

Land Management Commitment

December 2023 progress update

What is the Land Management Commitment?

The Australian beef industry exports over 70% of its beef production. Increasingly, our international markets and their companies are aligning Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting to meet shareholder and consumer interest in demonstrating sustainable food production, and global commitments to the Paris Agreement.

Over 6000 global companies have aligned with the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi). SBTi is a European-driven not-for-profit organisation that requires companies to set public reporting targets for reduced emissions, zero deforestation, and demonstrated improvements to biodiversity within their supply shed. Importantly, these global companies will be required to report their progress against their targets by 2024 via mandatory public disclosures.

The Australian landscape is one of the driest in the world and has some of the oldest soils in the world. Evolving over the past 50 million years, our landscape, its plants, animals and ecological systems, are incredibly unique.

While we haven't always gotten it right, we have learned and evolved our practices as science and research and development improve. Australian producers have a strong history of innovating and developing land management practices to suit the environment. Given the unique nature of the Australian landscape, we must provide regionally specific indicators for global reporting that recognises the inherent ecological differences within Australia.

What are the commitments?

1. Develop a national definition on deforestation for the Australian context, to be globally accepted for use in the supply chain and by financial institutions.
2. Develop a voluntary and market-driven minimum sustainability standard on environmental stewardship to be used in the traceability system to inform consumers.

Rockhampton Industry Roundtable

An Australian beef industry meeting was held in Rockhampton, Queensland, on November 7 and 8, 2023. The goal of this meeting was to seek a commitment that a clear evidence-based definition of deforestation and biodiversity for the Australian landscape is required. The group of 50 industry leaders from across the supply chain - including leading producers, corporate agricultural companies, peak industry bodies, government, state farming organisations, processors, retailers, and finance industry representatives - discussed a national approach to international reporting requirements. This provides transparency and traceability to our customers and gives confidence to consumers and stakeholders in the scientific validity of land management practices in Australian beef production systems.

What happened during December?

In December, the working group had a handover and approval of the Advisory Board was sought. Several meetings were held to construct the Advisory Board, with a range of supply chain representatives being nominated. The representatives sought approval from their organisations for their engagement on the Advisory Board and all conflicts of interest were raised and acknowledged in the risk register.

What are the next steps?

- Seek confirmation from Advisory Board members on their capacity to participate and approval from their organisations.
- Confirm the first Advisory Board meeting (virtual) on January 10, 2024, set an agenda for the meeting and ensure all materials to address in the meeting are provided to the Advisory Board before the meeting.
- Create a page on the Cattle Australia website for interested producers or stakeholders to find information regarding the Land Management Commitment.