



Industry response to the Australian Beef Language White Paper recommendations

1 FROM CARCASE TO A WHOLE OF CHAIN LANGUAGE

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
1	That the Australian beef language be constructed to provide a whole of chain framework for all necessary trading descriptions to facilitate information transfer at all points from conception to consumption. For operational purposes usage could be predominantly in three sectors: livestock and genetics (livestock language), beef carcass and carcass components including value-added product (meat language) and consumer product descriptions (meal language).	The industry supports this statement and is committed to the implementation of the language review outcomes.
1.1	Common terminology is prescribed and used wherever possible within each language sector.	The industry supports this statement and is committed to the implementation of the language review outcomes.
1.2	Individual traits be defined in 'outcome' terms with provision for alternate measurement technologies linked to a common standard.	The industry supports this statement and is committed to the implementation of the language review outcomes.
1.3	That an accuracy indicator be reported in association with alternate measurement technologies to facilitate appropriate industry implementation.	The industry supports this statement and is committed to the implementation of the language review outcomes.

2 TRANSITION TO AN 'OUTCOMES' BASED LANGUAGE

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
2.1	That the existing *A* cipher for BEEF be changed from *A* to *ANY*.	The industry does not support moving from *A* to *ANY*; however, the industry is willing to work through the issue to find an alternative solution. Further work by the industry committees and peak industry councils is required to resolve the issue.
2.2	That the existing basic category of Bull *B* be transferred from primary category to alternative category. It is recognised that this will be legislatively challenging.	The industry has agreed to explore this recommendation further. Bulls may be eligible for MSA in the future and as a result, a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken to determine the opportunity to grade bulls. The final outcome will be determined by the MSA Beef Taskforce and the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
2.3	That the definition of Bull be changed to include any entire male (i.e. those carcasses with primary sexual characteristics), other than those described within the existing 'Veal' basic category or castrated males exhibiting secondary sexual characteristics.	The industry supports further work on this recommendation which will need to be carried out before the industry can implement the recommendation.
2.4	That a new cipher EQG be established in the alternate category to identify beef and veal that has been graded through the MSA (EQ) system.	The industry supports this recommendation for use on a voluntary basis. The *EQG* cipher is supported to be developed through the MSA Beef Taskforce and the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
2.41	That there be an addition to the Handbook of Australian Meat (HAM) of MSA cooking style descriptions for use in conjunction with *EQG* eligibility without cut specification (for example, beef for stir-fry, beef for roast, beef for slow cooking).	The recommendation is not supported by industry at this time. Cut name is deemed to be of vital importance to the trade when making a purchasing decision, predicting portion yield and use options.
2.42	That the MSA EQ matrix be promoted as a primary retail product description.	This recommendation is supported on a voluntary basis. The matrix will be developed further and delivered to the MSA Beef Taskforce.

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
2.43	That optional cattle age verification supported by appropriate audit arrangements be introduced and be considered as an alternative to current dentition categories	<p>Whilst this recommendation is not supported as it currently stands, the industry has agreed to explore this further. Further industry input is required and any agreed outcomes would be used voluntarily.</p> <p>Linked to recommendation 4.6.</p>
2.5	That all cattle should be eligible for grading through the MSA (EQ) system.	This recommendation is supported by industry and will be progressed through the MSA Beef Taskforce.
2.6	That the current dentition and days on feed (DOF) eligibility component for grain-fed cipher(s) be replaced by a definition requiring despatch from an National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS)-accredited feedlot having been fed a high-energy ration for a specified number of days, and be eligible for MSA grading.	Further work is required before this recommendation can be progressed. This recommendation will be progressed with the peak industry councils and the relevant industry committees.
2.7	That consideration be given to adopting UNECE production and feeding system description codes to facilitate phasing out the use of 'grass-fed' as a generic description for not-grain-fed and include a new specified 'exclusively pasture or forage fed' cipher.	<p>This recommendation is not supported by industry as it is written; however, the industry is committed to resolving animal raising claims for the whole of industry. It will be further progressed through the Animal Raising Claims working group.</p> <p>Also refer to recommendation 3.1</p>
2.8	That a standard be established for lean meat yield % (LMY), potentially called Australian Beef Yield (ABY) as a carcass yield based description. An accuracy % should be included in the description, reflecting that alternative technologies may be used to measure this attribute.	This recommendation is supported by industry and will be progressed through the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program of work.
2.9	That the proposed *EQG* cipher be available for use on veal carcasses when supported by sufficient eating quality research including evaluation of sex effects.	This recommendation is supported by industry. The work will be progressed through the MSA Beef Taskforce.

