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Hadfield  
VIC 3046  
18 April 2008

Quarantine and Biosecurity Review  
G.P.O. Box 858  
Canberra  
A.C.T. 2601

Sir,

Recent serious breaches in Biosecurity and quarantine in such cases as apples, bananas, pig-meat, and the devastating equine influenza epidemic, clearly prove that the current biosecurity and quarantine regime is sadly inadequate.

In terms of this inquiry, even the terms of reference are flawed – particularly : “ an Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP) of very low but not zero risk”.

ALOP is based on the argument that Australia cannot have zero risk in quarantine because there are always some risks with international travel ( tourism ) and trade, and that we cannot expect other nations to buy our exports if we do not buy theirs.

Leaving aside the fact that there is no international agreement on trade in agricultural products, the first issue to be noted is that the W.T.O. specifies that quarantine is NOT A trade issue – a country can exercise as high or as low a quarantine regime as it wishes.

The second issue is that there is a great distinction between the almost negligible risk from contamination introduced by a tourist, when compared to the risk from the importation of say, thousands of tons of unprocessed meat, or of millions of fruit items as part of a trade policy.

Australia can exercise, and should exercise a zero risk policy in quarantine in trade, while accepting a low or negligible risk of disease from international travel(tourism).

I strongly urge the Inquiry to promote policies and strategies which will reflect the highest safeguards to Australian primary producers by advocating zero-risk in trade.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Bruno M. D'Elia