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17 June 2004

Ms Maureen Weeks  
Secretary  
Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport Committee  
Room SG62  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Weeks,

I write to express our considerable concern regarding the revised draft IRA on New Zealand apples.

My company employs over 80 people, 42 who are Agricultural Science graduates, who service the horticultural industry of Australia with agronomic advice and general farm input merchandise. The pome fruit industry is one of our major customer bases.

The threat to this industry posed by the position of Biosecurity Australia (or should it be called "Bioterrorism Australia") in relation to the proposed protocols is outrageous.

As educated science graduates we are convinced that this protocol is ill formed and leaves huge "holes" for both fireblight and European canker to enter this country. The issues of "visual inspection of orchards" for both these conditions is totally flawed, as symptoms will not be expressed in a manner that gives safe clearance of fruit and trash from "early infected orchards." The potential for error to occur here as well as in the general procedures puts our industry at a huge risk of certain infestation.

We ask that the committee totally reject the proposed protocol, until it is totally "fool proof." We await your response to this request.

Yours Sincerely,

I.D.C. MUIR. B.Ag.Sci  
MANAGER / DIRECTOR.

