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Labor's beef trade decision with USA needs independent review

Leader of The Nationals David Littleproud is calling for an independent review, following Labor's decision to allow US beef born and raised in Canada or Mexico to be imported into Australia.

Mr Littleproud said it was important the decision was predicated on science and that there could be confidence in the biosecurity requirements, including traceability.

"Labor's decision has more questions than answers and is unconvincing," Mr Littleproud said.

"I believe Labor's announcement needs to be independently reviewed, with an independent panel set up by industry, to review the science behind the decision.

"The Government still hasn't released the protocols to be put in place, despite this apparently being a long, scientific process. I am suspicious about the speed of this decision and the secrecy of this decision. I am concerned we could be sacrificing our high biosecurity standards for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to obtain a meeting with US President Donald Trump."

Shadow Minister for Trade, Investment and Tourism Kevin Hogan said Labor also needs to rule out trading away other commodities, such as pork.

"We need to know if the biosecurity requirements placed on US beef are equivalent to the biosecurity requirements Australian beef must meet when exported to the US," Mr Hogan said.

"The United States uses cattle from Mexico and Canada in their supply chain, which poses a potential risk to our industry. Ignoring those risks would be dangerous. It is critical we have confidence in the decision and in the protocols and veterinary inspections put in place."

The red meat and livestock industry makes a significant contribution to the Australian economy.

In 2022-2023, Australia's red meat and livestock industry turnover was \$81.7 billion and the industry employed 418,921 people.

In 2023, Australia exported 67 per cent of its total beef and veal production, valued at \$11.3 billion.

"Biosecurity is a non-negotiable," Mr Littleproud said.

"We have the world's best beef, which is used in six billion hamburgers across the US each year. We rely on our biosecurity protections to enable us to continue to export and build our economy, while also enjoying its benefits at home."