R. & E. McDonald,

[redacted]

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6th July, 2019.

Members of Victorian Farmers' Federation Beekeeper Branch.

SUBMISSION

Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism.

Apiculture:

Although our family Apicultural enterprise has not been targeted physically (as yet), we are most concerned to see an aerial photograph of our business premises (Castlemaine Honey) on the Aussie Farms web site.

As well, there are nine other Victorian Apiculture enterprises cited, not to mention several interstate colleagues (51 facilities).

Our Business - As well as ourselves Bob & Eileen, (retired from commercial activity but retaining some 20 hives on site), our two sons Robert and Peter McDonald each conduct a migratory business (in all approximately 2,000 hives), employing between them, five young people - including one with a wife and two children - who must be considered.

Bio-Security is an essential aspect of operations, both for the bee hives (disease spread) and also for the honey extraction and bees wax processing areas.

Equipment - Then, of course there is the highly expensive honey extraction machinery; the bees-wax processing plant; hot room; cool room; trucks; and Fork Lifts to consider.

Bee stings are an integral component of our enterprise. Whilst we are conversant with this in our every day operations, we are well familiar with the skills to avoid unnecessary pain for us, and trauma for the bees. When a bee inflicts a sting she must die, as the action of stinging actually removes part of her innards; thus stinging is purely a reaction to stress.

But just as importantly we do not want to have any of these misguided folk - should they see fit to actually interfere with our bee hives - being inflicted with one or multiple bee sting/s – the bees' only concern is the safety of their hive/s.

So we do not want to:

a) Reduce our field foraging force, or

b) Have some-one's loved one experience a fatal allergic reaction to bee venom.

c) Possibly be involved in any legal action which may follow a stinging incident.

Although activities such as occasional removal of hive lids, removal of honey combs, over-turning of hives by nudging with a car to produce a 'domino' effect etc., even spraying with insecticide, have been an ever-present threat of extreme stress for bees located on-site in forest areas, with the advent of this type of Activism increasing, the possibility of this practice has become more of a reality.

Thankfully, these past actions have not resulted in tragedy, only lost bees and/or broken equipment – which can all be replaced.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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