



6th April, 2013

Committee Secretary,

Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,

P O Box 6100,

Parliament House,

Canberra ACT 2600,

Australia.

Dear Sir,

Preamble.

Correspondents in Griffith newspaper the "Area News" have questioned the success of a previous inquiry and have questioned the bias of the Senate Committee with both major parties having a policy of Universal Free Trade.

I am greatly concerned about the apparent steady decline of citrus, non cereal agriculture and manufacturing in Australia since the early 1970s. I seek a widely acceptable graph or family of graphs to measure progress. Currently I am using a graph of Food Imported into Australia and a graph of Rural Debt of Australian Farmers. Refer to Attachment I which is a supporting flyer to what we plan to be a 10,000 signature petition to the Australian Government major parties and prominent persons calling for an immediate ban on poisonous Brazilian orange concentrate followed by selective tariffs on citrus products, other agriculture and manufacturing. I project an almost instantaneous drop in each graph. My request to the Senate Committee is that if the recommendation is not for the application of selective tariffs that the committee produce one of my graphs or an alternative graph showing projected progress from June until 14th September and beyond to support their plans to support citrus.

Summary.

1. Profitable citrus and other farming up until 1970 while tariff control was used as a tool of the Australian Government.
2. Probable explanation for the start of tariff reduction and the first ten years
3. Assessment of damage caused by continued tariff reduction
4. Suggested plans for saving the citrus industry.

Detail.

1. Profitable citrus and other farming up until 1970 while tariff control was used as a tool of the Australian Government.

When my maternal Grand Dad arrived in what was to become Griffith in 1915 from Broken Hill he had a huge task. He preceded his family of six (at that time) by only three months but had to clear the land, use some of the timber to build a rudimentary home (with iron roof and internal walls of bags), build enough fencing for a cow, chooks, vegetables and new fruit trees.

Whichever crops he planted he made profit right through to the early 1970s. An inspection on the internet of Sir John (Black Jack) McEwen will show that tariff controls were used to keep Australian agriculture and manufacturing among the strongest in the world which they were at that time.

Australia used to manufacture and export farm machinery at that time. I remember with pride the invention of the stump jump plough and the progress of the John Shearer farm machinery manufacturer which was established in 1877 and made good progress during the best days of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). It should be noted that the MIA was established as a part of the nation building Snowy Mountains Authority.

For those of us old enough to remember, regional farmers were the regional aristocracy who could pay cash for their farm equipment and buildings. There was never any danger of land being purchased by overseas interests. Australian farmers would have bought up any bargains. Cubbie Station would have had many Australian buyers until our long term downward spiral caused by tariff reductions.

The theme could have been “....those were the days my friend. We thought that they would never end.”

2. Probable explanation for the start of tariff reduction and the first ten years

My explanation is that in the early 1970s the GDP of the developed countries had risen strongly for so long that they felt that it would continue for ever. It was a noble gesture for the developed countries to adopt Universal Free Trade by reducing tariffs to improve the fortunes of the developing countries. As tariffs started to reduce, some of the more difficult or less profitable crops were phased out. I remember picking figs in hot weather while wearing long socks on my arms to keep off the milk like liquid which could irritate the skin. They were one of the first to be replaced by a different crop. Then quinces joined figs. The two graphs on the lower section of page 1 of Attachment 1 show that the well accepted notion of farmers of all types being accepted as having a happy and wealthy life style in the early 1970s. However by 1980 debt and food imports starting to nudge upwards.

3 Assessed damage caused by continued tariff reduction

An unforeseen result of the continuing reduction in tariffs was that the seemingly endless upwards movement of the GDP of the developed countries started to droop and now the average is appearing to see a cross over by the developing countries. This is shown in Appendix II which was produced by the late Lance Endersbee in 1996 . When I saw this graph it struck me like a thunder bolt but perhaps it might bounce off each Senate Inquiry member like a feather.

