

# THE LAND

Business

**Slap in face for processors**

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AUSTRALIAN taxpayer dollars are to be spent on training meatworkers in Vietnam at a time when a lack of labour is crippling our red meat processing sector.

It's a move processors and butchers have labelled a slap in the face.

Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, David Littleproud, has launched the Managing Abattoirs, Training and Exchange of Skills (MATES) in-country training program, saying it will improve key integrity aspects of the live export supply chain in Vietnam.

The MATES program is part of a larger five-year \$146 million investment focused on upskilling Vietnam's workforce.

Appropriately skilled labour is the single biggest obstacle to further investment in processing in Australia, according to peak industry group the Australian Meat Industry Council.

"This is an industry that employs nearly 200,000 people directly and indirectly across processing, exporting, wholesaling, retailing and smallgoods manufacture and, in regional areas, is often the biggest employer in town," said AMIC chief executive officer Patrick Hutchinson.

"When 8.5 out of every 10 animals sold in Australia are bought by processors, and we have begged and borrowed continually to get this government to recognise the value in investing in the red meat supply at similar levels to what industry does, this beggars belief.

"... the number one headline is we need a permanent workforce - and we are being ignored while money is being channelled to overseas red meat supply chains."

The specialist milk and nutritional formula maker, A2 Milk Company, is breaking into the South Korean market after striking a sales and distribution deal with Yuhan Corporation.

The Korean pharmaceutical company will start distributing the A2 protein range of dairy foods and nutritional formulas sourced from Australia and New Zealand after July.

A formal ceremony recognising the new relationship was held in Seoul this week, kick starting what A2 expects to be commercial growth similar to the stellar success it now enjoys in China and Australia.

South Korea has high per capita dairy consumption and fast-growing online sales.

"Yuhan Corporation is a long established, highly credentialed and principled Korean business," said managing director Geoff Babidge.

"With our complimentary capabilities believe we can build a meaningful business in Korea."

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