Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Legislation Amendment Bill 1987

Date Introduced: 30 April 1987
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. John Kerrin, M.P., Minister for Primary Industry

Digest of Bill

Purpose
The Bill will amend four Acts associated with the meat and live-stock industry to incorporate a number of minor changes relating to consultation, the procedure at General Meetings, and to implement an Equal Employment Opportunity plan for the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Corporation (AMLC).

Background
There are a number of statutory authorities that deal with the meat and live-stock industry. Those dealt with by this Bill and their primary functions are listed below.

AMLC
An AMLC was established by legislation in 1977, though a new board was constituted in 1984. Under the 1984 legislation, AMLC was given the primary function of facilitating the marketing of meat in Australia and overseas. A number of other organisations were created to allow AMLC to pursue its primary purpose and to concentrate on commercial matters. AMLC is principally funded by the industry. Two of AMLC’s major projects are the computer aided live-stock marketing program (CALM) and the Authority for Uniform Specification for Meat and Live-stock (AUSMEAT). An interim board to establish CALM was appointed in October 1984 and the system aims to encourage improvements in the pricing and marketing of live-stock. An interim body to establish AUS-MEAT was established in October 1985 and the scheme provides uniform descriptions and grading of meat.

Australian Meat Research and Development Committee
This body was established in 1985 and replaced the Australian Meat Research Committee. The new body was established on a more commercial footing than its predecessor and has greater powers, such as the ability to manage its own funds. The Committees’ major functions are to maximise the return on research funds, actively seek research projects, prepare five-year research programs, approve expenditure on research projects and to be accountable to the AMLC.

Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Policy Council
This body was created in 1984 and has the overall aim of providing a forum for resolving industry differences and developing overall industry policy. The Council’s functions are to inquire into and report to the Minister on matters affecting the industry,
either of its own motion or on request from the Minister; and to develop recommendations and measures that will protect the industry.

**Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Selection Committee**

This body was established in 1984 and has the function of selecting persons, other than the Chairman, Managing Director and Government Representative, to be nominated to the Minister for appointment to the AMLC. The Committee also nominates members of the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Research and Development Corporation, other than the Chairman and the Government Representative. The Committee has no finances of its own, the AMLC providing the necessary funds.

**Main Provisions**

*Amendments to the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Corporation Act 1977*

Section 8 of this Act will be amended to allow the AMLC to co-operate with the Australian Pork Corporation for the marketing of pig meat and pigs (clause 6).

Section 16J of this Act provides that where a foreign country has, or is likely to, impose restrictions on the importation of Australian meat, the AMLC may allocate the reduced amount amongst holders of export licence. Where applications against the proposed allocations are received, the AMLC may make a determination with the Minister's approval. Clause 8 will amend this section to remove the requirement for Ministerial approval.

Clause 11 will amend section 30B of this Act which deals with annual general meetings. An annual general meeting is to be held within 15 months of the last and at least once per year (proposed sub-section 30B(1A)). The requirement that a notice of the meeting be published in the Gazette within seven days of the tabling of the annual report will be replaced by a requirement that notice of the meeting be gazetted at least 70 days before the meeting.

Clause 15 will amend the voting procedures at the general meeting. The major amendments will require a 75% majority to defeat an AMLC motion to increase levies or charges or to pass a motion of no confidence in the Chairman of AMLC.

Clause 18 will substitute a new section 30N, which deals with corporate plans, into the Act. Under the new section, corporate plans are to be reviewed annually, increased information is to be included in the plan, and the plan is to include an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan. In addition, the Annual Plan is to include details of the EEO plan (clause 26).

Clause 25 will insert a new Division dealing with the EEO plan. Proposed section 33A will require the AMLC to have regard to the plan when making employment decisions, while proposed section 33B states that nothing in the Division is to require action incompatible with employment on the basis of merit.

*Amendments to the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Research and Development Corporation Act 1985*

Section 22 of this Act, which deals with annual general meetings, will be amended in the same way as clause 11 amends the AMLC Act (clause 31). Similarly, section 27, which deals with voting at the meeting will be amended in the same manner as clause 15 amends the AMLC Act (clause 35).
Clause 38 will amend the provisions relating to the Research and Development plan. The plan is to be developed by 1 April 1988 and is to be reviewed annually. The plan is to be for a five year period and industry bodies are to be consulted before it is developed (proposed section 30).

Amendments to the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Policy Council Act 1985
Sub-section 6(3) of this Act, which requires a conference of people concerned with the industry to be held each two years, will be repealed by clause 47. This will allow the Council greater flexibility.

Amendments to the Australian Meat and Live-Stock Industry Selection Committee Act 1985
Section 23 of this Act, which requires an annual report to Parliament, will be repealed by clause 52. Due to the nature of the Committee and its infrequent meetings the annual report is not considered necessary.

For further information, if required, contact the Economics and Commerce group.

15 July 1987
Bills Digest Service
Legislative Research Service

This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.

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