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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ANGRY MEAT INDUSTRY REACTION TO VETS STRIKE**

“A strike at this time will do massive harm to our profitable pre-Easter lamb trade with Europe .The longer-term damage in Europe and other major markets will be inflicted on New Zealand’s reputation as a reliable supplier of quality meat products”, said Brian Lynch, Executive Director of the Meat Industry Association.

Mr Lynch was commenting on the announcement by MAF veterinarians that they would withdraw their certification services completely between Friday 16 and Thursday 22 February and could go longer.

“Meat plants are working at maximum capacity to fulfil their contracts with customers in markets for which the vets final approval is needed before product can be exported. The strike will oblige farmers to hold back their stock and face a substantial cut in earnings. Rural communities cannot fail to be affected by the potential loss of farmers income exceeding \$25 million a day while the strike lasts”.

Mr Lynch said the MIA wanted the Government to appeal the decision of Judge Goddard to dismiss MAFs application for a permanent injunction that would have prevented the strike.” In the strongest possible terms we have reminded Ministers of the widespread injury the strike will cause. We’ve asked for an immediate approach to the Court of Appeal. If an appeal is lodged the vets and their union will be liable for damages if industrial action proceeds and is later deemed unlawful”.

Mr Lynch said the MIA urged MAF and the vets to return to mediation.

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