to support the definitions.

14. Is this work focusing on what is a deforestation-free product? What are you defining as deforestation assuming you are not aligning with the current definition?

The goal of this initiative is to produce an agreed, uniform definition to be applied within Australia, ensuring there is infrastructure to support it. A priority will be to leverage and adjust what is already available.

15. Is this work a duplication of other frameworks and initiatives in the industry like the ABSF?

Cattle Australia will continue to work with the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) to ensure the framework can adopt and report on the outcomes of this work given its alignment to the emerging ESG disclosure standards.

Currently, the ABSF utilises the ACLUMP land use data to define the grazed area of Australia, most grazing falls under 'Grazing Native Vegetation' land use areas.

16. Why are there three commitments the most important and are they achievable?

The three commitments underpin international market access conditions, we want Australian Producers and supply chain partners to be able to participate in numerous markets and access finance at the lowest cost of compliance.

17. How were the Advisory Board members selected and why is an Advisory Board needed?

The Advisory Board is representative of the supply chain partners in the Beef Industry and others that are closely linked to international frameworks that will impact the Australian beef sector. The supply chain is motivated to support the industry in meeting consumer demands and maintaining market access and access to capital.

18. How will the Advisory Board communicate?

On the Cattle Australia website, there is a page dedicated to keeping everyone informed of the progress you can find the information here: <https://cattleaustralia.com.au/land-management/>