

Land Management Commitment

Frequently Asked Questions

The below questions and answers are in relation to the [Land Management Commitment project](#).

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 and sustainably produced, with a current focus on avoiding deforestation. 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 practicable deforestation definition.

2. Why is Cattle Australia leading this work?

The beef producers Cattle Australia represents are custodians of more than 50% of the country's land mass. Cattle Australia wants to ensure 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 interpretation to capture the national/regional context.

4. What if we do nothing?

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

5. Is the Government on board?

Several Government departments, at both a State and Federal level, have been working with us to date and will continue to do so.

6. All states are currently different. How will it work?

The approach starts with high-level principles that can be tailored to meet the needs and legislative requirements of different States, Territories, and bioregions. 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?

Deforestation is gaining momentum as a variable for companies to report against. This work helps to define what credibly constitutes deforestation in the Australian landscape, so quantitative measures can be adopted to support reporting regimes, as a second order focus.

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

The SBTi defers to the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi) for defining and managing deforestation. AFi proposes the use of Natural Forest so that regionally appropriate specificity can be introduced.

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, ensure alignment across commodities. This engagement includes participation within the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework (AASF) Community of Practice (COP), virtual meetings providing key project updates with other commodity representatives and frameworks, and routine engagement.

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

Although Cattle Australia is 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.

The policy structure provides an umbrella set of principles that can be used by all commodities, as well as other at-risk sectors (e.g. mining / construction). These principles will ensure alignment across different areas but enable the flexibility necessary for industry-specific prescriptive interpretation.

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?

Our state and territory legislation provides strong evidence of how land management practices are required for positive environmental outcomes. The policy leverages these definitions as a baseline and sets out any additional considerations that are required to maintain market access.

12. What is the timeframe for completing this work?

By the end of June 2024, we are aiming to have a draft definition of deforestation for the Australian context for consultation. Implementation is required by the end of December 2024 to meet mandatory reporting obligations both domestically and internationally.

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

Reporting metrics, data, and mapping will be built out as a second stage after the high-level function of the policy is approaching finalisation. These metrics will work with the policy and be aligned to emerging reporting regimes e.g., TNFD and due diligence requirements (EUDR). The measurement and monitoring systems will be simple, reliable, credible and cost efficient, for an equitable outcome for all producers.

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?

This work leverages the existing internationally recognised definitions and drives interpretation within the context of the Australian landscape and Australian agricultural land management practices. This

will enable ongoing land management practices, which promote sustainable outcomes, under international frameworks.

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, and most grazing falls under 'Grazing Native Vegetation' land use areas.

The LMC work seeks to be complementary to existing work in progress across the commodities, and Cattle Australia is actively engaged with the AASF through its Community of Practice (COP) to identify linkages with other agricultural commodity frameworks and metrics.

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

The three commitments underpin international market access requirements and mandatory reporting of large corporations. We want Australian producers and supply chain partners to be able to participate in numerous markets, access finance at the lowest cost of compliance and meet reporting requirements.

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/>

19. What determined the policy principles that have been included? How has Cattle Australia consulted with the industry and supply chain on these?

The principles were first scoped using feedback and information provided during an initial scoping considerations process. This process requested organisations and individuals to submit feedback to Cattle Australia on the key challenges and opportunities.

The principles were [launched for feedback and consultation during Beef24](#). This feedback was analysed and incorporated. The principles are being used to inform and communicate the key decision points of the project.

20. What is the process and timeframe for this work?

- Stream one - Information paper (early June)
- Stream two - Consultation (mid-June)
- Stream three - Finalisation of Draft Policy (July)
- Ongoing – The scoping of implementation requirements

21. What are the principles?

- Reflects the Australian Ecosystem
- Promoting Economic Outcomes
- Is Simple to Use
- Consistently Applied by all Parties
- A ‘Make Good’ Mechanism

