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COUNCIL FOR THE NATIONAL INTEREST
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE



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Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

This Submission is made in response to letter dated 19th July, 2010 from Committee Secretary, Jeanette Radcliffe and following our telephone call to the Committee office when an extension in time was granted.

SUBMISSION

The submission addresses, broadly, the four Terms of Reference (a) to (d).

Essentially we argue that the current biosecurity and quarantine arrangements and consequently food safety measures are not adequate. We recommend:

- (i) refocus the philosophy of Biosecurity Australia away from promoting trade in imported produce to protecting Australian producers from all products from other countries eg pork, beef, apples, bananas etc, etc which have known diseases not yet in Australia;
- (ii) increase the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service inspection protocols for incoming produce and foodstuffs so that 100% of the produce/products of countries such as China, Thailand, Vietnam etc, where it has been shown that their quality control measures are very inadequate. There are too many instances of products, imported from these countries, being shown to contain pesticides, chemicals, fertilisers etc. This should continue until these countries demonstrate that their quality control measures are adequate. Thereafter some tolerance can be allowed.
- (iii) the whole subject of biosecurity, quarantine inspection and food safety should be overhauled and the responsibilities combined with the objective of ensuring that Australian consumers are protected from unsafe food products and unsafe food additives and colourings.
- (iv) truth in labelling regulations should be introduced so that Australian consumers can truly know from the label, the ingredients, the country of origin of the ingredients and the country of manufacture of processed products.

Denis J Whitely
Executive Director CNI - WA
7th September, 2010