

INVERARY BERKSHIRES

THE HOME OF CHAMPIONS

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

In view of the previous inquiry, and how its commissioner got it so wrong from all the evidence presented to him, what guarantee is there that this new inquiry, with you as its commissioner, will get it right? As a pig breeder and producer since 1964, I have never known it so bad. The industry is suffering as a result of bad advice and policy given to the federal government by its advisers and bureaucrats. Free-trade has not benefited Australian industries, not least of all the pig industry, in which I am involved. Does the federal government really care for us pig farmers?

You, as the new commissioner, are in a unique and privileged position to rectify the wrongs of the previous inquiry. It would take a man of courage and conviction that is prepared to look at the overwhelming evidence that is being presented to this inquiry objectively. Perhaps you should ask yourself. Had the previous commissioner who had inquired in the previous inquiry acted upon the recommendations submitted by the participants, we would not be holding this present inquiry.

It is only right and proper that the industry be compensated for its financial losses due to the overwhelming importation of pigmeat into Australia. As a producer, I submit that a payment should be made available to those who want to leave the industry with dignity. The last exit payment that was available to those who wished to leave the industry was about \$45,000, which was about ten years ago. Today this figure should be \$150,000, in view of how costs have risen.

With many producers leaving the industry, the genetic pool is shrinking. If this continues on current trends, the industry will be terminal.

Your question number four – “Has the industry suffered, or is it likely to suffer, serious injury?” The industry has suffered enormously as a result of the dumping of pigmeat into Australia. As a producer, my price has dropped while my production costs have increased substantially, to the point of unprofitability. I have been holding on, in the hope that the federal government would come to its senses. A number of piggeries in my area have ceased operations in the past four months, simply because they are getting no returns for their pigs. I further call upon the government to implement an immediate halt to the further importation of pigmeat in this country until such time as this industry recovers.

Question seven – “What are the impacts on other parties?” Only 10 per cent of US pigmeat imports into this country are quality assured. The USA does not place great credence on QA. Hence, the Australian public cannot be guaranteed the quality of the pigmeat it consumes from the imports. And further, AQIS cannot guarantee that every shipment of pigmeat into this country is tested for disease or chemical residue. Further more, chemicals that are banned for use in pig production in Australia are not banned in America, or other countries. Therefore, this exposes the Australian consumer to health risks.

The destiny of the pig industry in Australia is in your hands, and the livelihoods of your fellow Australians are at stake. Do you care enough and have the guts, drive and determination to give a report to the government that would go counter to the government's free-trade policies. Do you have the guts to tell the government ‘You got it wrong, mate’ and turn our industry around?

I look forward to reading your final report.

Yours faithfully



Judy Pearce

President

Australian Pig Breeders' Association (WA Branch)