

[REDACTED]

From: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture
Sent: Thursday, 13 June 2019 9:21 AM
To: aglawsinquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Mr Thomas Hanrahan

[REDACTED]

Trustee
Homebush Pastoral Co.

[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

--

--

File1:

File2:

File3:

My name is Tom and my family run a dairy and broiler chicken operation two hours south east of Melbourne.

The recent rise of animal activism has correlated directly in an increase in mental health issues and farmers being mentally strained by the thought of farm invasion. The recent culmination of drought, high fodder prices, lack of water and now the threat of livestock theft, farm invasion and the abuse of agriculturalists has seen my father age 10 years in six months and has had an impact on my mother's mental health. Since the invasion of the Gippy Goat farm my mother has elected to stay in Melbourne when she is faced with being home by herself out of fear. Either staying with family or renting a hotel room the fact that people now feel unsafe in their own homes means that this has gone too far and it is time for protections to be put in place and enforced to protect those who provide food and fibre for this country.

It is not only the stress and mental strain placed on farmers by the idea of trespass that is concerning. The biosecurity risks that these 'activists' offer is gravely concerning and could put the welfare of the animals they care so much about at risk. Along with these breaches in biosecurity offer up a plethora of diseases that can be transmitted from animal to human, including avian influenza. Diseases of the like have the potential to harm animals and have detrimental health effects on people.

Stress on animals is something that farmers have to be weary of. If animals become stressed it has a detrimental effect on production and can make animals act in an aggressive manner. Animals may hurt themselves if confronted by large groups of people and even small groups who do not know how to properly handle livestock and keep them calm. An example of this was captured in Queensland during the 'day of action' where activists with no idea how to manage stock pushed a group of dairy heifers through fences and onto the road where both people and animals could have been harmed. The animals may also act out and cause harm to animal activists or in serious cases death.

I personally respect the rights of people to not consume animal products and I absolutely respect the right of freedom of speech which these groups have expressed. I do not, however, believe that people have a right to enter private property under the falsity of 'liberation'. I have seen these groups compare themselves to the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, the only difference being the leaders of this movement discouraged, theft, violence and any illegal activity to push their cause. The actions of these 'activists' are to the letter of the law illegal. Their actions instill fear and hatred of people who conduct completely legal businesses, which in this democracy is their given right. Farmers are continuously treated like criminals, yet have committed no crime. It is time for the law to protect hard working Australians rather than allow these activists to run riot.

We as a country and indeed as the state of Victoria cannot continue to allow people to continue to ruin lives, increase the already high rates of mental stress in farmers and put people out of business. It is disgusting to think that the actions of these 'activist' groups is allowed to continue at the detriment of the Victorian rural economy and indeed at the detriment of Victoria's farmers. I encourage the Victorian Parliament to see reason and increase penalties for trespass and biosecurity breaches to protect our hardest working citizens.

Kind Regards,

Tom