In 1996 Lance had the foresight to predict that Europe would be the first developed group to fail and they are already in recession. He predicted that The USA would be next and Ben Bernanke's history making money printing puts the value of each US dollar at six cents in my estimation. My assessment is that Australia's decision to convert Australian dollars to Chinese currency will hasten

the demise of the US dollar. In 1996 Lance also suggested that Australia could resist failing if they retain their levels of agriculture and manufacturing. Even the Senate Inquiry Committee would have to agree that both have suffered huge losses between 1996 and now.

Citrus is only one of many industries which are failing. As the tariff reductions continued to bite, stone fruits and other crops became unviable and many were replaced by oranges. Over production was probably one result but even as many orange farms have been bulldozed or left to die the remaining orange orchards are still losing money. Even by 2010 farm debt and food imports had become significant.

My analysis of the problems for citrus showed these six items in what I consider to be in priority order

- i) Tariff reduction (most critical)
- ii) Protective tariffs by other countries including the United States
- iii) High Australian dollar
- iv) Water losses via Murray Darling Basin Plan (this had a higher priority but when the SMASH THE PLAN initiative disappeared without a whimper the possibility of reversing this looks to be impossible)
- v) Gouging by retailers
- vi) Seasonal variations.

To assist the contention that tariffs are the major problem, in May 1998 ABARE produced an 8 page detailed study of the "Australian Citrus Industry." It highlighted such items as "Processing citrus prices have trended down for two decades." "Australian access to some markets has been partly constrained by a range of import restrictions, including tariff and quarantine measures," and "In the past decade, the citrus processing sector has faced reduced tariff protection."

Despite the highlights and the downward slope of the graph of farm prices, ABARE did not do a follow up report and did not respond to questions and newspaper prodding relating to the influence of tariffs.

Looking back on the graphs those who should be guiding our nation should have seen the signs but the apparent momentum of the past almost 100 years of growth led to growth in areas (mineral wealth in the North West for example) which masked the failings in citrus.

With the recent huge increases in the volume of imported food (propelled by huge tariff advantages to developing countries) and the equally huge increases in farm debt my input to the Inquiry includes the contention that citrus is in a disastrous situation.

I believe that history will show that the time delay between now (6th April, 2013), the time to the closing date of the Inquiry, the duration of the Inquiry and the time taken to start implementing the immediate banning of poisonous Brazilian concentrate will cause even more unnecessary damage.

4. Plans for saving the citrus industry.

My immediate plan - while the Inquiry is waiting on submissions and deliberating on a solution - is to be aware of the health implications of Brazilian concentrate and to place an immediate ban on its

import into Australia. Page 2 of Attachment I shows the horribly mutated Brazilian oranges which grow on dying trees affected by the incurable greening disease but which are still being used for juice and concentrates for inclusion in juice labelled as "Australian made" and similar. Our so far unsuccessful request to the Quality Control Division of ALDI is shown in Attachment III which is part of an email sent to the Government and ALDI.

A new start

It was over optimistic of me to presume that a ban on Brazilian poison could be put in place after a third party had made requests to the Minister for Agriculture and the Health Minister. My initial request to the Inquiry is to examine the picture and the implications of the mutated Brazilian oranges on page 2 of Attachment I and to ban the import of Brazilian concentrate.

The next request is to save the citrus industry by selective tariffs starting with Brazilian oranges and orange concentrate.

In addition to data presented above, reference is made to Attachment IV. The late Lance Endersbee produced the first four columns in 1996. When I saw them in 2011 I found it very difficult to believe that Australian agriculture represented only 3% of Australian GDP. How did this relate to Australia being projected as the food bowl of Asia? How could such a low level of production and heading even lower relate to Australia being the envy of the Developed world? I checked with ABARE who advised me that the percentage of agriculture had reduced to 2% of GDP. This is seemingly so unacceptable that I ask the Inquiry to obtain from ABARE the information which I was unable to receive:

1. In 2013 what are the percentages of production, agriculture and services relative to GDP"
2. Is there a correlation between lowering of tariffs and Food Imports into Australia and Australian Farm Debt?

