

Queensland

30 September 2004

Pig Meat Inquiry

Dear Sirs

You advertised for submissions on pig meat imports a few weeks ago in the Qld Country Life.

In 1997 my wife and I visited my brother in Canada. His neighbour arranged for us to visit friends of her sister in Eatonia Saskatchewan Province in Canada. While there we were able to visit a Hutterite community there. The Hutterite farm covered 37 square miles of some of the finest black soils I have ever seen. There were 90 people living there, and they explained that when the community reached a population of 120, that they then started another community. As these are religious communities they pay no tax of any kind, nor do the members get paid wages although the community provides them with food and shelter and the necessities of life. The state provides a teacher for the children, but they did not tell us how medical help was provided.

My brother tells me that religious communities such as the Hutterites produce 25% of Western Canada's pork. Its hard to see how Australian farms who have to pay wages and taxes could compete against such production.

The Eatonia community told us that they had just purchased 6 new combine harvesters to harvest their own grain which was then fed back to the pigs, dairy cows, ducks (some 30,000 they told us) and poultry and no doubt some was used for their own use. One has to admire their hard work and skill.

In addition, they enjoy the luxury of 2 giant train systems to carry their freight and product to Vancouver and Prince Rupert to be exported. Up to 40 trains a day travel the CPR line.

I do not produce pigment but it seems to me that our farmers are not on a level playing field and under the present conditions they would have no hope of competing with this pork. I cannot see how our lives would be improved if this trade continues in its present terms and how putting Australian farmers out of business would do any good at all. My hope is that this inquiry will recognise this competition and take steps to make a more level playing field.

Yours faithfully

K. Oxenford