3 ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
3.1	That industry continues to develop standards for generic definitions that will underpin principal 'raising' or 'provenance' claims used by brands. Individual brands will be the responsibility of the brand owner. These standards should be developed by industry and held by AUS-MEAT. The cost of defending these standards in any raising claims dispute should be the responsibility of the brand owner.	This recommendation is supported by industry and will be progressed through the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC) and the Animal Raising Claims working group.
3.2	That a suitable mechanism be developed for use in conjunction with principal raising and provenance claims that comply with agreed national (and where applicable global standards) to enable clear distinction between these and alternative individual programs.	This recommendation is supported by industry and will be progressed through the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC) and the Animal Raising Claims working group.
3.3	That industry developed standards focus on high-level, well differentiated raising and provenance claims to provide clear national definitions and endorsement in conjunction with the legislative structure for welfare and animal health standards. Industry should not seek to develop standards for minor variations which should be the provenance of individual brand owners (e.g. a definition of 'eco-friendly').	The industry requires more work on this recommendation and will refer this work to Animal Health Australia (AHA) and SAFEMEAT/Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program for health and welfare respectively. This recommendation relates to 3.1 and 3.2.
3.4	Those efforts to rationalise auditing of industry and purchaser standards, and in particular on- farm audits, be aggressively pursued.	This recommendation is supported by industry. MLA will work with the peak industry councils to scope out a program of work with the outcomes to be presented to the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).

4 ALIGNMENT OF LIVE ANIMAL AND CARCASE LANGUAGES

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
4.1	That an expert group review the Bovine Livestock Language with the aim of creating a section within the existing language standardising terminology and ensuring common description across all trading and production categories including registered and commercial cattle sold by live export or as domestic store or finished cattle. This review will standardise the language used by all parties so that carcase and chiller assessment data can be linked to genetic evaluation programs.	This recommendation is supported by industry. Full industry representation is required to work through this recommendation. MLA will coordinate the commencement of a working group and will link in with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program of work. Linked to recommendation 4.4.
4.2	That this new language be aligned with the AUS-MEAT carcase language through the use of common terminologies between live animal and carcase description to facilitate clear communication.	This recommendation is supported by industry. Full industry representation is required to work through this recommendation. MLA will coordinate the commencement of a working group and will link in with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program of work (as per recommendation 4.1).
4.3	That standard muscle and fat scores be utilised in live cattle and carcase description with this description replacing condition score for live animal and the use of butt shape, P8 fat and rib fat in carcase yield description. Addition of a 0 fat score reflecting emaciated cattle at welfare risk is recommended for inclusion in the muscle and fat score system.	The industry recommends that the business case for inclusion in the language needs to be developed. MLA is to ensure this is included in the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program.
4.4	That the frame score calculation of the live animal be standardised, particularly in the light of new automated technologies to facilitate useful type description and relationship to possible final outcomes.	The industry requires further work be done to progress this recommendation. This links to the work proposed in recommendation 4.1. MLA is to ensure this is included in the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program.
4.5	That effort is made to achieve common description of dairy and beef cattle where they are utilised as meat.	The industry requires further work be done to progress this recommendation. MLA is to ensure this is included in the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program as per recommendation 4.4.