There is another question which has not been requested before. Approximately what is the percentage of services which indicates a Nanny State?

I have waited almost 70 years to use the following lines:

The Senate Citrus Inquiry Committee is being paid to examine input from people to determine **what is happening** with citrus.

The Committee has the unique opportunity to change **what is happening** by such an acceptable outcome as examining the mutated oranges on page two of Attachment I and recommending the immediate banning of poisonous Brazilian concentrate.

OR, after the family farm citrus industry implodes thy can join most of the population and ask **"What happened?"**

Enquiry to the Senate Inquiry

Following your examination of my submission could I be excused for thinking that unless some important changes are made that The Asian Century which we hear so much about will be a century of ever increasing volumes of cheap food being imported into Australia with only beef and non

cereal crops showing promise of profitability? Any comments on the Food Imports into Australia shown on page 1 of Attachment I and the percentage which agriculture represented in Attachment IV would be acceptable. If ABARE could be requested to prepare an updated representation of the sixth column of Attachment IV, that would be welcome.

We have done a lot of research on the importance of the Senate Inquiry and realise that if wishy/washy recommendations from the “right people” are accepted that the concerns that the Inquiry would be nothing more than a fob off would gain traction.

My concern is that If there are recommendations of:

Better market access OR

Trade development

My enquiry is:

If they are doing this now, how successful are they?

If they are not doing this now, how much are they asking for and how much do they estimate as the gain to the citrus industry and over what time frame?

Conclusion.

I am very pleased to be able to make a presentation to the Senate Inquiry. This is not because of what I expect to result from the Inquiry which I feel will be a number of weasel words and I would be very surprised if there would be a graph projecting the improvements to result from the inquiry.

The advantages I can see will be:

1. To observe how much of my presentation will be published.
2. The opportunity I have to distribute my presentation to various people.
3. Included in 2. will be the opportunity for me to pay tributes to two of my heroes – Sir John (Black Jack) McEwen and the late Lance Endersbee.

Sir John has been mentioned in most of my letters and an enquiry on the internet will give anyone a chance to refresh their memories or as an introduction to an Australian icon.

I wish I could have met or communicated with Lance. He should be recognised as an Australian patriot and a brilliant original thinker. I wonder how many of the Senate Inquiry Committee met Lance. He moved freely within all levels of Government but was not often impressed with the results of the meetings.

He published his plans for the use of Australian water and his plans for an inland railway from Melbourne to Darwin were well advanced when his 1996 DVD was produced. He described the opposition to the plan by almost every State Government (who each favoured systems centred on their capital cities). Lance was convinced that he had secured private funding. My hope is that someone can describe how close he was to achieving his dream.

Lance described how Australia's part in the Asian Century could be secured by maximising Victoria's manufacturing strength (when Bendigo and other centres were strong), the agricultural volumes from Shepparton, Griffith and others (what a cruel joke that is now) and the mineral exports of Mount Ida (there is one capability which Australia has – to dig up minerals to allow others to add value).

From Darwin Lance had advanced plans for a shipping and barge hub to service a population customer base rivalling Rotterdam.

The Senate Inquiry (if they are still reading this) should refer again to Attachment IV. Lance referred to the huge potential of our Asian neighbours who each (including Malaysia, the Phillipines. India and many others) have the production and agricultural capabilities to build their infrastructure as a stepping stone to enormous national wealth. He was disparaging of any plan to take advantage of The Asian Century based only on geography. He warned of the Developed Countries Disease of an ever increasing percentages of services compared to total GDP. He warned of the political reality where major parties are elected on the value of "goodies" which they promise. He warned that even if nation building projects are considered that we face Government ham strung by PARALYSIS.

