



**The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP**

**M E D I A   R E L E A S E**

**Minister for Agriculture**

## **Improved market access for genetic material**

Australian exporters of bovine genetic material will pay less to certify against the health requirements of the United States following a new agreement that removes the need for cumbersome and costly bovine tuberculosis testing.

Agriculture Minister, Barnaby Joyce, said the United States generally accounted for more than half the value of all bovine semen and embryo exports from Australia and was worth an average \$3.5 million a year.

“The new health conditions mean Australian exporters no longer need to test donor cattle to prove that the genetic material we’re sending is free of bovine tuberculosis,” Minister Joyce said.

“Although the US is yet to recognise our bovine tuberculosis (TB) free status the improved health conditions are a great step forward that will benefit our producers and exporters.

“Rather than testing for a disease that we have confidence is not present, Australia can now certify TB freedom for our genetic material to the US – saving time and money.

“Another improvement for this export market in genetic material is the removal of testing for bluetongue for embryos.

“Bluetongue has not caused any clinical illness in cattle in Australia. However, the virus’ seasonal presence in parts of northern Australia can result in more expensive protocols for exporting cattle genetics.

“The US recognition that embryos exported from Australia do not pose a bluetongue risk is especially good for producers in northern Australia.

“There is the potential for northern Australia’s cattle studs especially to increase their exports significantly because of these changes.

“This is another example of the Australian Government’s commitment to improving and increasing market access opportunities for Australian agricultural producers and industries.

“While establishing new markets is essential in ensuring a strong farmgate return to our farmers it is also important to maintain and improve Australia’s foothold in our existing markets.

“My department is continually focussing on ways to reduce costs, and is working to streamline bovine genetics certification processes and focus on providing further efficiencies in service delivery.

“We will continue to work hard to improve market access through negotiating technical advances that meet our trading partners’ needs while ensuring any import conditions are practical and affordable for our agricultural industries.”

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