

29th March 2011

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
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Dear Committee Secretary

SENATE INQUIRY – SCIENCE UNDERPINNING THE INABILITY TO ERADICATE THE ASIAN HONEYBEE

The WA Farmers Federation (WAFarmers) Beekeepers Section representing the interests of commercial beekeepers in Western Australia is very disturbed with the Federal Government's decision to cease the eradication campaign for the Asian Honeybee as it believes that:

1. It will only be a matter of time before Varroa Mite (greatest risk to the bee industry of Australia and Western Australia) is introduced into the country (as the Asian Honeybee is the most preferred host for Varroa Mite). Australia is the only country in the world that has been successful in keeping Varroa Mite out.
2. Should Varroa Mite enter Australia/Western Australia the horticulture and agriculture industries will be under great threat. There will not be enough commercial or feral bee populations for pollination purposes as colonies may be wiped out by the competing Asian Honeybee or the Varroa Mite.
3. The Asian Honey Bee will become a public nuisance.
4. The environmental damage and impact the Asian Honeybee will have on WA's wildlife and environment should be of great concern to the State and Federal Government. We are not aware of any risk assessments conducted in this area.
5. Bees play a very large role in crop pollination, both in the agricultural and horticultural industries throughout Australia. Should the Asian Honeybee be allowed to spread and inhabit other parts of Australia it will not only be the honey industry that is affected but all primary producing industries that rely on bees for pollination. It will be difficult, if not impossible to eradicate at a later stage.
6. The Federal Government prides itself on first class biosecurity programs and protocols. To ignore the scientific evidence which suggests that eradication must continue due to the dire consequences if it does not, is not a wise move. To make a decision based on available funds rather than what is needed and consequences of inaction is irresponsible governance.

7. WAFarmers would like to see the Federal Government reinstate the Asian Honeybee Eradication program.
8. Any future funding arrangements for an eradication campaign should be sourced from industries which would be affected in the event that an eradication campaign was not in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on this topic.

Kindest Regards

David Leyland

DAVID LEYLAND

Beekeepers Section President