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COUNCIL FOR THE NATIONAL INTEREST
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE



25th March, 2010

Submission to:

Senate Committee of Inquiry into Relaxation of Import Restrictions on Beef
The Senate
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Council for the National Interest Western Australian Committee (CNI) strongly opposes the Relaxation of Import restrictions on beef because for the following reasons 'it is not in Australia's national interest:

- it is against the interests of Australian producers. Many of the countries wishing to export beef to Australia receive generous government assistance in a variety of forms. By contrast Australian producers receive absolutely minimal Government support and there are signals from Government that what little there is, is about to be reduced further;
it is inequitable for USA to be allowed to export beef to Australia whilst the AUSUS FTA prohibits exports of Australian beef to the US for a period of 18 years;
One of the greatest benefits which Australian producers have is that Australia has a clean green pest, chemical and disease free record. This is an asset which must be carried into the future for the benefit of the nation. Relaxation of beef imports will compromise this 'clean green' status. Currently, Australia is only one of ten countries which have negligible risk of BSE
- it is against the interest of Australian consumers – food safety would be compromised. Moreover Australia's very inadequate food labeling laws would make it difficult for consumers to be on their guard and avoid these imports if that is what they choose to do.

A final plea to the Senate Committee – Please re-impose the import ban and in the national interest hold an inquiry into all aspects of AQIS, BioSecurity Australia, FSANZ and food labeling laws.

This Inquiry should seek to:

- eliminate the trade bias in AQIS, BioSecurity and FSANZ
- ensure that all decisions of the three bodies protect and promote the interests of Australian producers and consumers
- ensure that arrangements are put in place which enable consumers to know country of origin of ingredients, details of ingredients including all additives and country of manufacture.

Yours sincerely

Denis J Whitely
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