

Feature Article

AUSTRALIANS BACK BEEF INDUSTRY

AUSTRALIA: A recent survey reveals that city dwellers have a positive opinion of beef-cattle ranchers.

A recent national research survey has shown that urban Australians have a very positive view of Australian cattle ranchers, with more than four out of five respondents--85 percent--believing the ranchers do a "good" or a "very good" job. Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) commissioned the survey.

MLA said the most surprising discovery from the survey was that approximately 16 percent of adults in Sydney and Melbourne, the equivalent of 690,000 people, would trade their urban lifestyles for that of a cattle rancher if they had the chance.

MLA marketing manager David Thomason said the results were encouraging, but stressed that the attitudes of urban Australians should never be taken for granted by Australia's beef ranchers.

"We must remember that attitudes change and there is an increasing disconnect between the urban population and the bush," Thomason commented. "Now is not the time to rest on our laurels. Instead we should be actively demonstrating to urban Australia that Australia's farmers are proud, look after the environment and their animals, and are the best in the world at what they do."

The majority of the respondents, people living in cities, agreed that cattle ranchers are hard working (89 percent) and make a positive contribution to the Australian economy (87 percent). These positive feelings were stronger among lower income earners than higher income earners. Almost three quarters (72 percent) of urban dwellers admire what Australian cattle ranchers do and more than two thirds (69 percent) believe that the ranchers genuinely care about their animals.

Overall, those living in Sydney and Melbourne appear to be genuinely compassionate about life on the land. Approximately three-quarters of respondents (74 percent) said they care about the welfare of Australian cattle ranchers.

More than three out of four urban respondents (76 percent) said they would be "very interested" or "somewhat interested" in visiting a working cattle ranch to see what goes on. There was a strong interest in visiting a ranch among mothers with children, but less so among people without children.