

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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RED MEAT INDUSTRIES FACING DIABOLICAL RISK: KATTER

Seventy per cent of Australia's red meat industry would be wiped-out if either Foot and Mouth (FMD) or Lumpy Skin (LSD) diseases breached the nation's borders and infected the local livestock, Katter's Australian (KAP) Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter MP has said.

Mr Katter said he and his colleagues had received urgent State and Federal briefings late on Monday about the biosecurity threats posed to Australia by both diseases, which are presently rampant in Indonesia.

He said the arrival of either disease in Australia would be catastrophic to the meat industry, the national economy and Australian and global food supply chains.

"The KAP has been in discussions with the government at both the State and Federal levels to address the biosecurity threats being posed to Australia by both Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease," he said.

"Both these diseases represent great risk to an enormous industry; this includes a beef industry that injects \$6 billion dollar into Queensland each year alone.

"The impacts that these diseases could have on the entire red meat industry in Australia, which is a critical industry, are diabolical – we can't afford to lose this industry and the risks mean it could be shut down overnight."

The arrival of either FMD or LSD in Australia would immediately reduce, if not obliterate, Australia's access to the global red meat export market.

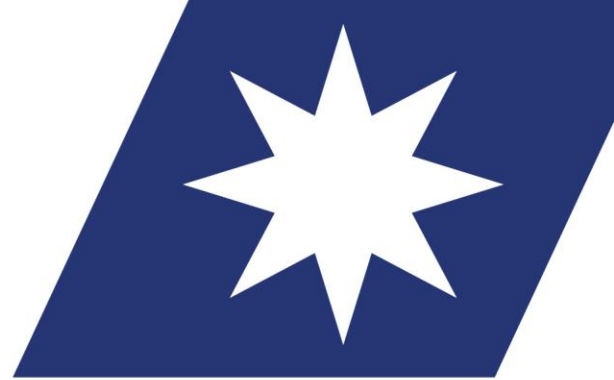
Around three-quarters of the country's red meat production is currently delivered for export, and in 2021 exports accounted for 72 per cent of all produce.

Mr Katter said LSD was bovine-specific and could be spread by insects, while FMD could impact all hoofed mammals and was spread mechanically by the movement of animals, persons, vehicles and other things which have been contaminated by the virus.

"The risk profiles of these diseases are different, but both are equally worrying," he said.

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“When it comes to FMD which can be controlled by border security, what we don’t want is a Ruby Princess 2.0.

“Every flight that comes to Australia from Indonesia represents the same risk we faced at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

“We don’t want to see our industries shutdown on the basis of complacency by the government, or travellers.

“I think it’s fair to say that a lot of the people coming back from Indonesia, particularly Bali, aren’t always the most responsible on an issue such as biosecurity.

“So we need all the border controls enhanced and tightened up, and the public needs to know this is a very serious issue and the implications could be severe not only for our red meat industry but also the entire national economy.”

Mr Katter said the KAP was also imploring the Federal Government to increase its support to Indonesia in a bid to control the local LSD outbreak, as a reduction in spread there would immediately reduce the risk infection of Australian livestock by intercontinental insects would occur.

Federal Member for Kennedy, Bob Katter, is presently engaging with Queensland livestock producers with regards to their views on the current biosecurity threats, and whether or not producers are satisfied with current government efforts.

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