

AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE EXPORTERS PTY. LTD.

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Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport

Re: Asian Bees

Dear Madam.

Please pass on my congratulations to your committee for the effort they are putting into the validity of eradicating Asian bees in Cairns.

Just a couple of differences I have with evidence presented by the DAFF representatives.

1. It was said that horticultural industries who rely on pollination had been contacted to contribute to the cost sharing and had refused.

I wish to bring to the committees attention an article in "Good Fruit and Vegetables" Vol. 22 no.5 November 2010 and I quote: A detailed response from Cherry Growers of Australia (CGA) chief executive officer Trevor Ranford stated it was a complex issue with no simple answer. While he said CGA had not been asked for funds, the cherry industry was actively involved with bee issues and biosecurity.

"A spokesman for the Australian Blueberry Growers Association said he did not recall any request for support of the Asian honeybee project; however there was a request for involvement in a Honeybee Industry and Pollination Continuity Strategy regarding the possible introduction of the Varroa mite. A response from the Australian Macadamia Society indicate it had not been approached by any government department nor AHBIC for a contribution of resources for the eradication of Asian honeybee; however, the society's funding commitments were targeted elsewhere anyway."

How many other pollination dependent industries were not contacted? I took the liberty of contacting John Moore of the Summerfruits Assn. and he told me that he responded to a letter from Nicola Hinder of DAFF saying that their association was very concerned about the incursion, however, they do not maintain funds and are simply a not for profit organisation. Should Australia's biosecurity defence be thrown out simply because growers association do not have funds?

2. A spokesperson from DAFF told the committee that over \$3 million has already been spent on eradication attempts.

This is not correct because all expenditure to July 2010 was for surveillance in an effort to see if the incursion was carrying Varroa mites. There was only 4 field workers carrying out this surveillance.

Our industry feels cheated because we were lead to believe that there was only a few nests and it was only when 36 more field workers were employed that we started to see numbers far in excess of our belief. All the delays have made the task of eradication more difficult and therefore costly.

I would urge the committee to consider recommending a fund to allow for an increased "First strike" capability for all future incursions that could decimate Australia's agricultural industries.

The Deed of Arrangement Scheme does not work?

Best regards,



Warren Taylor