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
4.6	<p>That an optional animal age description of day of birth/month of birth/season of birth (dd/mm/yyyy, --/mm/yyyy or Jan-June/yyyy) be established and be the sole official indicator of animal age where this is specified. These alternative age declarations should utilise an NLIS field to facilitate download at transaction points and inclusion in databases. It is further recommended that dentition and ossification measures be reported as such and not promoted or published as having any age relationship.</p>	<p>The industry requires the work under recommendation 2.4.3 is completed before this recommendation can be progressed.</p>

5 OBJECTIVE MEASUREMENT AND SYSTEM INTEGRITY

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
5.1	That, wherever possible, the language should describe a common outcome (or trait description) able to be produced from alternative technologies where applicable. The trait measure needs to be auditable and where appropriate reported with an accuracy description	There is general industry support for this recommendation. There needs to be a clear process for demonstrating that any objective measurement device is correlated and device accuracies. MLA is to ensure this is part of the Rural R&D for Profit program and engage AUS-MEAT and the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
5.2	That accurate objective measurement for live animal, carcase and cut descriptions be actively pursued and incorporated into language when cost effective under commercial conditions.	There is general industry support for this recommendation. There needs to be a clear process for demonstrating that any objective measurement device is correlated and device accuracies. MLA is to ensure this is part of the Rural R&D for Profit program and engage AUS-MEAT and the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
5.3	That the measurement of inputs to key underpinning industry systems be continually monitored on an industry-wide basis and strengthened as appropriate to ensure the integrity of these systems. In the immediate timeframe measures and methodologies should be adopted to monitor and ensure repeatability and accuracy of subjective grading traits.	The industry supports this recommendation, supporting the move from subjective to objective measurements when they become available and proven. MLA is to ensure this is part of the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program. MLA will also work on device accreditations with AUS-MEAT.
5.4	That the current QA-based integrity system be strengthened in the immediate future with emphasis on points of ownership transfer. It is critical in this regard that accuracy and integrity be and be seen to be effective. The storage of relevant data, especially at the point of ownership transferral would be useful for any subsequent dispute resolution.	There is more required before this recommendation is supported by industry. MLA is to work with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program to consider how live scans can be correlated to in plant measurements and develop a process for dispute resolution. This recommendation links to recommendations 6.1 and 6.2.
5.5	That carcase muscling and fatness be described by independent muscle and fat scores (based on a similar principle to the EUROP 15 point scale format).	This recommendation is not supported by industry and requires no further action at this time.

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
5.6	That a single marbling standard be adopted utilising the MSA standards with optional reporting in rounded 100's. Such a standard must cover the full range of Australian cattle for this characteristic and may require additional standards beyond 1100.	This recommendation requires further work before endorsement by industry. A cost benefit analysis must be undertaken for any proposed changes. MLA is to follow up with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program to review IMF, chemical %, MSA and AUS-MEAT marbling scores.
5.7	That, subject to R & D validation, a standard for marbling fineness be defined and introduced into the grading system where appropriate. This standard should not be breed specific.	This recommendation requires further work before progressing. This is related to recommendation 5.6, as a fineness measure would require the ability to objectively measure it and is worth investigating if this can be measured objectively. MLA is to work with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program to ensure marbling measurement technology can measure fineness.
5.8	That the existing AUS-MEAT meat colour chips for both beef and veal be re numbered in steps of 100 to provide a linear progression and potential subdivision in units of 10 supported and ultimately replaced by objective measurement.	The industry supports more accuracy in measuring meat colour and that this should be done objectively. MLA is to follow up with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program to consider a meat colour step approach in place of AUS-MEAT chips. This includes developing a cost benefit analysis to recreating chips or moving to renumbering chips.
5.9	That MSA grading data be monitored statistically to identify possible variation in grading results and enable early action to monitor and re-train graders where appropriate.	The industry supports this recommendation. MLA will develop this work and report to the MSA Beef Taskforce.
5.10	That further R & D be prioritised to objectively relate existing carcass colour measures to actual consumer appeal and pH.	This recommendation is supported by industry and MLA is to work with the MSA Beef Taskforce and Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC) where language changes are required.