Yours faithfully,

(Arthur) Brian Mills

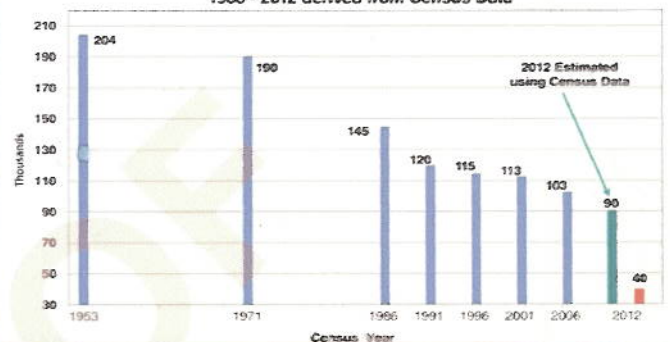
SAVE OUR HEALTH, CITRUS, OTHER AGRICULTURE & MANUFACTURING

Area of Australian Farms
1977 - 2010

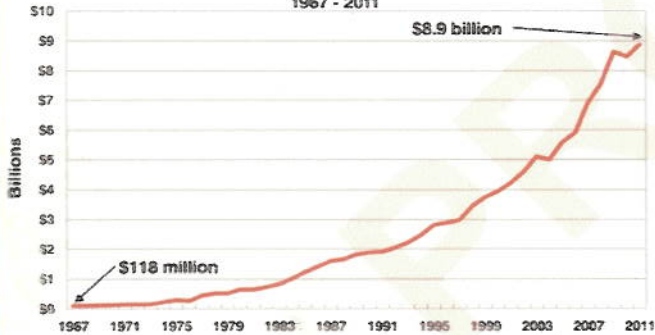


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 4327.0

Number of Family Farms
1953 - 2012 derived from Census Data

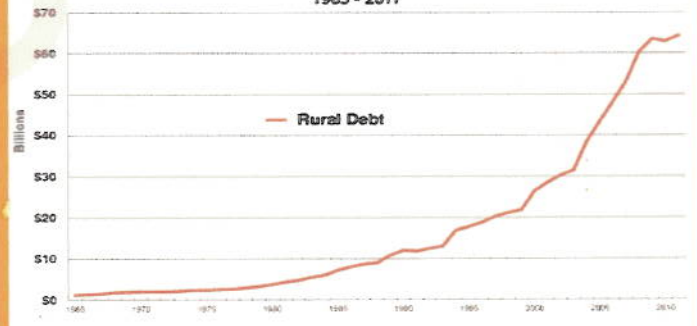


Food Imported into Australia
1967 - 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 5439.0

Rural Debt of Australian Farmers
1965 - 2011



Source: Reserve Bank of Australia Table D6

These graphs prepared by CEC show that there is a very close relationship between the volume of imported food and rural debt. These two graphs have an inverse relationship with tariff reduction. The Australian Government talks about Australia being the food bowl for Asia. What more proof could there be that Australian politicians are completely out of touch with reality. Worse still we cannot trust them with our futures. Are they being criminally negligent by not being aware of what is happening? Do they understand what these graphs are saying? Do they have a plan to save citrus and other industries?

The same parties are behind the Senate Enquiry into citrus. If they do not move to selective tariff protection are they prepared to

project how their findings would affect the two graphs shown? Would the time frame of their plans allow voters to see results compared to plans prior to 14th September 2013?

Previous petitions have been directed to Governments which have policies of continual tariff reductions so that they do not want to know. We have a "thinking outside the square" idea to address the petition to a prominent person to take the problem to national front pages. Could it be Dick Smith, Ita Buttrose, Billy Slater, Pauline Hanson, Tony Windsor, Bob Katter or a representative of another minor party which has a policy of tariff protection? People signing the petition are invited to suggest a White Knight to save citrus, other agriculture and manufacturing.

CONTAMINATED ORANGE JUICE & CONCENTRATE MUST RESULT FROM MUTATED BRAZILIAN ORANGES BUT IS ACCEPTED BY AUSTRALIAN SCIENTISTS.



