Melinee Leather: Hi, my name is Melinee Leather and this is my family's property Barfield Station. Here in Central Queensland we breed and finish cattle for the organic EU and natural pasture-fed market.

 My family is passionate about naturally raised grass-fed beef and we've spent 30 years in this beautiful part of the country creating a sustainable business that we can pass down through the generations.

 Australia is one of the world's largest and most efficient producers of commercial livestock in the world and one I'm extremely proud to be part of. In 2016 there were 25 million head of cattle on Australian soil and the red meat industry employed around 405,000 people. All of this is at risk if we don't protect Australia from biosecurity threats.

 Biosecurity is critical to our business and we work hard to prevent foreign pests, weeds and disease from entering our property. Implementing biosecurity measures isn't difficult, but it's essential to protect our future.

 Here at Barfield Station we quarantine cattle coming in from other properties to ensure that they are free from diseases before they mix with any of our other cattle. While we've been lucky here in Australia, we can't take our foot off the biosecurity pedal. Foot and mouth disease is one of the biggest biosecurity concerns for us Aussies. We are currently free from the horrible disease, however, some of our closest neighbours have been infected for some time.

 This disease is not only a concern to the beef industry, but will also affect buffalo, pigs and sheep and any other cloven hoofed animals. The disease can be brought into Australia very easily, so we must be vigilant. Our highest risks are travellers coming in from infected countries where they might have soil on their shoes or be carrying meat and dairy products, untanned hides and skins or other animal products. These products can also be brought in illegally by post.

 The Australian government has employed measures to reduce the chance of foot and mouth disease arriving to Australia, but biosecurity is everyone's business and we need your help to ensure pests and diseases don't arrive or spread into Australia.

 So what can you do? Check your animals for anything unusual. Fevers, drooling, and blisters around the mouth and on their hooves, anything out of the ordinary. You know your stock better than anyone and you are in the best position to report the first signs of potential biosecurity threats like foot and mouth disease.

 In 2016/17, the gross value of Australian cattle and calf production was approximately $12.7 billion. If there were to be a large outbreak of foot and mouth disease, it would cost the Australian public and industry around $52 billion to control over 10 years.

 Australia is an incredible country free of many devastating diseases. It is vital to implement strategies to protect our strong industry and keep our meat and livestock among the best in the world.

 You can help keep our economy strong and our meat industry safe by keeping a top watch for pests and potential biosecurity threats. Notify the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources or call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 if you see anything out of place.

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