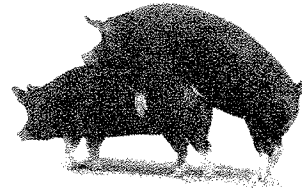


# SHENANDOAH ESTATE

BERKSHIRE PUREBRED PIGS  
CHEMICAL-FREE FARM



"Nothing Artificial"

Pigmeat Safeguards Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
LB2 Collins St East  
Melbourne  
VIC 8003

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We read that the Commission will conduct an inquiry with individuals, companies and other organisations to identify issues and relevant sources of information and to **seek their views**. Notice how it says "seek their views"? Is the Productivity Commission really interested in the industry's views? And then, what will it do with these views? Will it recommend implementation of these views to the government?

In the last inquiry, the Productivity Commission listened to the views of all parties concerned, but in the report that was given out, the presiding commissioner was basically saying that there was no problem. It is definitely obvious that there is a problem in the Australian pig industry, and in Western Australia in particular. Many WA farmers have been unable to compete with the prices of imported pigmeat. These imports are **cheap** and **subsidised**, and are continuously dumped into Australia. Consumers are attracted to low prices, and the only ones who really reap the benefits of this importation are the producers overseas who export their inferior produce into Australia and flood the market. Farmers are often forced to lower their prices in order to compete with the imported meat, and don't even get half the benefit that the exporters receive.

The Productivity commission has received plenty of evidence that the Australian pig industry is suffering as a result of the wrong recommendations made by its previous report. Many farmers have left the industry, and pig numbers have gone down. In 2005, a trade agreement was established between Australia and the United States. It seems to me that the Australian government does not care about our farmers, who are also tax payers.

The Australian Pig Breeders' Association (WA Branch) had recommended that a three-year moratorium from pigmeat imports should be established so that the pig industry could recover. This simple recommendation could have made things easier, but once again the Productivity Commission ignored our recommendation. Three years is all we ask. Is it too much to ask, when the industry is already almost too far gone?

It seems pointless to write submissions when the Productivity Commission is not prepared to act on the views that are presented to it. Have any of the ones who are conducting this inquiry any experience in the pig industry? If this inquiry was headed by a genuine bona fide pig producer, then the government would have a clear and true picture in its final report, rather than a report written by a bureaucrat who has no affinity or sympathy with the industry's plight. What are the qualifications of Gary Banks in order to be the presiding commissioner? And what are the qualifications of the other commissioners? Of course, they wouldn't be talking of lack of evidence if they were pig farmers. Their livelihoods don't depend on how much they get for their pigs. Their livelihoods depend on what they are getting from the tax payers. There is only one language they speak: money.

In light of the tragedy that has occurred, it would seem that the Productivity Commission and the Australian government are acting in collusion. In other words, they are aiding and abetting each other. Perhaps it is time that there was an inquiry into the Productivity Commission itself, as to whether this body is relevant. Perhaps it is time that the Productivity Commission itself was abolished.

There is an old Russian proverb: when you see the bear in front of you, don't look for tracks. I fear that what is happening in the pig industry today is obvious for all to see, and it would not have occurred if the original inquiry had implemented the recommendations that were presented to it by the participants.

As a producer who has suffered, through no fault of my own, but as a direct result of government policy, I further call upon this inquiry to recommend an exit payment to all producers who have left the industry in the past two years and those wishing to leave to be paid \$100, 000 as compensation, tax free. No strings attached. This would eliminate the suffering endured by many small producers.

Evidence suggests, as reported in The Pork Producer July 2005, that the government was prepared to sacrifice the pig industry for the sake of having a free-trade agreement with the United States. It would seem that the majority of submissions to the inquiry warned of dire consequences if its recommendations were not acted upon. How is it possible that a bunch of government bureaucrats heading this inquiry could not see past their noses? It is clear now that the figures have made fools of the bureaucrats. I am enclosing a photocopy of the article 'Trade before disease – Government sacrifices its own industry' from The Pork Producer July 2005.

One more industry has been sacrificed on the altar of free-trade.

I look forward to reading your final report, hoping that you will see common sense, and recommend my advice to the government.

Yours faithfully,



Chris Dodoff  
Pig Breeder