

Australian Lamb Industry Prepares Response to US Safeguard Investigation on Imports

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Australia's lamb industry has begun preparing its response after the United States Trade Representative (USTR) referred a global safeguard investigation into lamb imports to the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) under Sections 201 and 202 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974.

The investigation will examine lamb imports from all exporting countries and does not specifically target Australia. It marks the first stage of a statutory process and does not automatically result in tariffs or other trade restrictions.

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) said it is working closely with industry stakeholders and the Australian Government to present a fact-based case demonstrating the role Australian lamb plays in supporting the US market.

Tim Ryan, Chief Executive Officer of AMIC, said Australian exporters have developed a long-standing relationship with US customers and consumers, contributing to the sustained growth of lamb consumption in the country.

"Australian lamb exporters have built a long-standing relationship with US customers and consumers, which has ultimately underpinned the maintenance and growth of lamb consumption in the US to the mutual benefit of US producers and Australian exporters," Ryan said.

He added that Australian imports complement domestic production by helping meet year-round consumer demand.

"AMIC emphasises that imports are essential to the total year-round US supply and availability of lamb to American consumers. While it is disappointing to see this type of investigation, we are confident the Australian industry can present a robust case demonstrating the mutual benefits of this trade."

Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) also expressed confidence in the industry's ability to respond collaboratively.

Bonnie Skinner, Chief Executive Officer of SPA, said Australia's sheep producers have built a reputation for supplying high-quality lamb that complements US domestic production rather than competing directly with it.

"Australian sheep producers take pride in producing high-quality lamb that is trusted and enjoyed by American consumers. Australian supply complements domestic production and helps meet year-round consumer demand for lamb," she said.

She also noted the longstanding collaboration between Australian and American sheep industries through international forums to promote lamb consumption globally.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) highlighted its continued investment in expanding the US lamb market through marketing and consumer awareness initiatives.

Paul da Silva, Regional Manager – North America at MLA, said the Australian and American sheep industries share a common objective of increasing lamb consumption.

"MLA has invested in programmes to help grow lamb consumption in the US for decades, working with American-owned businesses to increase product awareness and trial. The growth of the lamb category benefits both Australian and American lamb producers, and we will continue to engage constructively with the process," he said.

The investigation comes amid continued efforts by the Australian lamb industry to strengthen its presence in international markets while maintaining stable supply relationships with key trading partners.