

Dear Senators,

A facebook post this week by Property Rights Australia featured an extract of the submission of Dr. Piers Larcombe.

It drew the attention of Josie Angus who shared the post and added the comment,

“Reading this submission to the Reef inquiry outlines an almost lay down misere against the Qld Labor Govt [#reeffregs](#). It is a damning indictment on the continued use of computer models at the expense of actually getting out there and measuring something. **The damage that has been done to farmers in the political process is extraordinary, to the point that it has had serious effects on international market access**, all based on pure fabrication.”

Josie Angus and her husband Blair, are not only very large cattle producers but beef exporters with a particular interest in the EU market. She has observed that the very public discussion about the damage that farmers are allegedly doing to the Great Barrier Reef has become part of the trade discussions.

Having watched the two days of presentations in Brisbane I personally cannot see any justification for the statement referencing the sugar industry that, “This puts pressure not only on water quality but also on **biodiversity as coral decay is accelerated**.”

Joanne Rea

Chair

Property Rights Australia

Director

Greenshirts Movement Australia.

Excerpts from:-

“Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment in support of FTA negotiations between the European Union and Australia” by the European Commission dated 13th March, 2019.

Considering that no science institution and no scientist at the Inquiry has been able to forge a define link between agriculture and the health of the Great Barrier Reef, particularly coral, it may be of some importance to correct the record for the Commission.

As it is a lengthy document so I will copy and paste relevant sections for the benefit of Senators and also provide the original file for reference purposes.

Quotes from the paper

1.2 final dot point

The direct environmental consequences of trade-induced growth of the agricultural sector in Australia and associated knock-on effects call for further exploration, with a special focus on the impact areas ‘water’ and ‘biodiversity’. P12

Five sectors for in-depth analysis

1. The **ruminant meats** sector is economically important in both Australia and the EU, and is expected to be affected relatively strongly by the FTA: it is expected to be the sector with the

highest growth in exports from Australia to the EU (both in absolute and relative terms) and the highest relative growth in Australian output. At the same time, EU output is expected to decrease stronger, in relative terms, than any other sector. This has important social, human rights and environmental effects. Regarding the latter, the sector exerts pressure on the environment in a variety of ways. Apart from the geographically non-exclusive greenhouse gas impact of methane (CH₄) emissions, farming of ruminants causes negative impacts on water quality (sediment run-off) and biodiversity (directly via land-use

change or indirectly via sediment run-off) in Australia specifically. As ruminant meat output and exports are expected to grow significantly under a potential FTA, this merits further analysis. In the EU, impacts vary across regions, but as ruminant meat output overall is expected to decrease under the FTA, this could technically loosen the sector's pressures on the environment in the EU.

4. **Dairy** products are another relatively important sector in both Australia and the EU, and the FTA is expected to have a strong impact particularly in the EU, with bilateral exports expected to increase by almost 50%; this change in trade patterns also has consequences regarding the social, human rights and environmental sustainability. The sector has also been highlighted by a number of stakeholders as being important in the negotiations, citing issues such as Geographical Indications, treatment of subsidies, and threat of increasing import competition as important issues to be addressed. Pp 25-26

Table 2.1: Sector prioritisation summary p25

This table, which is much easier to look at in the original file, shows ruminant meats as high priority for further investigation in most categories including economic and environmental. Dairy comes up high on the list for further evaluation but is only Medium for environmental impact. Sugar is given allow priority for further investigation but has a High environmental impact rating. Interestingly oil and gas sectors each have only a Medium environmental impact assessment.

The following case studies are proposed to be selected (this is only a partial list as we offer to do six case studies): p28

☑ **Sugar and water quality**, although not ranking among the top-5 economic sectors, or being affected in a major way by the FTA, would be interesting to study due to the potential environmental impact that could be caused by the predicted increase in Australian output. From an environmental perspective, **sugar cane farming in Queensland is one of the main contributors to water pollution via fertilizer run-off** that is released into the catchment areas of the Great Barrier Reef. This puts pressure not only on water quality but also on biodiversity **as coral decay is accelerated**. With sugar output and exports expected to grow under the FTA, further analysis of these effects is warranted.

☑ **Wine**, as a subsector to 'beverages and tobacco', is suggested as a case study topic because of the competitiveness effects of the FTA on this sector – with both the EU and Australia having globally competitive and renowned wine industries. Also the issue of geographical indications was mentioned as a reason for deeper investigation.

This leaves four more case study topics to be determined as the research progresses.