

DS Farms Pty Ltd



12/4/2017

To the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

Hi my name is Daniel Rossmann. I have been involved in Aquaculture since the early 90's when I would help my father and uncles on the family Prawn farm. When I graduated school I went to work in to Work working alongside my uncle and father building another two prawn farms. In 2013 my brother Simon and I purchased off my uncle the families original prawn farm. We have worked this farm for 3 seasons and it was a good and profitable business.

The Management of the emergency response in my eyes was poor to say the least. The morning of the 5 of December 2016 we found white spot in one of our production ponds. It just so happened that Dr Ben Diggles was coming to our farm that morning to talk with us about fighting White spot. When he arrived at the farm he confirmed that it was White spot and called it in to Biosecurity QLD. While my brother and I went and sealed off our outlets so that our farm was completely sealed off from the river.

It was not until the next day after lunch that anyone from Biosecurity came on site. Even though there were many officers working on my father's farm just across the road. During discussions with officers they told me that they were working by the Aqua vet plan and that in that it states that only ponds that test positive will be eradicated and other ponds can be continued through grow out. We were also told that we would be able to harvest all of our uninfected ponds. But this was not to be the case. We had a harvest plan written on how we planned to harvest the remaining ponds. In this plan after ponds were harvested. We would refill them with another ponds water and they would chlorate that pond as we were harvesting the next pond. This did not happen! After I had 2 ponds ready for them to chlorate they still went and chlorated the ponds we were going to harvest instead. Of our forecasted 200ton crop we were only able to recover 2 ton.

During all of this process I was informing them, that if they were going to kill all of the prawns on my farm because they are possible vectors. That means that they will have to kill every crab and crustacean on my farm as well. They told me that they would do this. But when it came to the second part of the decontamination we were informed that they would not be doing anything about the crabs because they believe that they are not carrier the virus. Disregarding all papers on WWSD. They stated this was because they had tested 150 out of the hundreds of thousands crabs on our farm and had not got a positive. I was outraged with this and fought long and hard

to be allowed to use Trichlorfon and treat the crabs on my farm myself. This permit is still held by Biosecurity QLD.

One thing that I believe needs to happen in future outbreaks. Is that the people high up eg. Allison Crook, Jim Thomson and there advisers need to go to each site at least once during the outbreak and look for them self and consult with the farmer. I believe that this would have saved a lot of time and made life a lot easier for everyone involved in the outbreak.

My view on the effectiveness of Biosecurity controls imposed on uncooked prawns.

Is that they are totally ineffective. White spot is only the tip of the ice berg when you are looking at disease that can be brought in through uncooked prawn meat there are at least 6 others. Some of these cannot be tested for.

It outraged me that on a recent trip to Canberra were we met with Heads of Federal Biosecurity. They informed us that even in the light of what has happened on the Logan that the risk of importing uncooked prawn in to Australia is low risk and that the current Import Risk Assessment does not need to be adjusted. They in turn told me that this was because if a product is said to be anything higher than low risk it cannot be imported.

The impact on Australia's Prawn Farming sector due to this outbreak is inexcusable. It has taken a good up and growing profitable industry and turned it on it head. On my farm alone I will have to double my debt and invest close to two million dollars to be able to farm again. Even with this massive investment it does not assure us 100% that white spot will not get back into the farm. The ongoing cost to be able to farm with this in our river will also eat into profits and it may become not viable to farm.

The wild caught sector has also been hit badly and I really feel for them. They cannot sell uncooked product outside of the control zone this is causing them to sell at very low profits making them less viable.

The Importers. They would have known what they were importing and I believe that they should be held accountable. It is pretty obvious that Australia has become a dumping ground for the world white spot prawns! Just before the outbreak 85% of the uncooked prawns in the supermarkets were positive to white spot. I do not believe that 85% of prawns in prawn farms overseas all have white spot.

We have been told that if we stop the import of uncooked prawn that it will have implications on foreign trade. I believe that Australia being a island country that should have the best Biosecurity and the best chance of Biosecurity but if we don't protect our good local Australian industries and keep importing uncooked products like prawn meat. We are waiting

for another disaster. I am not saying no prawn imports at all just no uncooked prawn imports.
To protect our local industries and environment.

I thank you very much for the work you are doing with the Inquiry and I thank you for taking the time with my submission.

Thank you kindly

Daniel Rossmann