

(R&D) levies in the agricultural sector  
Submission 17  
**Industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and research and development (R&D) levies in the agricultural sector**

**Thank you for inviting me to comment on matters covered by your inquiry: The industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and research and development (R&D) levies in the agricultural sector, with particular reference to:**

- a. **an audit of reports, inquiries and reviews relevant to this inquiry;**  
*n/a*
- b. **the basis on which levies are imposed, collected and used;**  
*The imposition of the levies has always seemed fair and equitable as it applied to all those involved in the industry. The Levies Management Unit is thorough. Until recently, the basis on which the levies were used enabled our industry to access our levy monies to develop our industry. In my view, this is not the case at present.*
- c. **competing pressures for finite R&D funds;**  
*n/a*
- d. **the opportunities levy payers have to influence the investment of the levies;**  
*Nil. The deer industry does not currently benefit from the investment of its levies. What RIRDC thinks our industry needs is no longer necessary or relevant to our industry. The interpretation of RIRDC's Overview, Purpose, Goals and Vision statement would appear to be different to that of the average deer farmer. We have an understanding of what is needed for our industry to progress. Sadly, RIRDC interpretation of the guidelines mean that we do not have the same access to the deer industry funds and I feel this is hampering our development. This results in frustration and lack of confidence in our industry's future.*
- e. **the opportunities levy payers have to approve and reapprove the imposition of levies;**  
*There was consultation with levy payers many years ago but I am unaware of any procedure that would include levy payers at present.*
- f. **the transformation of R&D and marketing into increased returns at the farm gate, including the effectiveness of extension systems;**  
*Can I suggest that the New Zealand Government and the Deer Industry New Zealand model be looked at for the effective use of levy payer's money. Their application of scientific research and new knowledge to improve deer farming practices through farmer education is very relevant to their levy payers. The lack of applications for pure research from academics in Australia indicates that pure research is not a priority at the moment.*
- g. **collaboration on research to benefit multiple industry and research sectors;**  
*n/a*
- h. **industry governance arrangements, consultation and reporting frameworks; and any other related matter;**  
*I believe that our industry governance is the responsibility of the DIAA but that it is restricted in what it can do because of a lack of funds. From RIRDC's perspective, they may well feel that they are addressing the issues above but the deer industry sometimes appears to be an irrelevancy in such a conversation. Our industry lacks the critical mass to be efficient in all sectors of the "paddock to plate" scenario and it is in some of these areas that we need to spend our levy monies to further develop our industry. Further development of the industry means a bigger pie from which both government and farmers would benefit.*

Regards

Andy Cowan  
Deer Farmer