Reflects the Australian Ecosystem	The policy will reflect the unique Australian land management practices that drive positive environmental and economic outcomes. This will factor in the quality and function of a landscape, its historical use, and the benefits of active management.
Promoting Economic Outcomes	Promoting producer economic outcomes will be core to informing decision making. The final commitment will ensure a balance between optimal environmental outcomes, access to markets and financial services, and business resilience and profitability.
Is Simple to Use	The policy will seek to build on existing State, Territory and Federal definitions, legislation, and measurement and monitoring systems where possible. It will then provide clear guidance to end users on how to demonstrate alignment with the policy.
Consistently Applied by all Parties	Collaboration with the supply chain and financial sector is being undertaken to leverage an industry agreed definition and common method of verification. This will avoid a scenario where multiple definitions and monitoring approached create confusion and compliance burden for producers.
A ‘Make Good’ Mechanism	The policy will provide direction regarding alignment and seek to provide clarity around future land management practices, which facilitates producers and landowners being provided with informed insights on how they can achieve compliance while continuing to operate an economically sustainable enterprise.

22. What process has been undertaken to try to review and find alignment across definitions of deforestation, agricultural use and land use change?

We need a consistent set of definitions for interpretation and application. Currently, Australia has a distinctly different definition of forest compared to the Accountability Framework initiative (Afi), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). A definition scan and analysis has been undertaken to build out a matrix to work through the risks and opportunities associated with aligning with any definition. Balancing the distinctive features of the Australian context, which differs markedly from some other jurisdictions, is a key outcome being sought.

A Technical Working group of 19 members across the supply chain self-nominated to participate were then validated and approved for meetings by the Advisory Board. Refer to monthly updates for further information on this process.

Common land management practices were identified as core and common across state and territories. In addition, these land management practices are embedded in state and territory legislations.

The case studies are an important tool for applying the definitions.

Slight adjustments to the international framework definitions have been required to more accurately reflect the Australian agricultural environment.

23. Why can't we utilise an existing definition of deforestation, forest and agricultural use?

Existing definitions are the foundations of this work and are now being interpreted for applicability in the Australian landscape.

24. Are the use of 'native forest' and 'natural forest' interchangeable?

The definitions are relatively interchangeable in most circumstances.

25. What is the significance of the 1990 baseline?

This is the date from which an area of land will be assessed for an agricultural use classification. 1990 represents the period prior to significant vegetation management legislative reform across State, Territory, and Federal levels.

26. Why does the policy need to include case studies? What is the purpose of these?

The case studies have been included to communicate how the policy would be implemented and makes clear acknowledgement for key management activities. The case studies demonstrate that certain practices are vital to ensure a business can continue to be sustainable. These include examples such as weed control, the building or maintenance of key property infrastructure, and the clearing of regrowth.

27. What determined the specific case studies that were included? Will there be more case studies developed in future?

The included case studies will explore land management practices that are at heightened risk of being flagged as deforestation under incoming regulation and supply chain due diligence. The case studies apply the policy decision tree to support interpretation of the risk for being flagged as deforestation and provide guidance to producers on how to mitigate this risk. These initial studies have been selected to support understanding of the policy function and structure, and more will be included, in more detail, later in the project.

The case study topic areas are:

- Regrowth
- Weed Control
- Remnant Vegetation
- Drought Fodder
- Natural Disaster
- Infrastructure

28. What will the pathway to acceptance and/or adoption of this look like across the national supply chain?

The pathway to acceptance and adoption of this information will be through negotiation with Government and for international support. This work will also inform a voluntary credential that will use the existing traceability systems in the industry.

29. What do the different thresholds mean to a producer, and why is one better than the other?

The forest thresholds come from Australian and international frameworks. This means the Australian thresholds link into existing Australian measurement/monitoring systems, while international thresholds are used by trading partners in their measurement and monitoring systems. The impact of height and cover thresholds is a secondary consideration to an area's agricultural use classification.

30. Why is natural forest important?

Natural forest allows for the consideration of an area's biodiversity and general ecosystem benefits. By taking 'natural forest' into consideration, we are able to treat native and invasive species differently, even if they both meet the thresholds to be classified as forest.

Do you have a question that hasn't been answered? Submit it here:

[Land Management Commitment feedback & questions form](#)