

M.S. 720  
Millmerran  
Q. 4357  
14 Sept. 1998

Pig and Pigeat Industries Inquiry  
LB2 Collins Street East Post Office,  
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Sirs/Madams,

We wish to lodge a submission to the pigmeat industries inquiry and make our worsening position known to them. Since the governments offer of "open slather" to the Canadians, our situation has worsened alarmingly. During this period we went from \$2.16 per kg average for consignment or \$172.00 per pig per consignment to \$1.69 per kg average per consignment or \$135.00 per pig consignment. These figures are at 78-80 kgs which was our average weight, Although two weeks ago 50-70 kg pigs rose by 10c per kg, heavy bacon sagged by a further 12c per kg. In this period our production has risen by 20% and will continue to rise until mid November. We are still down on income with more feed costs etc. than before.

We borrowed \$135000.00 to build a new weaner shed (this was a necessity) and by juggling things we were able to rise our sow numbers from 120-150. This was just before the rot set in in December. Since this our tax figures show the big loss (not segregated on accountants paper) about \$40000.00 in that time. Figures for June 1998 also show imports of pigmeat are higher than last year. This government seems absolutely determined to bust some of its farmers family farms. In April we were forced to borrow a further \$65000.00 from QIDC and OD extension very much against our will, when a nations producers can provide its own needs why do they insist on imports.

This recent crisis has damaged our position, physically, mentally and financially. Our two sons, who work on the farms are 31 and 28 years old and are wondering why they stayed on the farm getting \$200 per week. We have three small farms 1270 acres with 800 acres cultivation and some cattle with a little 50 head Q.A.'d feedlot. Our piggery is in the second stage of QA. There is plenty of work for all but very little money. This whole issue has shaken and weakened our partnership and has clouded our future with doubt. We have written faxed and phoned politicians of the government - all to no avail - they say maybe but mean NO. I forgot to mention our debt is large because of purchasing one place in 1984 at 14% interest and in fourteen months we were on 22% then eight years later of drought and now this. Our accountant states very positively that our whole concern is viable if we can get a go and we agree with this assessment. We find it impossible to look into the future with any degree of confidence and 80% of the blame has to go to the government with its globalisation and gatt sympathies.

We feel that a temporary four year quota of no more than 400 tonnes per year is the only way for us to survive. They also have to show some signs of intelligence and put a \$2.00 (at least) per tonne tariff, as all other countries do. We cannot be expected to compete against countries, who as well as tariffs have governments who will subsidise their produce.

We have included a little paper work from our accountant, our bank and one of my doctors, who are prepared to back us in our time of need and for this we are

grateful. Messrs Howard and Fischer and Anderson say that importing a product will not interfere with the countries own industries. It must be a coincidence that Messrs Howard, Fischer and Anderson don't have any pigs. Although they promised faithfully to reshape our labelling laws they have also reneged on that. I think they thought that they have to deceive and be deceptive with the Australian housewife to make sure the import will sell. Wouldn't it be terrible if our housewives could openly select and didn't buy our wonderful governments Canadian pork?

When pigs get to a certain weight they have to go to market, not like cattle or other meat animals which can be bushed and kept back. If a pork producer is forced out of business by for example - the government - their sheds are worth nothing although they cost \$4000 per sow to build (DPI figures) - pits in the floors, cement partitions, low roads and the like - they can be used for nothing else - so lower value farm, lost equity and more bank problems.

The \$19 million given by the government to the pig industry is a total and unforgivable lie. Producers have not and will not receive 1c and they know it. This money is to help processors get into the export mode so other countries can export to us and we can export to Asia or go broke. Woolworths and Coles will get a lot of benefit out of this. They import, export and retail - how can we compete against this? They, the government also refuse to use exceptional circumstances to assist our destitute members. There is no doubt that they are hell bent on the destruction of the Australian pork industry. I haven't mentioned the ever present danger of importing disease which Mr Anderson totally overlooks also the fact that thousands of people work with pork producers on the producing and processing side - also retailing. These things don't matter do they?

Probably the most hurtful part is that there is a provision in the WTO (World Trade Organization) rulings that allow this government to assist their countries - BUT THEY WONT. I can assure the Howard Government that we don't only think we are in trouble - we are and they can correct it.

Yours faithfully

Ray Parker  
for Parker Farm Co.