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MEDIA RELEASE

MEAT INDUSTRY WELCOMES VETS RETURN TO WORK

“This is good news. If the strike had dragged on into the weekend and beyond, the damage done to our export meat business and to the rural community would really have begun to mount,” said Brian Lynch, Executive Director of the Meat Industry Association. Mr Lynch was commenting on today’s announcement that MAF veterinarians had voted to end their week-long strike action.

“As it is, we’ve seen meat workers lose over 15 million dollars in wages; farmers have been deprived of twice that sum in delayed payments for stock; some meat companies have had trouble filling contract orders; and questions have been raised in overseas markets about New Zealand’s reputation as a reliable source of quality meat products”.

Mr Lynch said that New Zealand meat exporters were confident of being able to recover quickly the ground lost as a result of the strike.

Mr Lynch said it was obvious from the vote that some vets had misgivings about returning to work without a result that went closer towards meeting their earlier demands.

“However, its reassuring that support for an immediate resumption of duties has been so decisive. The plain fact is that neither the vets nor the industry and the country could afford the strike to drift on without a solution.

"Nor can we afford a repetition of this bruising experience. It’s critically important that the underlying issues that led to the strike be addressed urgently, in an objective manner, and independently. For this reason the MIA fully supports the proposed review of the way the vets’ situation has been affected by recent structural changes; this will include a comprehensive evaluation of their jobs".

"The MIA expects to contribute to the design and conduct of that review," said Mr Lynch.

For further info

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