

SUBMISSION TO THE WHEAT EXPORT MARKETING ARRANGEMENTS INQUIRY  
DRAFT REPORT MARCH 2010

From Marion Billing "Rosemere" Marrar NSW 2652. 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2010.

Before commenting on the Productivity Commission Draft Report, I would like to comment on how this Inquiry was organised.

It has been a complete farce, set up by Government so as to be seen to be doing something for the farmers, but to make it most difficult for growers to have an input. The amount of time to attend one of the Meetings, or write a submission to the PC, and now to comment on the Draft has been far too short!

This PC Inquiry and Draft has also been organised during the sowing season or harvest season, when growers are at their busiest! They do not have time to read the Report, let alone comment! Maybe it was done deliberately by Government!

If growers in NSW wanted to attend one of the country meetings, (of which there were only 6 for the whole of Australia) we had to travel 5 hours to Dubbo, in the middle of harvest (9/12/09), which we and 50 others did from most areas of NSW... Does the Commission realise that NSW is the second biggest wheatgrowing State? Why did NSW not have 2 country meetings like WA?

Cr Wendy Craik opened the Meeting and said "this is the most people we have encountered so far"!! then went on to say "this Meeting would not be recorded but our concerns would be noted". I would have thought this would be a great opportunity for the Inquiry to hear from the "grassroots".. and not the marketers and traders.

I cannot find any reference to this meeting in the Draft report, and I think that reflects that the Inquiry was not wanting to hear from growers at all!

Now that this Draft is out, many growers have told me "they wouldn't waste their time putting in a submission as it was all "cut and dried" in June 2008 when we lost the Single exporter for wheat, even though 85% of growers voted to keep a single exporter for Australia. So you will now understand why there are very few grower submissions, or will be in the future! Growers from this area are guttered and depressed about the Government's action on our industry.

I gather there will only be Meetings in Capital cities now for growers to attend the Draft report hearings. I think they are to be held in May (when we are all sowing still!) This is the typical way growers are being discriminated against. We are just the hard working peasants, not allowed to have any input into OUR INDUSTRY, but the traders, marketers and Government can have all the say!

If our great industry keeps going down this path there will not be an Australian Wheat Industry within a few years. We can (and I hope you can too) already see the multinationals moving in on our Australian companies in joint ventures and be sure they will eventually take us over.

Many growers in this area are fed up with the ruination of our great wheat industry and are moving away from growing wheat. The price being offered now is well below the cost of growing it....let alone making a profit. Our drought (8yrs) needs to break and we need a 4t/ha crop in this area to make a profit and recoup some of our loss, but with more charges being imposed by Traders under this new set up it, and no guarantee of getting a decent Spring it is not worth the risk.

DRAFT REPORT COMMENTS.

I believe that WEA should continue its role until at least 2014 as it has a role to play in the accreditation of exporters and does give some security that growers will be paid for their grain

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#### Access to Ports.

I would like to see better safeguards put in place before this is abolished. All exporters need to have continuing access, not just the 3 companies who own the wheat exports. I do not know of any other industries in Australia whose ports (for wheat) are owned by 3 companies! and some, jointly owned with multinationals already.

#### Quality.

I think deregulation has brought the quality of our grain down to a lower level and as recent as last week we see Egypt ( a buyer of our grain for many years) now questioning our quality? I believe growers should continue to receive a premium for the high protein, low screening wheat , and not having it put it in with lower quality wheat.

In the Draft report you state “that growers are now seeing prices that accurately reflect the quality of the grain they grow!” This comment is a load of garbage and inaccurate.

I have not had time to read all of the report, but I believe most of your recommendations relating to deregulation should stay until atleast 2014, and not be changed next year as your Draft report suggests.

I think the final report should consider putting a “floor price” in for wheat and it should be above the cost of production.(\$250/tonne)

Marion J Billing 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2010