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



Dear Sir

Inquiry into the Biosecurity Bill 2012 and the Inspector-General of Biosecurity Bill 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to respond, on behalf of the Australian cherry industry, to the Government's proposed biosecurity legislation and the Senate Inquiry.

Cherry Growers Australia is the peak industry body representing the interests of commercial Cherry growers in Australia in matters of national importance including regulation and legislation, marketing, research and development.

Our industry has 450 growers in all States, see the brochure attached and the value of the Industry each season is about \$120 million that represents sales in both the domestic and international markets

Our national board welcome the updating of the old *Quarantine Act 1908* and its amendments over the last 100 years to a new bill that will set the framework for the next 50 years.

CGA is fully supportive of initiatives aimed at building a system to better manage the risks of pests and diseases entering, establishing and spreading in Australia and potentially causing harm to people, the environment and the economy.

As a member of Plant Health Australia we are like the other deciduous tree fruit industries always aware of risks to our industry from the importation of similar fruit from other countries and also root stock and new breeds and varieties that growers want to use for commercial crops.

In relation to this and not wanting to replicate the work others have done CGA is fully supportive and agrees with all the issues raised by Apple and Pear Australia and Summerfruit Australia in their submissions on the key issues raised.

These were:

- Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis Process;
- Prevention and Control Measures;
- Accreditation of Overseas Approved Facilities;
- Emergency Provisions;
- Australian Appropriate Levels of Protection and SPS; and
- Exports.

The three peak bodies recently met in Melbourne and agreed we need to work on major issues that cross over the industries, particularly as many cherry growers also grow summerfruit or apples and pears and the new legislation and nits roll out is one of those.

CGA is supportive of reforms that deliver broad but simple legislative and regulatory provisions so that biosecurity risks are managed efficiently, effectively and at minimum cost. We also need to be aware of the ramifications of any new administrative arrangements as the new framework is implemented

CGA believes that the framework which underpins our quarantine and biosecurity arrangements must be based on sound science and sensible policy. The quarantine and biosecurity arrangements must be adequately resourced to protect Australia's environment, biodiversity and agricultural production systems from exotic pests and diseases.

For this to occur the Federal government should look to inject funding into this area , not as we seem to see a cutting back of resources and a move to a full user pays system as we have seen in the inspection area.

The Federal Government should look at its level of Community Service Obligation in this area as it does for other areas of government such as health, education and the environment and border security in other areas.

The maintenance of our quarantine status is vital for domestic production and also for current and future export opportunities and access. While the government has obligations under the WTO, our Board and other believe we should not lower the bar to the lowest level.

For this reason we believe that the Australian Government should:

- Fully fund an increase staff and resourcing in this area to manage the new systems for both imports and exports for the next 10-20 years as it has done for other key initiatives such as the environment.
- Look to use the highest level of ALOP's and even adopt the Tasmanian ALOP's as the level to review imports requests.
- Declare regions that have special quarantine measures and regional different due to being pest free etc. that prevents some products even though they have been

approved by the Federal Government not being allowed into various areas with out convening WTO obligations.

- The one size fits all does not suit the continent of Australia and the Federal Government in conjunction with the State and Territory jurisdictions should work together to ensure this occurs and can be flexible to changes over time.
- Continue to consult and communicate fully with all relevant industries over time on importation and export issues, particularly with new technologies available; and
- Brands be they based on various levels such as Australian, State , Regional , local or farm based are a key to domestic and export sales and we need to have a system that can be able to allow for this to occur,

The new Australian Cherry Industry Strategic Plan 2012-17, highlights the need to expand our industry and to do that we must ensure we have a strong national biosecurity system that ensures we don't have disease outbreaks through importation of unsuitable products that could affect our industry.

Also we need to ensure we can grow our domestic market and expand and maintain our export market access through biosecurity related technical market access and multi-lateral, regional and bilateral negotiations especially as we want to grow our exports from 20% to 50 % of our annual production and able to supply into the range of markets in Asia/ India, Middle East and Europe.

We have a key advantage in being able to fly our product into markets and we need a smooth systems approach for this to occur from the orchard to the market place and the Australian biosecurity framework is a key component of that and we look forward as an industry to working with Australian Government in these areas so we can have a strong and viable industry and other in the horticulture area.

The CGA Board would like to request to present a verbal presentation to you if you are undertaking such a process in 2013?

If that is the case please get in contact with the CGA Chief Executive Officer, Simon Boughey.

Simon has already attended two workshops run by DAFF on the matter and put many of these points forward already in 2012.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Smith
National President
Cherry Growers Australia