



AgForce Queensland Industrial Union of Employers

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20 March 2009

The Hon Dick Adams MP
Committee Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources
c/o pir.reps@aph.gov.au
Parliament House
National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN ASSISTING AUSTRALIAN FARMERS TO ADAPT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Dear Mr Adams MP

AgForce represents thousands of Queensland beef, sheep and wool, and grains producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce delivers key lobbying outcomes and services for members, and presents the facts about modern farming to consumers through the *Every Family Needs A Farmer* campaign.

AgForce understands that in any climate change policy setting positions of both mitigation and adaptation must be taken into account.

As you would be aware from the Government's current development of market based mechanisms, such as the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, there is little understanding of just what impact will be felt by the primary production sector across the Country under such schemes. At the same time, it is widely accepted that the agriculture sector will be impacted upon by a changing climate more than nearly any other operational sector in our economy. It is for this reason that we applaud this inquiries role in the investigation as to opportunities and needs of the Sector when dealing with these impacts. For this reason AgForce welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the House of Representatives Primary Industries and Resource Committee inquiry into the role of government in assisting Australian farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Whilst Australian agriculture is considered to have a strong and proven history of adapting practices to the Australian climate, it is also accepted that impacts of a speed never before seen in the history of this sector may indeed be on the door of current practice. AgForce endorses a comprehensive research and development agenda, not only with appropriate levels of funding from all quarters, but also priority agendas and timeframes to ensure outcomes are achieved to ensure the viability of the sector to continue to provide food and fibre requirement not only for our domestic population, but to service some of the World's as well. It also supports that this role is coordinated by Government so that outcomes required can be achieved in a coordinated way and in a timely fashion, and that the investment

opportunities can be prioritized and efficiently managed. It is imperative now more than ever that the opportunities are managed effectively to decrease the position of duplication and to strive for the best outcome achievable in the current economic climate.

AgForce believes that given the appropriate tools the sector can continue to do just that, and indeed as the recent ABARE figures show, to also continue to help stabilise the economy with strong and continued growth during this difficult economic climate being experienced.

With this in mind, AgForce also recognises that this is not just about investment into Industry R&D alone. Appropriate International and Domestic policy frameworks are required so that perverse outcomes such as ongoing landscape competition removing agriculturally productive land from the market, do not come to fruition. This is also imperative when addressing policy frameworks such as drought policy and exceptional circumstances management, to ensure that landscape resilience is provided for, and that ongoing farm management can take these issues into account, whilst at the same time providing the sector with the support that is, from time to time, required.

AgForce also endorses the Government's recent announcements into significant R&D investment surrounding issues pertaining to livestock emissions, soil carbon sequestration and nitrous oxide retention, but also recognise that these instruments have been developed specifically for the mitigation side of the climate change policy position, not necessarily covering adaptational principles. AgForce sees that it is imperative that these principles are taken into account in any further works programs surrounding the sector and climate change.

Further to this submission, AgForce supports the National Farmers' Federation submissions to this inquiry, and looks forward to expanding on this submission in the future if required.

For further information please contact Drew Wagner, Policy Advisor on (07) 3236 3100, or at wagnerd@agforceqld.org.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Freeman', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Freeman
Chief Executive Officer