

AUSTRALIAN EGG
CORPORATION LIMITED

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Secretary:	<i>[Signature]</i>

30th March 2009

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into the role of government in assisting Australian farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the above inquiry. This submission intends to briefly illustrate how the Australian egg industry is approaching climate change impacts, how AECL facilitates these approaches through R&D, and how government assistance can continue to support egg farmers in their efforts.

The Australian egg industry is a small but important industry facing many RD&E challenges. Our industry primarily serves the domestic food market and therefore is a fundamental contributor to national food security and good human health. The Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL), the industry's R&D service provider, is committed to assisting egg farmers meet the challenges of adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Assistance from the government in a very collaborative fashion is fundamental in providing egg farmers with the tools and initiatives to adapt to the diverse effects of climate change. Further, it is imperative that the domestic food supply is given the highest priority with respect to adaptation measures in response to climate change. AECL encourages that any further assistance to provide support for adaptation is provided equitably to all farmers, irrespective of the magnitude that their particular production system has on climate change.

Our industry has started to tackle the challenges associated with adapting to the impacts of climate change. Measuring and reducing environmental impacts and adaptation strategies already feature within our R&D portfolio and are being included the egg industry's quality assurance program, EggCorp Assured, which includes approximately 80% of the national flock. Details of project that specifically involve climate change adaptation strategies have been submitted separately to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

The egg industry's national research, regional development and local extension efforts are supported by research providers including universities, CSIRO and independent consultants and by making use of the CCRSPI network. Our aim is to provide Australian egg farmers with the means to adapt to the impacts of climate change whilst improving production efficiency and best practice to ensure that animal health, biosecurity and welfare standards are maintained and that consumers continue to be supplied a safe product. In practice, we seek to facilitate more efficient, profitable and resilient egg production leading to better productivity outcomes in a sustainable fashion.

Meeting the climate change adaptation challenge is as important for egg farmers as for farmers in any other agricultural industry. To this end, egg farmers require assistance to respond to the adaptation challenges that face them as a result of climate change. The diverse locations of egg farmer business's, which correspond closely to the national population distribution (extending into rural communities), illustrates the magnitude of the adaptation challenge facing the egg industry.

On top of the existing R&D priorities relating to sustaining egg production, specific climate adaptation issues include:

- the need for the industry to adapt differentially with respect to the location of the business and impacts upon each location;
- ensuring a consistent supply of good quality water, which is critical to egg production;
- temperatures of the producing environment need to be managed to ensure hen health and welfare standards are maintained;
- energy use and changes in the potential increase in the costs of energy ; and
- the industry is acutely exposed to feed availability and pricing, which are dramatically affected by changing weather patterns and competing pressure for biofuels.

The egg industry may be a relatively small contributor to climate change itself, however this should not exclude egg farmers from continued support and encouragement to ensure that Australia's domestic food supply is secured against the impacts of climate change.

The egg industry is a leader in minimising environmental impact, with a small ecological footprint, relatively low greenhouse gas emissions and already participating in research to further respond to climate change impacts. Future investment in targeted R&D will see greater improvements and new technologies or shifts of practice which can then be assessed and if suitable, adopted by the egg industry. AECL encourages increased support via RD&E to meet the added challenge of climate change impacts on sustainable and profitable egg production.

All farmers, including egg farmers, must be equally supported in their efforts to adapt to the threats of climate change because the threats of climate change impacts are equally distributed to all farmers throughout Australia. It is imperative that Australian farmers maintain productivity improvements in a sustainable fashion.

Yours sincerely,



James Kellaway
Managing Director