



Akoonah Deer Farm

ABN: 68 835 700 248

19th October 2014

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Senate inquiry into R&D Levies

My name is Richard Coffin; I've been farming deer for 25 years, a levy payer and wish to comment on the following

a) *an audit of reports, inquiries and reviews relevant to this inquiry;*
no comment

b) *The basis on which levies are imposed, collected and used;*

The way the levies were imposed was carried out with industry consultation. I have no issues with the collection process, although with a shrinking industry there comes time where the cost of collection negates the amount of levy monies raised.

When industry originally set up the industry levy through RIRDC it was for research development and marketing, we're then told levy funds cannot be used for marketing only R&D. more recently it appears that funds are for research only. This is too restrictive and development must be included for our industry to grow. The way some of the levies have been used is also questionable.

c) *Competing pressures for finite R&D funds;*

No comment

d) *The opportunities levy payers have to influence the investment of the levies;*

As a levy payer I have no influence or say as to how levies are spent.

e) *The opportunities levy payers have to approve and reapprove the imposition of levies;*

There does not appear to be any process by which levy payers could approve and reapprove levies.

f) *The transformation of R&D and marketing into increased returns at the farm gate, including the effectiveness of extension systems;*

As a farmer we're yet to see any increase in farm gate returns as a result of R&D projects to date

g) *Collaboration on research to benefit multiple industry and research sectors;*

No comment

h) *Industry governance arrangements, consultation and reporting frameworks;*

There is virtually no consultation with individual levy payers. With regards to governance arrangements, persons that hold key positions within the industry are excluded from being eligible to sit on the deer reference panel/small animal industries advisory panel. Yet persons with little or no involvement or knowledge of our industry can sit on these panels and advise on projects seeking levy funding.

A person who has intimate knowledge of and backing of industry participants should be allowed to sit on these panels regardless of their position within industry.

Regards

Richard Coffin