

Summary:

It must be recorded the dates of public hearings and public forums on the Wheat Export Marketing Arrangements organised by the Productivity Commission shows a complete disregard or/and knowledge for the industry in Western Australia with the dates scheduled to be during peak harvest time.

We farm south east of Perth Western Australia where the soil and weather conditions favour mixed farming, growing wheat, barley, lupins primarily and running merino sheep and cross bred lambs. Most of the produce is exported. Our family business is moving into the fourth generation.

We were among the farmers who felt strongly about the need to retain the single desk, orderly marketing system. Although this 'brave new world' is welcomed by some it puts pressure on our business and families as there is not enough time to attend to all that one must, is required to and would like to within the farm let alone a life 'after hours'.

The challenge is being embraced but at a cost – one must follow the markets, purchase new mobile phone systems, computer hardware/software, attend courses, employ consultants, all of which has a dollar value as well as time which impinges on other areas of the business or rest. I believe the younger generation will not accept farming as a life style and in time there will be less Australian farmers growing produce to acceptable environmental quality assurance standards.

Of concern is my belief that multinational companies are being catered to by our government, making it easy for them to buy Australian grain for whatever price they choose and demanding port access and private farmer information. One must ask who is Government working for and to insist there are clear roles for a body such as the Wheat Export Authority to ensure the reputability of marketers and industry good functions to add value for Australian wheat producers. There must be checks and balances on marketers so that Australian Wheat can be safely marketed as such. The compliance costs of unnecessary requirements, some of which are already in place need to be met by the marketers or government. Western Australian farmers are already paying the price of producing grain to a high standard. We need to know requirements of our market well in advance, breeding of varieties to cater for specific markets as well as growing conditions have to be considered. If buyers require quality of grains they

should be paying premiums to offset the cost of segregations at harvest and seed purchase.

Once the wheat is sold it should be paid for before leaving Australia. Ownership and liability rests with the purchaser as we cannot guarantee the condition of ship, destination port and any contamination that may happen along the way. Should there be a problem on the sea or port we cannot be held liable as a grower as has happened in the past for our export produce.

We expect our grower owner bulk handling co-operative – Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH) be entitled to use its infrastructure and facilities to operate at a profit returning same into the business to maintain itself. We believe CBH has been the envy of many interstates and overseas farmers, as was having orderly marketing, single desk. CBH should not be discriminated against by the exemption of the Melbourne Port Terminal access undertakings which affect competitiveness.

Transporting of the grain from farm to rail to port became a bottleneck last harvest (2008/09) which was of no surprise. Farmers not committing their grain for sale will be an ongoing issue and storage of same whether on farm or CBH company and similar private facilities will prove hard to control. The existing transport system needed to be upgraded where necessary and maintained. Our road system cannot cope with the volume of trucks already and I see this affecting all industry and ultimately every person through taxes or loss of lives from road related accidents.

We urge you to consider information from CBH and our Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc) (WAFarmers) our industry leaders who have details required for this submission.