

Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
between Australia and the United States of America
Suite S1.30.1
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

April 25th 2004

To the Secretary

I am writing to express my concern at the Free Trade Agreement between the USA and Australia the text of which the Senate is examining now.

My concerns are as follows:

- * The PBS scheme will be dismantled and Australians will be forced to either pay more for drugs than they currently do, or that they will be forced to take American drug companies' drugs, rather than the independently chosen drugs that are on the PBS, chosen by an independent panel at the moment.
- * If the FTA is passed the government will have no say on the level of Australian content on our TV. The current level is vaguely reasonable, but the FTA does not take into account new media and new media forms. It is pathetically inadequate.
- * Of serious concern is our quarantine laws which the FTA is proposing to water down. Australia does not have foot and mouth. We have one of the most precious and carefully looked after flora and fauna in the world. The risks of passing the FTA will be to threaten our fruit, pork, chicken and dairy industries as well as to threaten the flora and fauna in our backyard.
People from the industries to be affected have written and spoken about specific diseases to their crops and livestock and how passing the FTA would affect them and help spread diseases.

I would like to remind the committee about how what the drive for money and more exports really does to the world:

But don't our exports make an important contribution to world food supply?

No. For instance, 80% of undernourished children in the developing world live in countries with food surpluses. The hunger problem has more to do with the way arable land is utilised. Neo-liberal economics dictate that countries should specialise in producing some products and import all their other needs. The practical result of this idea has been the adoption of "cash crops" like tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, cotton and rubber by hundreds of millions of poor farmers across the world. Over 62 million hectares are now planted with these 6 crops alone. In the last 20 years, production of these six crops in developing countries increased 30%, and even in low-income countries with food deficits, production of these cash crops increased by 25%. **(UN Food & Agriculture Organisation)**
Also, the global economy has necessitated the transfer of hundreds of millions of farmers across the world from their farms to urban areas to staff "export processing zones." Basically, most countries are perfectly able to grow their own food, but the global economy has dictated that they grow cash crops or make cheap **Global Trade Watch March 27th 2004**

I would like to recommend to your committee that the Senate should NOT pass legislation enabling the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the United States of America .

Yours sincerely

Susan McMichael