

Land Management Commitment

May 2024 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 improves. 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 in May?

In May, the Advisory Board met several times, initially to review the draft policy principles before they were [launched at Beef2024 for feedback and consultation](#). The Advisory Board also met after Beef24 to review feedback received on the draft principles, and again to work through the draft information paper prior to consultation opening.

In April, with the support of the Advisory Board, Cattle Australia elected a Technical Working Group consisting of technical specialists from across the value chain. The key purpose of the technical working group is to support the consultants in the development of a policy that meets the needs of the supply chain while encompassing state and territory nuances. The technical working group met on three occasions in May to provide feedback and considerations.

Cattle Australia and Baringa Partners continued engagement with key stakeholders, including state farming organisations, R&D partners, Federal and State Government representatives, and supply chain partners. Cattle Australia hosted a webinar for other commodity R&D and advocacy bodies, to brief them on the project's progress and next steps, and ensure engagement across commodities.

Cattle Australia also [responded](#) on behalf of the beef industry to a media release from Greenpeace.

What are the next steps?

- Continued engagement with other agricultural commodities to ensure cross-commodity alignment is maintained.
- Continued updates to the communications plan that supports the Land Management Commitment work.
- Ongoing engagement activities with key stakeholders.
- Open the feedback and consultation process on the draft Information Paper.