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To the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Future of the beekeeping and Pollination service industries in Australia

A:

The importance of the honey bee industry has always been in the past of very little concern to the wider population with honey products about the only thing that was ever noted, however in the past few years since the discovery of colony collapse overseas our industry has been in the spotlight and just realising what we as beekeepers have known that the bee plays a very critical role in the food chain for the population of the world through pollinating crops for a more effective crop return for producers and the ever increasing consumers, without the correct pollination of some food crops there is no food produced.

With the registration of approximately 10,000 beekeepers around the country there is a good reason employment wise that this industry should be supported in whatever needs possible as it keeps other industries also in viability state so the flow on effect for our industry relates to the greater population in many ways.

B:

The current challenges to our industry as I see it are the security of the resources that beekeepers pay for on an annual basis in the forest systems. Beekeepers must be assured of resources that they rely on for honey production but also bee health for future pollination of food crops, it is ok for government to say that we are allowed in these forest systems but they will be cut down for clear felling operations and not regenerated properly, with modern machinery clear felling is becoming a major issue for the industry as more moonscapes appear within our production areas.

Industry had a good relation with wood cutting operations however with more country locked up for parks and reserves, the left over country has been under constant pressure for wood products that are not sustainable under the current guidelines that are in use. Also beekeepers are under threat by the continuing burning regimes that some state afflict upon the country side yes we live in bushfire affected country however we need not clear the whole country sides of fear of fire, this is changing the flora resources that where once apart of our environment.

C:

I think the adequacy of our current bio security needs a re think as in the past 15 years we have had three incursions that has left our industry with more parasites to manage with no help from government that allowed this to happen eg; chalk brood 1990s, small african hive beetle 2000s, and the asian bee late 2000s, with all these incursions/invasions industry has had to manage with no assistance from government and no real attempt for eradication for some so I doubt whether government will make any attempt to try to help industry when the varroa mites lands on our door

As we need all states to agree on a eradication plan, and when has all states ever agreed on anything?

What needs to happen is a financial plan to help industry members purchase mite strips that will help control varroa when it arrives this only needs to be for a eg two year time frame as so industry can learn to manage this new creature when it arrives without placing hardship on a lot of beekeepers as it has in other countries until they learnt how to manage it.

D:

With the current ban on imports for used bee products this seems to be working ok however the allowance of honey into the country is another matter we as beekeepers must produce a clean and green product bee keepers at their own expense change equipment from mild steel to food grade stainless and produced a food safety plan to show where the product has come from however imported honey from other countries need not have this requirement it is once again a great level playing field that works against our industry as honey is being dumped on our wharfs, we need to have clean products however if it is not a human safe issue other chemicals are allowed into our food chain even though our industry is not allowed to use this same product. This needs further investigation surely?

E:

This submission needs only one paragraph

Act on the recommendations that came out of the first inquiry.

It is disappointing that after all the work and effort by industry members and agreement from both sides of parliament that very little if nothing has seriously being done to help industry out, money does not have to be spent to achieve some of the recommendations that will help out industry directly.

All the recommendations that came out of the first inquiry are all still relevant.

May place on website

Regards Ken Gell