

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee

Submission to the Senate Inquiry on the
Examination of the Foreign Investment Review Board National Interest Test

Dear Ms Radcliffe

This submission specifically relates to the purchase of agricultural land by sovereign funds

I am prompted to write because of my alarm at the speed of sales of prime agricultural land in my district in central western NSW to Hassad Australia (Qatar gvt). Within the past eighteen months a dozen or so farms have been bought by this sovereign fund.

This Sovereign fund has also bought vast area of farming land in Victoria , Western NSW and Queensland.

Their aim is to produce 35 % of the needs of Qatar's population in sheep (150000 sheep) and 40 % of their need in grain (50000 tonnes of wheat) : Qatar news agency/dec 22nd ,2009.

1. As I understand, all of what they produce is shipped straight to Qatar.
2. Local stock agents, abattoirs, saleyards will be affected, which means less jobs
3. Where will the sovereign fund pay tax on their profit and how will their produce be valued?
4. Local farmers cannot expand their enterprise as Hassad Australia is paying a premium of up to 20 % for land.
5. Risk to the wool industry as they are breeding middle eastern breed "self shedding sheep" which will contaminate the wool of merinos sheep on adjoining farms.

I would like an answer to the questions:

How was the test applied?

How can it be in the national interest?

Ps : We have been growing fine wool for 30 years which is our main income and have now our livelihood threatened to feed the Qatar population. We need oil ,why don't we go and buy some oil field in Qatar ?

Dominique Mathieu