

# Media Release



27 September 2020

## VFF backs decision to ease meat processor restrictions

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) welcomes today's decision by the Victorian Government to loosen restrictions on the state's meat processors.

VFF Livestock Group President Leonard Vallance said it's much needed respite for farmers after weeks of consultation between key farm industry groups and the State Government.

"Today's decision to boost workforce capacity at Victoria's meat processing facilities I'm sure comes as a relief for many anxious farmers."

"Victoria is in the middle of the peak spring meat processing season."

"As an industry we process more than half of Australia's sheep and lamb meat."

"We've been calling for the restrictions imposed on meat processing facilities to reflect the number of COVID-19 cases present, especially in regional Victoria."

"While it's pleasing to see regional workforce capacity boosted to 90 per cent for meat, we expect once metropolitan cases fall to a comparable level to those in the regions we'll see capacity increased for processors in Melbourne."

"Farmers just want to continue farming at the end of the day and we're confident ourselves and the industry can continue to do so in a COVID safe way," Mr Vallance said.

VFF Pigs Group President Tim Kingma said today's announcement is a timely one as we approach the Christmas peak season for the pork industry and the onus is on the industry to ensure it continues to adhere to COVID-safe practises

"The demand for pork traditionally surges as we approach the Christmas season and today hopefully gives many producers the confidence they need to gear up for the season ahead."

"We want as many Australians as possible to enjoy local meat this Christmas and not have to rely on imports." Mr Kingma said.

"Farmers and industry have been implementing COVID-safe practises for months now and it's up to all of us to ensure we help move towards a COVID-normal environment as soon as possible," Mr Kingma said.

The VFF commends the work of the meat processing industry, Agriculture Victoria and Minister Symes for today's decision to help ensure Victoria's farmers can continue to reliably supply Australians with world class meat.

**ENDS**

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