Citrus greening is a bacterial disease which has no cure and has devastated large areas of South and North America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Each of the major political parties in Australia are committed to Universal Free Trade by the United Nations and probably by the New World Order and Agenda 21. Our current politicians do not believe in our right to sovereignty and the protection of our shores. One of the minor parties has a policy of banning imports of all food. The major parties could ask how dare they even think about nibbling at the edge of Universal Free Trade and question the opening of our borders to any food which is extremely cheap even though it could destroy the ever decreasing volume of fresh food which we produce? The other danger is what we eat and drink. Our internal organs have been enhanced by our pure foods - they can be destroyed by toxins and other poisons

We are being poisoned by proven percentages of banned substances and undernourished by products grown overseas under very dubious conditions. Their prices are very low but at what cost? It is happening at the cost of farmers losing money and therefore their inability to resist overseas interests wanting to buy our land and our water. Many decades ago when I was at school I learned of how little water we have in Australia for our 12 million people. Now we have 22 million people and we flush out the Murray mouth with what used to be irrigation water. Where are our politicians leading us?

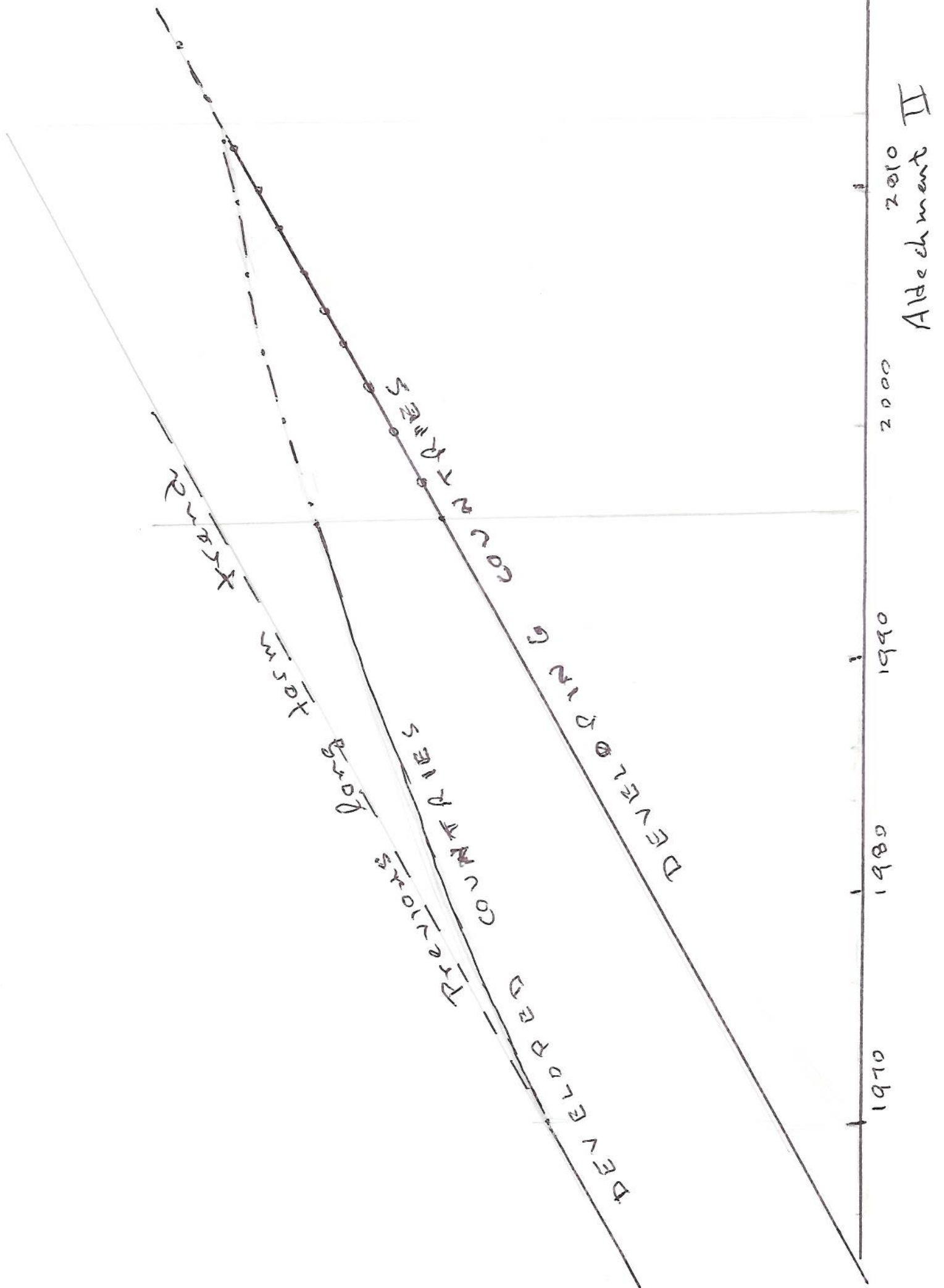
Tariffs can save citrus, agriculture and MANUFACTURING. A dear friend of mine suggests that this handout should concentrate solely on citrus. A part of my life was in blast furnaces. There were 5 in Port Kembla (now 2 but only one in operation), 4 in Newcastle (now none), 3 in Whyalla (now 2 with only 1 in operation) and 1 in Kwinana (now none). My manufacturing friends in Victoria are signing the petitions to try to reconstruct citrus and manufacturing because they are both being killed by Universal Free Trade. They understand that Universal Free Trade will only reach equilibrium when a Bangladeshi farmer has a wage equaling the Australian farmer and that the Bangladeshi manufacturer has a wage equaling the Australian manufacturer

