



Australian Agricultural Company Limited
ABN 15 010 892 270

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RSPCA endorses AAco's NT Processing Facility

RSPCA Australia has stepped forward and voiced its support for the Australian Agricultural Company's (AAco) proposed Northern Territory processing facility, on the premise that it will provide new options for cattle producers and make a significant difference to the welfare of cattle in northern Australia.

Heather Neil, CEO of RSPCA Australia, said the organisation sees AAco's proposed facility as an important infrastructure project that will improve the welfare of cattle by effectively reducing the distance travelled for thousands of cattle each year.

Currently, cattle in the Northern Territory are being transported up to 3000km to processing facilities around Australia.

"The welfare of cattle will be improved if they are slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible," she said.

The RSPCA's backing comes as a comprehensive environmental assessment and development application process of the proposed facility enters its final stages.

David Farley, AAco Managing Director, said the Company's values are closely aligned with those of the RSPCA in relation to animal welfare.

"Animal welfare is a core competency of the AAco team and as such the RSPCA's support means a great deal, reiterating the project's positive impact on an area we see as being of the highest importance," he said.

Mr Farley said negotiations with the Northern Territory and Federal Government to secure the \$37.5 million in infrastructure funding needed to underpin the facility are continuing, however, the window of opportunity to fulfill the Company's plans to start civil works in mid-2012 is closing fast.

"The urgency to secure funding by 31st March is due to the fact that works need to be completed during the dry season, which runs from April through to October, in order for the processing facility to commence operation in 2013," he said.

"If we miss the opportunity to complete the project during this period, the project could potentially be pushed out another year."

The Senate Committee Report report's findings from the Senate Inquiry into Live Exports, which was released in November 2011, stated that government funding of northern abattoir projects was "fully justified" and that "such facilities are unlikely to be established without some form of government assistance."

It also states that "the committee considers that given the significant investment in the northern Australian cattle industry, government support of such enterprises, in all its guises, is fully justified" and that it "encourages the industry and all levels of government to continue to investigate options for the development of commercial processing streams within northern Australia in addition to existing live export markets."

Mr Farley said the facility and associated infrastructure will not only help to improve animal welfare practices and boost agricultural productivity but may also provide long-term income streams for government.

The Board of AAco is yet to make its final investment decision on the project, pending necessary approvals and Territory and Federal Government funding commitments for the key public infrastructure.

A trade night held in Darwin last night attracted more than 100 people looking to win work at AAco's proposed meat processing facility. Around 60 companies registered for potential work on the project in a range of trades and services including building, fencing, roads, electrical, concrete, panel installation, sheet metal work, engineering, painting, landscaping and plumbing.

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About AAco

Australian Agricultural Company Limited – AAco (ASX:AAC) – is the largest beef cattle company in Australia. For more information on AAco's proposed Darwin abattoir – visit the project website – www.aacont.com.au

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AAco

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