

Bindaree urges support for beef industry forum

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BINDAREE Beef is calling on Inverell locals to attend a beef forum held in Armidale tomorrow to support the struggling industry.

The forum begins at 10am in the Lazenby Hall at the University of New England and is expected to address a range of growing issues that are heavily impacting the industry.

Leigh Belbeck from Bindaree Beef said the main issues that would be discussed were importation of beef, the beef grading bill, beef industry council accountability and federal costs and charges.

“The big picture is, if the beef industry starts to collapse the overflow into rural communities is huge,” Leigh said.

“Our industry is uncompetitive and because we can’t compete with the world market we are losing the market in Australia.

“There wouldn’t be a rural shire across Australia that doesn’t have part of the beef industry in its town, so it’s really important for people from rural and regional Australia get behind the industry,” she said.

Richard Torbay’s Food Amendment (Beef grading) bill will be one of the main issues addressed tomorrow.

The bill aims to bring consistency to the beef consumers buy from the supermarket or butcher with all table beef from eight-tooth and older animals labelled as ‘low grade’ or ‘low quality’.

Leigh Belbeck believes the bill is the first step to turning the industry around.

“We need to get the consumer confidence back.

“One day a consumer can purchase a piece of meat and like it, the next day they can buy a piece and find it really tough so they don’t go back,” Leigh said.

“We need consistency to keep the customer coming back, clear labelling will be one step in the right direction.”

Federal costs and charges facing abattoirs and the beef industry will also be challenged at tomorrow’s forum.

Bindaree Beef representatives feel government costs are damaging the business at a time when governments should be supporting the industry.

“Most countries around the world are subsidising and assisting the industry but in Australia we are being charged.

“We wear all the costs of the inspectors we have on site and it takes a toll,” Leigh said.

Since 1998 fifteen abattoirs in NSW have closed and at least six red meat abattoirs in Central West NSW have shut since 2003; that number is expected to increase.

For further information regarding tomorrow’s beef forum contact 67211411.

Courtesy of the Inverell Times