

Texas ag chief to Chipotle: Australian beef isn't exactly local

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples is asking Chipotle founder Steve Ells to sit down and have a conversation. The topic: why Chipotle is sourcing beef from 8,000 miles away in Australia rather than from the great state of Texas.

"I am shocked by your recent decision to start serving meat that's been shipped in from more than 8,000 miles away. I also was dismayed by your misguided and irresponsible declaration that this meat is somehow more 'responsibly raised' than meat produced by Texas ranchers," Staples wrote in a letter to Ells on Monday.

As Staples points out, Texas is home to the nation's largest cattle herd and nearly 249,000 farms and ranches across 130.2 million acres.

"We have a wide variety of producers and processors. It seems foolish to discount these immense, local resources when making decisions about where to source your beef," Staples wrote. "Your decision to forego American beef is premature. In fact, the decision seems to abandon the work you and your company have accomplished in supporting local farming."

Staples invited Chipotle executives to meet face-to-face with him and Texas beef industry leaders to discuss how they can help supply Chipotle's growing demand for fresh, healthy beef, noting, "Texas beef would not have to travel thousands of miles and leave a substantial carbon footprint before ending up in a Chipotle burrito."