

31st August, 2009

Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,
P.O. Box 6100,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have received the AQIS Meat Notice 2009/9 in regard to New Export Fees and Charges to apply from 1st July, 2009.

This has come as a huge shock to our Company. Could you please explain the new charges for these exorbitantly increased costs for our Establishment which will immediately endanger the survival of our plant?

The New Charges Affecting Us Are:-

Export slaughter 750t - <10,000t

2008/09: \$0 2009/10: \$50,580 (**hitherto not charged**)

On Plant Veterinarian

2008/09: \$92,604 2009/10: \$173,664 (**an increase of 87%**)

Area Technical Manager

2008/09: \$14,208 2009/10: \$20,640 (**an increase of 45%**)

Total Charges for these three categories alone

2008/09: \$106,812 2009/10: \$244,884 (**a total increase of 129%**)

I appreciate that the Government is trying to revert to 100% cost recovery. Our total AQIS bill last year (including sundries such as Manual Health Certificates) was \$108,881. Allowing for the repeal of the 40% subsidy and then applying a notional CPI factor of 5%, a total of approximately \$160,000 could be anticipated (based on previous costings).

However, under the guidelines contained in Meat Notice 2009/09, we anticipate the (aforementioned) increase of (at least) 129% in AQIS charges, which is a 150% greater increase than what we would anticipate on the underlying basis of full cost recovery and also allowing for CPI. We would like to know how the Government could justify this increase for an operation such as ours.

We are given to understand that (apparently) the meat industry has been consulted and approved the current charges. This may be OK for large processing establishments but we are one of the smallest export abattoirs in the country. This projected revision of charges reflects a total neglect on how these increases in AQIS fees and charges affect a small export abattoir

in comparison to larger processors.

I am not sure if the Ministry for Agriculture is even aware of our existence but we are the last remaining export abattoir in Australia servicing the Australian deer, emu and ostrich industries and with it rides the hopes of income for these farmers. We are also processors of goat and have built up a good reputation with the industry. Furthermore, we would point out that it is necessary for us to process all of the above species to remain viable and to offer an ongoing commitment to the relevant industries.

The Game Meats Company is a low through put plant which employs 36 locals in the rural community of Myrtleford and the surrounding areas. Myrtleford has already seen a huge down turn in employment with the collapse of the tobacco industry in recent times. If allowances of some sort are not made the future of this Company and its employees will be in jeopardy.

We urge you to consider our position with reference to all the above points. If you wish to contact us in relation to any of the above please feel free to contact the Writer.

Robert Cavedon

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