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Peter Gutwein, Minister for State Growth

Tasmanian Quality Meats looking to expand

The Hodgman Liberal Government is a strong supporter of Tasmania's primary industries and has a target to grow the farm gate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

We are aware of challenges with livestock processing capacity in the State and estimate around 850,000 sheep and lambs are being shipped to the mainland for processing which is a major concern for many in the sector.

If more livestock were processed in the State this would lead to higher export sales from Tasmania, the creation of additional jobs and additional investment in regional areas.

The Government has established the Red Meat Industry Working Group and we are engaging with producers, industry, and key stakeholders throughout the supply chain to deliver a long-term strategy for a sustainable livestock industry.

Recently Tasmanian Quality Meats worked very closely with the Tasmanian Government and stepped up to effectively save the pork industry by taking on the processing of pigs at the Devonport Abattoir following JBS' decision to close the facility.

The company which has a major sheep and lamb processing facility at Cressy has recently shared its proposal to substantially increase its lamb and sheep processing capacity by around 400,000 units per annum which they estimate will create an estimated 100 additional jobs.

This would represent a significant increase in the current capacity of Tasmanian Quality Meats and offer new options for farmers to capitalise on the value of the Tasmania Brand.

The Government looks forward to receiving the business plan in coming weeks.

This proposal dovetails well with the State Government's strategy to grow the industry and will complement the work of the Red Meat Industry Working Group which will deliver a long term strategy for the industry in the near future.

I would like to congratulate Tasmanian Quality Meats for supporting the pork industry when it was needed and its continued commitment to the Tasmanian red meat industry and for having the confidence to look at options to invest and significantly increase production, which will provide the opportunity for further on-island processing of lambs that are presently shipped to the mainland.