

Australia Expands MSA Beef Grading Access for Long-Distance Cattle

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The new MSA Beef long-duration road and/or rail transport pathway is the result of extensive research funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)



Beef producers in northern and remote regions now have greater access to Australia's world-leading Meat Standards Australia (MSA) grading system after a new transport pathway confirmed that eligible cattle can remain MSA-compliant after journeys of up to five days.

For producers, the change means cattle from longer-distance regions may have more pathways into MSA-backed branded beef programs, provided all preparation, transport, rest and documentation requirements are met.

The new MSA Beef long-duration road and/or rail transport pathway is the result of extensive research funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA). The research found cattle can be transported for up to 120 hours from property dispatch to slaughter without compromising consumer eating quality, provided cattle are properly prepared and managed throughout the journey, including access to good-quality hay or dry feed and water at rest stops and during lairage.

The pathway is expected to create new opportunities for producers in northern Australia, where long distances to processing facilities have historically limited access to MSA grading and the branded beef premiums it can support.

MSA grading uses on-farm, carcass trait and processing data to predict beef eating quality and support consistent consumer satisfaction.

MLA Program Manager - Carcass Value, David Packer, said the pathway was a significant step forward for the red meat industry.

"For many producers in northern Australia, distance has been one of the major barriers to accessing MSA grading opportunities," Dr Packer said.

“This pathway provides a science-backed solution that reflects the realities of northern production systems while maintaining the integrity and consumer confidence that underpin the MSA program.

“The research showed that when cattle are appropriately managed before and throughout the transport journey, including access to feed, water and suitable rest periods, eating quality outcomes are maintained and the MSA model continues to accurately predict consumer satisfaction.”