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
5.11	That the OSCAP grading system and internal pass standards be reviewed to assist in improved consistency.	Further work is required to progress this recommendation. Moving towards objective measurement of chiller assessment measures is positive. The report questions the integrity of the current correlation system; however, no evidence of failure is presented. Supporting data is required and AUS-MEAT is asked to report on accuracy, current correlation standards and any system failures to the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
5.12	That R&D continues to identify improved objective measurement technologies that can increase the precision of predicting outcomes. This applies to technologies to measure fat and muscle in the live animal and carcass, along with tissue distribution within the carcass and intramuscular fat content. This will require continued substantial industry R&D investment	This recommendation is supported by industry. The work will be conducted through the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program and ensure AUS-MEAT is actively engaged for device approvals through the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).
5.13	That industry education and communication issues be addressed as a priority to increase the level of understanding and co-operation between sectors.	This recommendation is supported by Industry. There is strong support for a coordinated industry approach to delivering producer education - with a benefit for all sectors. MLA will take action on a coordinated industry approach to ensure all opportunities are capitalised on.

6 DATA CAPTURE FOR SEAMLESS INFORMATION FLOW

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
6.1	That attention be directed to facilitating electronic data interchange between multiple industry databases with linkage via the NLIS ID as a common key. This will require an approval process by individual owners to authorize release of data from a potentially large number of databases at multiple access points and the use of freely shared data to derive maximum benefit. Standard data sharing protocols will be required together with procedures for accommodating new data fields and technology over time.	This recommendation is supported by industry for uptake on a voluntary basis with data owners to approve which data is shared. MLA is to ensure this is part of the Digital Value Chain Strategy which will integrate databases across the industry.
6.2	As noted in section 5, the storage of relevant data, especially at the point of ownership transfer would be useful for any subsequent dispute resolution.	This recommendation is supported by industry. MLA is to ensure this is part of the Digital Value Chain Strategy.
6.3	Again the recommendation to specify standard output descriptions able to be produced from multiple systems with associated accuracy indicators is reinforced.	This recommendation is supported by industry. MLA is to work with the Objective Measurement Rural R&D for Profit program as part of the database development and integration with the Digital Value Chain Strategy.
6.4	The ability to “attach” individual animal records to mob based NVD declarations is supported as a desirable protocol for all future transaction systems.	This recommendation is supported by industry. MLA is to ensure this is part of the eNVD program and a relevant platform is available to enable this to happen.
6.5	The question of PIC numbers relating to properties versus individual livestock owners should be examined within long term potential requirements for national and international data linkage and the similar but potentially different need to trace the “person in charge of livestock” or source property.	This recommendation is supported by industry. This work is part of the SAFEMEAT initiatives project. There are issues with state legislation that requires action. Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) to work with Animal Health Australia (AHA) to work through these issues.

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
6.6	The potential to interact at individual property or producer level with the United Nations blue number system should be evaluated. This identification system seeks to provide a global network for producer to retail information transfer together with automated assessment of farm practice and eligibility in relation to a plethora of private and government programs.	Further work is required before the recommendation is supported. AUS-MEAT is to ask GS1 to develop more information to deliver to Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC).

7 GLOBAL BEEF DESCRIPTIONS

Ref	Recommendation	Industry position
7.1	That the Australian beef language adopt UNECE Bovine Language coding where possible to facilitate commercial use and integration with EAN-UCC standard systems. This is regarded as highly relevant for production and feeding system descriptions in addition to other slaughter system and cut related coding	This recommendation requires further work. MLA is to discuss this with AUS-MEAT to update the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards (AMILSC) on the EAN-UCC standard along with its potential application to the Australian industry.
7.2	That efforts to rationalise auditing, and in particular on farm audits, be aggressively pursued including collaboration with international agencies such as GS1 including the prototype UN blue number initiative.	Further work is required - AUS-MEAT is to ask GS1 to develop more information to deliver to the Australian Meat Industry Language & Standards Committee (AMILSC) - as per recommendation 6.6.
7.3	That the Australian beef language be made freely available for use within the development of the UNECE international bovine language.	<p>This recommendation is supported by industry. The UNECE has adopted the AUS-MEAT language as the basis for the UN international language. There is an opportunity to lead the development of an international language to include eating quality attributes.</p> <p>MLA is to work with the UNECE Standardisation of Meat and report to the MSA taskforce.</p>