

From: Tenterfield Bush Honey,

, TENERFIELD NSW 2372

Date: 31 March, 2011

To: Committee Secretary, Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Garry Lucas and I am 69 years old and reside at the abovementioned address. I would like to state at the outset that it has been my intention NEVER to go on the pension.

I have no money, but as it stands now I own my house but owe a substantial amount due to the purchases of a new bogey drive truck and trailer just three months ago. Even with the importation of honey from China and Argentina (at approximately \$1.80 kg landed), I can handle that debt. However, if the Asian Honey Bee is not eradicated and it does what we believe it will do, everything I own in relation to bees is not worth a razor.

My son, who is 37 years old, works with me. He knows nothing else and is set to take my business over when I start to wobble or fall off the perch. There is every likelihood that his 7 year old son (my grandson) will one day take over from him.

In the year 2000 we were landed with the South African Hive Beetle which is costing beekeepers millions of dollars a year. We all know how it got into the country but nobody wanted to know about it. It was very poorly handled. How good is our Bio Security!

The Horse Flu got in. Bio Security again, but in this case the Melbourne Cup Winners had all the dollars thrown at them overnight.

In my operation we run 1,200 hives and approximately 1,000 nucleus hives and I employ my son and one other beekeeper, both full time.

I have sites from Childers, Qld, to Quilpie and south to Trangie. You have to have sites over such a large area to try and drought proof yourself. However, the last drought was so extensive it did not help.

I pollinate apples and stone fruit in the Granite Belt area in Queensland. I would like to point out those fruit growers employ a lot of people seasonally.

There is no doubt that should I put my operation on the market at the moment it will not create the interest it would have before the Asian Honey Bee incursion.

I bought out a beekeeper 5 years ago and paid top money to gain good country (good bee sites). You never buy out another beekeeper for his bees, it is his sites you buy. Should this Asian Honey Bee take over all of that it's worthless. Under the circumstances, I would definitely not expand my business.

It has been suggested in some quarters that a small hive entrance may help. We have always been advised to have large entrances in our hives. Bees will not do as well especially in hot weather. Should this work there would be a large labour content involved in changing the hive entrance.

Beekeeping, at the moment, is certainly not an industry that you would advise somebody to start in.

I can only see beekeeper numbers declining.

I contribute to my community through my employees, my own personal shopping for food and various goods plus a large fuel bill every month. I always donate a bucket of honey (\$100) to worthy causes in my local town and keep the local aged care homes in honey.

I talk to and have contact with a large number of beekeepers on a regular basis and I can tell you this subject of the Asian Honey Bee is being discussed, not only with beekeepers but also with the public.

I would also like to remind you that this aggressive bee lives in small cavities, parrots and possum nests, mail boxes, walls of houses - the list goes on. I live in a rural setting and since building here 12 years ago I have planted a lot of native trees to encourage parrots and small native birds. My feed bill for them is nearly as much as it costs to feed the chooks.

I appeal to your common sense to examine this Incursion very seriously. It is certainly causing me sleepless nights.

Yours faithfully,

Garry R Lucas
TENTERFIELD BUSH HONEY PTY LTD