PRESS STATEMENT:

MALCOLM FRASER:

April 19th, 1964

RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN MEAT BOARD.

Last week I wrote about the changed world trading conditions which has made it necessary for the Government at the request of producer organizations to re-organize the Australian Meat Board.

The new Board will be smaller and more compact than the old one which had to resort to a committee system before it could decide many major issues. The old Board had 12 members comprising of a Chairman, a Government representative, together with people from the beef, lamb, mutton and pig industries. There was also a representative from public utilities and from meat employees. The new Board will have nine members; the Chairman, five meat producers' representatives and two meat export representatives, together with a representative from the Commonwealth.

There is immediately a significant difference between the two Boards in addition to the difference in size. The meat producer representatives will be appointed from a panel suggested to the Minister by what is called the Australian Meat Board Selection Committee. These representatives will have their names put forward, not because they represent a particular part of the meat industry but because of their overall ability to do a job on the Board. It is thought that it is more important to get people who can take a broad view of the whole position rather than represent one particular segment of the industry. Nearly all the Australian meat exported abroad is exported by private traders who find markets in 60 to 70 countries of the world. These people with an intimate knowledge of world markets will have two members appointed by the Minister from names submitted to the Australian Meat Exporters Federal Council. This Council is representative of all the great meat exporting firms. Their advice and knowledge should prove a valuable addition to the membership of the Board. It must be pointed out, however, that the producer representatives will have an absolute majority on the Board and thus will be in full control of its activities.

A moment ago I mentioned the Australian Meat Board Selection Committee. This is a body established with a certain constitution by the Australian Wool Growers and Graziers' Council and the Australian Wool and Meat Producers' Federation. The main, and almost the sole function of this Committee, will be the nomination of meat producers' representatives for appointment by the Minister to the Board. The Selection Committee consists of nine members, an independent chairman and four members from each of the organizations I mentioned. This Selection Committee begins life with the same disabilities as has handicapped the Australian Wool Industry Conference. The Australian Wool Industry Conference does not yet give recognition to the Australian Primary Producers' Union, nor will the Australian Meat Board Selection Committee.

On past occasions I have said that this Union should be represented on the Conference. I believe that it should also be represented on the Australian Meat Board Selection Committee. The Australian Dairy Farmers' Federation should also have some representation on the Meat Board Selection Committee because of the fact that just under 15% of beef slaughtered is represented by the slaughter of old dairy cows and a great deal of this meat finds markets abroad, especially in the United States.

However, certain procedures have been followed concerning new membership in the Wool Industry Conference. The Minister has said that he confidently expects the Australian Primary Producers' Union to be
included on the Conference in the near future. Since these procedures and precedents have been laid down it is unrealistic, I believe, to expect the Government to follow a different course in relation to the Australian Meat Board Selection Committee.

The new Board will have wider powers than the old one. It will be financed from the levy on the slaughter of all cattle over 200 lbs. dressed weight and sheep and lambs. No charges have been fixed as yet, but the sort of figure that has been spoken about is 5/- a head for cattle and 6d. for sheep. This would supply a fund of something under £2 million each year. These funds could be used for the development of markets overseas, for the promotion and sale of Australian meat overseas or for promotion inside Australia.

Under certain circumstances the Board will have power to purchase and sell meat in its own right after consultation with a special consultative committee which will be composed of four members from the Australian Meat Exporters' Federal Council, together with four members from the Australian Meat Board, together with the Chairman of the Board. The Board can only use this power where there is special marketing problems which preclude the effective participation of private traders.

The Australian Agriculture Council, unfortunately perhaps, expressed reservations about giving the new Board power over research, thus the current arrangements for beef research will be continued independent of the new Board.

It is the Government's ultimate intention, however, that research will also be provided within the ambit of the Board. Meanwhile, the present beef research committee will obtain a part of the levy for research purposes and the old research levy will be abolished. The Government pound for pound subsidy on money spent on research will be continued.

The re-organisation of the Meat Board is fully in line with Government policy, which is designed to try and create a sound overall control for the industry concerned. The legislation will provide a management that leaves control in the hands of the producers concerned but which, at the same time, has available to it expert advice on various technical matters.
Library Digitised Collections

Author/s:
Fraser, Malcolm

Title:
Re-organisation of the Australian Meat Board

Date:
19 April 1964

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/40116

File Description:
Re-organisation of the Australian Meat Board

Terms and Conditions:
Copyright courtesy of Malcolm Fraser. Contact the University of Melbourne Archives for permission requests.