There is a beautiful young lady named Shona who operates the Yinnar Milk Bar and Country Café in the village of Yinnar in Victoria. It was a thriving dairying area but that has been devastated. Shona is so concerned about what is happening to her community and what is happening in the faraway Riverina that she sells oranges at no profit to support citrus farmers and their fight for survival.

The cute little church at Yinnar only has a service once a month. While I was there I prayed to God about the graphs which I had seen which seemed to confirm my contention that reducing tariffs have caused Australia's agricultural and manufacturing problems. I had to admit to myself that I am at odds with both major parties (90% of the population?). How hopeless is my cause? However I prayed that I could produce a flyer to solve my doubts once and for all. I prayed that the Senate Inquiry would publish my message and my projected graphs compared to their solutions backed by their projections on their graphs.

Brian Mills

Kath



The starting point relates to oranges which are sold by the Motwell Uniting Church Op Shop to help farmers. I was invited for a cup of tea by a nice lady who was eating an orange. There was also a carton of orange juice. It had a brand name of Westcliff "... a registered name of Aldi..made from local and imported juice.. to our stringent quality specifications."

The words "imported juice" makes me boil and here are some of the reasons:

A recent article in The Land stated that of the orange juice labeled as "Australian made" or similar contains 70 to 80% Brazilian orange concentrate.

The toxic spray carbendazim was banned for use by Australian farmers two years ago.

The US banned Brazilian concentrate because of unacceptable levels of carbendazim.

Australia banned Brazilian concentrate but Citrus Australia reported that juice manufacturers had lobbied the Government who reversed the ban. Citrus Australia who seem to be a Government stooge should be protecting farmers not just reporting bad news to them.

The volume of orange juice consumed in Australia per year is about 520 million litres. That equates to a lot of poison.

Brazil is losing huge tracts of oranges due to a disease called greening. It takes about two years for the trees to turn yellow and die while producing horrible looking mutated fruit.

Brazil is clearing large areas of rain forest to replace the dying orchards.

An internet report advised that the citrus industry is using the disfigured fruit even though it tastes slightly bitter. My question is whether there are toxins in addition to carbendazim.

The following questions for Aldi should also be asked of Coles and Woolworths:

1. From which countries are the imported juice sourced? Please prove the data if Brazil is not included.
2. Is any of the concentrate from orchards affected by greening?
3. What is the reading for carbenazim?
4. What reading is there for other toxins?

The Weakness of a Developed Country

Comparison of comparative GDP components in 1996 as seen by the late Lance Endersbee

