

Inquiry Into Review of the Citrus Industry in Australia

To The Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission - Inquiry Into Review of the Citrus Industry in Australia

Robert & Karin Smyth

We are family citrus growers in the "Riverland West" area of the 'RIVERLAND' in South Australia

I am a third generation horticulturist in this area, do not believe in "Child Abuse" consequently the fourth and the fifth generation who live in this area are certainly not horticulturists

THREE GENERATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE as a grower will not be passed on to my family

My Grand Parents were original settlers in Cadell close to one hundred years ago

In the past our family, have VOLUNTEERED, as well as LOST LIFE, for what they believed to be a great country (Australia). Could I say the same thing today?????????

COMPETITIVENESS

We collaboratively irrigate with approx thirty other irrigators, with technology which allows us all to irrigate our trees to the trees requirement, to the extent we can pulse irrigate. (Several times a day)

Optimisation of pipe sizes to deliver our medium pressured (delivered farm gate) water was used to save capital when the infrastructure was installed in 1998. (pipe lines have NO ends)

We are unable to compete with our overseas growers with our wages being from two to ten times higher than theirs, plus we do not receive subsidies

Help is required from the Australian Government, as is done for other industries. e.g. motor industry, air lines, etc

Freight and Banking costs are not competitive with the rest of the world, which adds to the cost for Australian Growers for their marketing, as well as chemicals, fertiliser, etc.

CARBON TAX

With the cost of power for the pumping of water at today's prices some are asking the question, should we have spent six plus million dollars approx fifteen years ago??, making us less competitive in Australia and the world markets of today.

AUSTRALIA BEING SERIOUS ABOUT OUR EMISSIONS

The amount of emissions that are emitted with the importation (by Sea and Air) of product into this country would be enormous.

LABELLING LAWS

There are many reasons why consumers would like to see a lot more honesty with Australian labelling laws. e.g., chemicals in products so toxic, Australian growers are prohibited to use.

MONOPOLY MARKETING

A.C.C.C. given added authority to scrutinise supply chains.

BIOSECURITY

Importation of product from countries with diseases we do not have.

Less staff to do inspections of above products.

Product entering Australia via New Zealand, (Because it will not be accepted direct)

FUTURE AUSTRALIAN JOBS.

The amount of jobs lost by importation of products to Australia in our industry is very considerable .

I believe it has been estimated that Australia imports close to the equivalent of FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND fresh tons of citrus for the citrus juice industry alone, yet we see thousands of our trees pulled out because of our uncompetativeness.

At the cost of production plus the multiplier effect it is many Australian jobs that we loose, sadly it is not only the citrus industry in Australia that is suffering from poor governance.

With the predictions of food shortages by the year 2050 it is important to keep the production and knowledge of producing food at the for-front with education. This is not happening.

Sadly it is well known by Australians that too many of our food and fibre growers, as well as manufacturers, are diminishing rapidly.

I personally find it absolutely UN-AUSTRALIAN when I see the amount of land which is capable of producing food and fibre and hear of the amount of imports coming into this country, simply because Australia is disadvantaged (production cost and no subsidies) over other countries we import from.

URGENT CONSIDERATION REQUIRED

Presumably Governments (ALL) and Unions can not see what the effect of the imports is going to have on future jobs in Australia when the hole in the ground IS EMPTY. (mining)

If a major catastrophe should occur in a country we import from, or a serious war breaks out WHAT WOULD AUSTRALIANS EAT AND WEAR. ????

For any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards
Rob Smyth