

Re the 'Farm Gate to Plate' Bill

In essence our position in this:-

The problem we see with the bill is when growers get high prices for early season or late season fruit. We don't want the high prices seen in a negative light if we have found a particular market advantage. We also don't want to bite the hand that feeds us. It is always good to show transparency, but it is probably a case of an independent watch dog that can investigate individual cases and help growers if needed.

Other points-

- Difficulty to implement – farm gate prices vary from day to day. Ensuring that a farm gate price on a particular day follows that particular fruit/vegetable all the way to the retail shelf could be challenging
- There could be circumstances that could reflect a negative to the grower as outlined above
- The Bill could make retail stores more accountable for their in store price structure
- How could this procedure be effectively policed
- The Bill could create more problems than it solves – could create a reign of confusion, mistakes, inadvertent misinformation, and so – ending in the whole thing becoming meaningless.
- May engender public opinion that is more sympathetic toward growers
- May encourage the public to question retailers about their pricing structure
- May show the public where a large part of fruit and veg pricing goes to other than the grower some of the time.
- In a case where bins of fruit are put out in the store at prices below the farm gate price – how does that help the grower?
- The Bill seems to be drafted on the premise that retail stores are 'ripping' the grower off most of the time. Is this in fact the case – or is that just assumed – and it could be wrong? Is that a proper basis on which to introduce legislation like this?
- This bill could turn out to be a two edged sword. That is – not benefiting the grower at all.

In general – whilst the intent appears to be good – the practicalities of a bill like this and its implementation appear to be fraught with danger.

SAFFGA therefore have concerns on supporting the Bill as it has been presented to us.

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