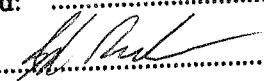


20/05/2007

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Date Received:	..... 28-5-07 .....
Secretary:	.....  .....

To.

Standing committee on agriculture, fisheries and forestry  
p.o. box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
Act. 2600

Re: *INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY*

*Att. Bill Pender*

Inquiry secretary.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission. I hope that many of my industry peers take advantage of the opportunity also.

***Current and future prospects:*** At present honey prices the industry will struggle to survive and the number of full time beekeepers will decrease. Honey prices are connected directly to the un-level playing field of the world trade. We have had to conform to costly trace back systems and quality assurance programs which have been imposed by supermarkets, yet honeys produced overseas have none of these in place. With none of the quality controls we have and the high Australian dollar, enables much cheaper imports to enter our domestic markets. Our honey packers cannot command higher prices because the supermarkets can just bring in cheaper honey at a price that we cannot even produce it at there needs to be a quality control put on all imported honeys and honey related products if it does not meet the same standards as Australian produced honeys it should not be allowed in. The honey-bee industry is vital to the survival of many other agricultural industries without honey-bee pollination crops such as almonds and kiwi fruit etc just do not happen. Many other crops also benefit from honey-bee pollination. Canola for example is reported to gain a 25% increase in seed yield and also an increase in oil content, just by having honey bees pollinate the crop.

***Biosecurity:*** Biosecurity is a big issue. There are diseases and parasites the world over that we do not have in Australia, any one of which, should it arrive will have

dire effects on the bee industry, with flow-on effects to other industries. If for, example fire blight was to enter on apples from New Zealand, and got into our Goulbourn Valley orchard country it would put many bee keepers into quarantine so as not to spread this disease. Although fire blight does not effect honeybees directly, they are a carrying vector.

**Trade issues:** I covered previously as they are tied directly to future viability of the industry.

**Impact of land management:** The impact of land [miss] management and the bushfires is very large in a negative way. In Victoria alone the past 3 years we have had a huge area of our natural resources destroyed by fire with in excess of 10% of the industry being directly affected [hive losses].

To compound matters and make things worse there is still resistance from National Parks to re-open bee sites that have been lost to industry in the past.

There is no evidence that says European honey-bees have any negative effects on our environment, but still they use the precautionary principal. This attitude toward bees needs to change and more forest needs to be opened to beekeeping if the industry is to survive and grow.

**Research and development:** The industry needs more research and development on all levels. There needs to be work done on genetics and the hygienic traits of some bees with the view of disease control in mind Dr Moffaker Hussein was willing to research a trap for the small hive beetle to trap it out side the hive. Unfortunately this research opportunity went begging for lack of money. This is just one example.

**Government work that has been done:** I am currently unaware of any work that has been done by governments to benefit the honey bee industry, but that is not to say that none has been done.

I am a forth generation bee keeper and current president of the Central Victorian Apiarists' Association. The views put forward in this submission are my own and **not** on behalf of the afore mentioned association.

I thank you again for this opportunity, and I hope that my input is of some use to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Rod.Gell