

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

11th April 2013

Dear Secretary

We would like to make a submission to the review of the citrus industry in Australia. We have a small orchard in South Australia's Riverland, where we produce high-quality limes for export to New Zealand.

We were recently told by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that our registration fees for export would increase from approximately \$550 per annum to \$8530 per annum due to cost recovery. We have since learned that this is a flat fee that applies to all exporters, regardless of size.

As small producers, this is a significant cost impact for us. We are no longer able to export, as we simply can't afford the fees.

Officers of DAFF have told us that the fees were only put in place after industry consultation. We were never consulted, and we are not aware of any small or medium businesses that were. Only large exporters (who can afford these fees) were consulted or were part of the Ministerial Task Force.

There has to be a better way of implementing cost recovery. Small and medium producers should not have to pay the same fees as large producers, who have a far bigger turnover and can afford the costs. These fees will also stop small exporters entering the market, and will stop exporters sending small consignments to try out new markets.

We understand there is a rebate for these fees this year. However, after the rebate we are still looking at \$1500 or so, a three-fold increase on the original fees.

The Department refuses to recognise there is a problem, or the impact these fees will have on the industry.

We have attached our correspondence with the department for the committee's information. We have also attached questions asked by Senator Xenophon in the Parliament, which outline the issues.

We are happy to provide any further information the committee needs to consider this matter.

Yours sincerely

Michael and Tanya Punturiero