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Parliament of Australia

New Inquiry ;; Australian Farmers and climate change, Submission from Julian Campbell

The Secretary,
Primary Industries and Resources Committee
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT 2600.

- Current and prospective adaptations to the impacts of climate change on agriculture and the potential impacts on downstream processing.

Agricultural farmers have been adaptive to many changes in the weather patterns during the past 200 years. Many farmers do not believe in climate change as such but agree there is a climate variation with these dry times at present although man has accentuated the variation of weather by extra emissions of CO₂.

One property has records from prior to 1901 and looking at these figures 100 yrs on we have a similar pattern of rainfall

To change farming methods takes time and money? Can the farmer lose income for several years to set up sustainable practices? Can governments see clear to fund these farmers to change their farming practices? Farmers do care for their land and want adaptations that will allow the next generation to carry on with the farm in better condition than the previous generation found it in. Possibly 2-3 years income would be lost and farmers with a debt, as most do, this lack of income will be extremely difficult to retain a viable farm. Farmers therefore must have some form of funding to be able to change the farm method of production.

The role of Government in;

*augmenting the shift towards farming practices which promote resilience in the farm sector.

The drought has caused depression and disappointment in farmers and added to this regulations almost crippling the farmers ability to use his initiative having to wait many months to have a project approved may lose him the opportunity as had presented itself with rain or other good fortune. Imports of food ie apples, bananas with suspected diseases is certainly not helping the resilience of farmers, when they provide excellent products in these lines. Surely we can import other free trade goods that will not bring in disease and keep the excellent farmers producing.

Farming needs to be talked up by government, given the recognition it deserves rather than the maligned criticism it gets daily in the media. Farming is hard, constant work sometimes in difficult conditions. With decisions being made taking into account weather, markets local or export with less than adequate communications (internet service Phone

access not to mention time this all takes .Farmers cannot take computers to the paddock all the time dust affects these instruments.)

FARMERS WORK EXTREMELY HARD FOR LONG HOURS TO PRODUCE FOOD AND CLOTHING MATERIAL yet farmers are not given good press and are not understood by the city counterparts who lead a very different life.

Wendy Craik CEO MDBC.is reported to have stated that temperatures are warmer (Daily Telegraph 8Sept 2008)yet this statement is at odds with the physics of evaporation, so it is a wrong statement.

*promoting research , extension and training which assists the farm sector to better adapt to climate change.

It is most important that the Research Stations remain open to continue the work that takes years sometimes to come to a conclusion The State Government of NSW is trying to close most of the stations . these must remain allowed to operate without the restriction of Big Business input.

Farmers again must be given time for training , but the training needs to mean the farmer can leave his farm without worrying what happen while he /she are away. Who will look after the animals , make sure the crops are sown, watered, weeded, fertilised etc if the are a one person farm.. It is very difficult for farmers to leave their farm at some times, to go to training courses..IF climate change is here the farmer will need much training to help the change to different farming practices

C)The Role of Rural Research and development in assisting farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change .

See above notes.

Qualifications .Farmer for 50 years living through many different seasons, and economic times .and seeing the denegation of the farmer who now needs tremendous government support to handle the impact of climate change ..Please allow the research stations to study what is needed to allow the farmer to adapt to climate change.

Julian Campbell AM