

John and Marisa Triaca  
.....NSW

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

### CITRUS INDUSTRY INQUIRY: GROWER SUBMISSION

Dear Sir,

We would like to submit our personal point of view on the current state of the Australian citrus industry, and the effect that government policy and the decline of the industry has had on our family farming operation and also to our family on a financial and personal level.

In a nutshell due to the fact that we no longer have the support of the Australian government in the way of import quotas, tariffs, sales tax exemptions and concessions, as in previous years, we cannot compete with the rest of the world.

The frozen orange juice situation where our local market is flooded by cheap imported juice is the primary source of our difficulties. How are we expected to compete with countries who are not burdened with the huge costs that we have?

All of our costs continue to rise. Labour, workers compensation, superannuation are not even comparable with our overseas competitors. Let alone the cost of production involved in the operation of our farm.

The price of imported frozen orange concentrate pulls our domestic price down to the same level and we can't survive on that.

The Australian industry supplies 50% - 60% of the local requirements, and still last year growers had no other option than to leave fruit on the trees. Once again this is a direct result of the local market being flooded by cheap imports. This is devastating financially and emotionally to Australian growers and their families.

Personally and as an industry we have diversified and put much energy into the fresh fruit market. Although this can provide good returns it does not make up for what is lacking in the juice industry. Obviously the fresh fruit market is much more specialised and rigid in quality control and expectations. Plainly speaking it is most costly and difficult to produce that perfect looking orange to sit on the supermarket shelf than good sound fruit for juicing.

On a personal note it really is very disheartening to "see" that our government is quick to support others and not their own. We need support to keep our existing industry viable. The basics that

we had in previous years; tariff protection, import quota, sales tax exemptions and concessions. We know that farmers overseas have this support from their governments! What we don't need is to be told to get out of the industry. How can we get a fair price for our property when the industry is struggling?

As far as replanting goes, 7 to 10 years is the time span for new plantings to come into production. Even with grants, how do you exist during the wait? And why go to all this expense and effort when we have a potentially worthwhile industry already in place? For us as a family: there have been no holidays, we exist.

And what of saving for our retirement? Superannuation, we think not.

We thank you for this opportunity to submit our case. And we look forward to major positive moves in the support of our industry and Australian farming families.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

John and Marisa Triaca.