

NSW

21 November 2001

Citrus Industry Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East Post Office
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Sir

My family has been farming citrus for 36 years, I have been on the farm since leaving school 18 years ago.

In the last eight to ten years I have watched the citrus industry slowly deteriorate. The importation of cheap FCOJ from countries such as Brazil is seen as a major problem. It is impossible for Australian growers to compete with countries with such low labour costs, when our labour and superannuation costs are so high.

Our land is worth nowhere near as much as other commodities, there is no money in citrus, making it hard to sell. People at retiring age are not getting the proper value for their land, and some farmers are being forced to simply walk off their properties.

I run a citrus packing shed as well, the high costs of inspections and transport are making it hard for our operation to export, as well as competition from higher producing countries.

Low juice price can affect market price because you are not taking it to juice for a lower price, growers are going to want to sell it on the fresh fruit market, in turn flooding our local markets, dragging the price down.

Due to low prices over the years, a lot of growers have not been able to upgrade machinery with new technology as they can not afford it.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Amato