

Media Release

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COLES LEADS GROUNDBREAKING AUSTRALIAN TRIAL TO REDUCE METHANE EMISSIONS FROM BEEF CATTLE

Coles is partnering with the beef industry to trial a new feed supplement that greatly reduces methane emissions from cattle and could lead to a step-change in the sustainability of Australian beef farming.

Coles is partnering with Mort & Co Grassdale Feedlot in Queensland on Australia's largest commercial feedlot trial of feed supplement Bovaer. DSM, the developer of Bovaer, is a partner in the trial.

International studies have already shown Bovaer – which is broken down as part of the natural digestive process of the animal – to be successful in reducing methane emissions. This trial, however, will be the first in Australia to test the feed supplement in a real-world, large-scale commercial feedlot of industry size and scale.

The trial will study how effectively Bovaer reduces methane production in feedlot cattle.

A recent study of 20 cattle funded by Meat and Livestock Australia found Bovaer, which is added to cattle feed at the rate of just a quarter-teaspoon per day, to reduce methane emissions by between 60-90%¹.

Nine thousand eight hundred cattle will form part of the trial, and Coles will provide grading data to be analysed. Specialised cattle veterinarians and researchers Bovine Dynamics will produce a research paper outlining the findings of the study to be then published in a scientific peer-reviewed journal.

The cattle will be fed at Mort&Co Grassdale Feedlot and processed at the Teys Australia Beenleigh processing plant, Queensland.

Coles Chief Executive, Commercial & Express Leah Weckert said the trial is one way that Coles is working with suppliers to innovate for better sustainability outcomes.

“When we set out our Together to Zero emissions ambition in our Sustainability Strategy, we knew that working with our supplier partners and stakeholders would be key to achieving this,” Leah said.

“This trial is going to give us a wealth of data and knowledge to help us understand how we can reduce emissions in one part of our supply chain, while continuing to deliver quality meat to our customers.

“We hope the Bovaer feed supplement trial will open up a new opportunity for emissions reduction, and that it will provide an affordable, commercially viable option to one day be rolled out at scale around the country.”

Mort & Co CEO Stephen O'Brien said: “We approached Coles to partner with us in this trial because we believe Bovaer had significant research and science behind it to make it worthy of a trial of this size.”

“We're confident that the final outcome will be a game changer for our industry, providing us with scientifically proven results that will hopefully allow us to roll this out across a larger cohort of cattle and certainly change our environmental footprint,” he said.

“The Australian red meat and livestock industry goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030, and we look forward to working with Coles to lead the way.”

¹ <https://www.mla.com.au/news-and-events/industry-news/the-feed-additive-reducing-methane-emissions-by-up-to-90/>

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For further information, please contact

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Background:

Cattle produce methane - a greenhouse gas - through their natural digestive processes (i.e belching). Methane is then broken down in the atmosphere over the following 10-12 years.

The Australian red meat industry has set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2030. To achieve this, beef producers are adopting production practises to reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions from their farms. The percentage of total CO2-e (carbon dioxide equivalent) reduced by the Australian beef industry from a 2005 baseline is 58.21% from the most recent 2019 data (ABSF Annual Update 2022)