

# Beef cattle feedlots



March 2007

## Fitzroy Industry & Infrastructure Study

### Agricultural Corridor

#### Intensive livestock industries in the lower Fitzroy region

The proposed Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor development is expected to centre on intensive livestock industries. Intensive livestock industries are those in which animals are confined under supervision in specially constructed pens or lots and fed manually for specified time periods. In general, the term refers to cattle feedlots and most piggery operations.

The Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor is expected to focus initially on cattle feedlots in view of the current and continuing expansion of the beef industry.

#### The Queensland beef industry

The beef industry was worth \$3.135 billion in exports to Queensland in 2005/06. Feedlots produced approximately 40 per cent of the 3.6 million cattle processed in Queensland, with more than half being value-added for export markets. The Queensland beef industry employs approximately 15 000 people, with the majority employed in regional processing plants and service sectors.

Feedlot cattle are fed primarily on grains (wheat, sorghum and barley), enabling the production of beef that has the traits most highly valued by customers, attracting premium prices both domestically and internationally.

Most supermarket beef comes from animals that have spent time in a feedlot. This ensures that the meat's characteristics (age of beast, size of cut, meat and fat colour) meet consumer expectations.

Queensland will continue to produce significant quantities of grass-fed beef due to land suitability and the low costs of production. However, the availability of this product is affected by droughts and dry-season variability making consistency of supply difficult. This product is normally less valued by customers.

#### Opportunities presented by feedlots

Feedlots allow greater flexibility in how cattle are produced and managed. They enable beef industry managers to:

- consistently deliver a product meeting both the domestic and export customer specifications (eg. fat colour) despite severe dry seasons
- access the valuable chilled grain-fed beef export markets of Japan, Korea and the United States
- supply a product of higher value to customers, providing higher returns to producers
- add value to cattle production, for greater returns to regional Queensland
- increase the number of cattle produced, expanding the beef industry, increasing export income and creating more regional jobs
- proactively manage pasture availability through utilisation, decreasing stock pressure and ensuring pasture condition is preserved resulting in greater environmental sustainability
- supervise cattle welfare, preventing losses during droughts.





## Feedlot developments and the impact on the local economy

The Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor is expected to produce short-fed product (70 to 100 days on grain) destined for export and domestic markets.

Establishing a 15 000 head feedlot has an estimated capital cost of \$18 million (excluding the purchase of land). Such an enterprise requires some 21 trained staff to operate the feedlot and the associated cropping activities.

Rockhampton's two beef processing works employ an estimated 1 250 people, contributing significantly to the local economy. These works aim to operate as close to full capacity as possible. Additional feedlots generate a consistent cattle supply and the potential for employment of a second shift in the processing plants providing a significant increase in local jobs and expenditure.



## Public consultation and feedback

Local residents, business owners and the public are now invited to offer feedback on the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor development or identify other issues that they feel may not have been considered.

To do so, please:

- **visit the information displays** at the Rockhampton State Development Centre (corner of Fitzroy and Bolsover Streets) or the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Rockhampton (corner of Bruce Highway and Yeppoon Road), where copies of the technical studies will be available
- **visit the website** at [www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au/fiis](http://www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au/fiis)
- **contact the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Business Information Centre** on 13 25 23 (local call) to obtain copies of documents or to speak with a project representative
- **email** comments to [fiis@infrastructure.qld.gov.au](mailto:fiis@infrastructure.qld.gov.au)
- **post** comments to  
FIIS Coordinator  
Department of Infrastructure  
PO Box 15009  
City East Qld 4002
- **fax** comments to (07) 3225 8158.