

BRYN JONES

30th March 2011

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY ON

SCIENCE UNDERPINNING INABILITY TO ERADICATE ASIAN HONEYBEE

My name is Bryn Jones, age 36.

I am a dedicated pollinator working in central and western NSW. "Dedicated Pollinator" means I keep and breed bees solely for servicing agriculture by pollination.

The incursion and the possible abandonment of total eradication of the Asian Honey Bee (AHB) scares me and creates great uncertainty into the future, for my family and our industry.

I breed my bees in autumn and winter, west of Bourke and in south west Queensland on the Paroo River. I then use these hives for pollination in spring and summer for crops such as cauliflowers, onions, almonds, seed canola, kiwifruit, seedless watermelons, pumpkins, seed Lucerne, sunflowers.

The bees regularly do 4 weeks in a pollination job then usually get returned to an abundant source of protein (pollen) and nectar to recover for 3 weeks before doing their next job, i.e. 4 weeks pollinating onions at Narromine then moved to Bourke to recover on natural river gum for 3 weeks, and then back to Eugowra on seedless watermelons at rates as high as 10 hives per hectare.

According to several sources I trust, one being CSIRO Australia, the Asian Honeybee would thrive in most areas I try to breed my bees.

Any additional threats to the way I run my business makes it not viable. The problem being that there will be no-one else able to stand up and fill the void.

The farmers we service in Cunnamulla, Griffith, Gosford, Condobolin, Narromine, Bourke etc. all rely on our expertise on being able to successfully manage an insect for optimum pollination of their crops.

Some of these farmers have large numbers of staff both permanent and casual, often being one of the main employers in their towns.

These farms and orchards rely on me to supply good hives with good queen bees and stores (food) to do the job.

It's not just getting a box of bees and jamming it in a paddock or orchard.

This insect, Asian Honey Bee, will greatly affect the ability for beekeepers to access not only areas to grow European Honey Bees (EHB) for agriculture, but also access good queen bees.

You only need one link in the chain weakened and the chain becomes unreliable. Make no doubt, we are talking about food security here.

ASIAN BEE endemic = No beekeepers = No Bees = No seeds = No fruit = No veggies.

The Asian Honeybee cannot be managed in numbers suitable for agriculture. It will only contribute to the demise of an essential industry that Australia needs to protect into our future.

Finally, the environment has the most to lose – animals and other insects that depend on nectar too will be displaced. This shouldn't be under-considered.

In times ahead, I want to be working with farmers and with my bees producing food, seeds and fibre and fuel.

Some of the other threats can be managed – eg. Varroa mite; small hive beetle. Eradication of AHB is the only option if we are serious about the future.

Yours sincerely,

Bryn Jones

Beekeeper/Pollinator

President of Western Plains Branch of NSW Apiarists Association Inc.

Councillor of Crop Pollination Association Inc. (represents beekeepers in NSW, QLD, VIC that use European Honey Bees for pollination)