

Dear Senate

My name is David Moon, I am a 5<sup>th</sup> generation farmer living in western Queensland. I am a director of our company which is a family owned horticultural company producing Rock melons , Onions ,Pumpkins and Table grapes . It continually amazes me as to how little most Australians know or even care about where their food comes from. It is also surprising that most people in Australia don't realize how much of a knife edge we are on when it comes to reliability and sustainability of supply of good quality safe food. I have heard people say that if Australian farmers can't produce enough food we can import, this will not work for several reasons .

1. If the country we are importing from runs short on that type of produce they can and often do stop exports to feed their own people leaving us high and dry and starving.
2. Australia has over 150 banned agricultural chemicals such as DDT and Dieldrin making our farmers the safest and cleanest food producers in the world bar none, countries like China have less than 10 . If you think its ok to put melamine powder in milk what else can be shipped onto our shores.

Over the last five years we have seen everything from droughts to flooding rains, huge price fluctuations (usually downwards),Fertilizer price rises up to 400% in one year, fuel up 70% and to top it off, because we had a tougher than usual year income wise our bank decided to penalize us with an extra 4% interest rate hike over and above our normal rate.

Sometimes I have to question my own judgment and that of my families for even getting out of bed in the morning, It is hard to explain but I do feel that because I am a Farmer of food I do have a duty to my customers and the public to produce good food sustainably and at high standards of quality and volume.

Though I am not after sympathy from anyone I believe it is about time that the government no matter what persuasion starts to take food production seriously and not for granted. Instead of handing money out to over abundant car companies and non competitive clothing companies how about helping our farming community with issues like water efficiency, information, laws about how much interest farming entities can be charged by banks ie margins on loans and overdrafts, better access to information about cropping statistics agronomy. These few suggestions only scratch the surface but these measures and many more could be implemented cheaply compared to other programs the government is currently running.

I'm not sure if the Australian senate is aware that presently food producing farmers are leaving their industry in droves and the if the hemorrhage is not stopped the result will firstly be a non sustainable rise in fresh food prices , secondly a major shortage, thirdly food queues followed by starvation.

AUSTRALIA , GET REAL OR GET HUNGRY.

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