



**From:** Geoff Wade [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 28 July 2019 3:14 PM  
**To:** aglawsinquiry  
**Subject:** Inquiry into the impact of Animal Rights Activism On Victorian Agriculture

Geoffrey Wade



Dear Sir/Madam

Please find the following my submission to the inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture.

As a person who has had a close association with the agricultural sector for most of my life I feel that I am qualified to make comment on the above matter.

Whilst I personally have been the victim of theft on two separate occasions where pumps, saws etc have been stolen the psychological damage from the feeling of the invasion of privacy of having persons unknown invading my property was unsettling to say the least. On another occasion I had stolen two bales of crutchings and twenty three sheep. On all occasions the police were called but unfortunately there was not any recovery of any of my property.

After these incidents I was employed by Australia's foremost rural chemical company which led me to call on every major property in Victoria and Tasmania. Many of the farmers I spoke to said they had been victims of theft and while the lost property was of concern the major problem appeared to be the mental anguish suffered. Mental health issues are rampant in rural areas and trespass and theft along with climate conditions are factors in many farmers leaving the industry.

Another factor that I found hard to deal with is the right that "Joe Citizen" thinks he has to enter a farmers property to harvest mushrooms, fish or firewood. It is the perception that farmers are wealthy and as such should provide to the poor townfolk and they get very upset if challenged but the same people take a very dim view should the farmer "borrow" cuttings etc from their garden.

Of recent invasions of farms with activists taking photographs and threatening farmers and when facing Court incurring minuscule fines is an absolute miscarriage of justice. I wouldn't be surprised that this lack of compassion for farmers as shown by the Courts will lead to vigilante groups being formed to protect property and it won't be until there is a death will authorities spring into action.

As I mentioned I have been on farms most of my life and from my experience the vast majority of farmers really care for their stock as it is their livelihood. Skinny cows don't give much milk, stressed and hungry sheep don't cut much wool.

To stem the exodus of farmers leaving the industry (the average age is 56) the Government must show empathy for the farmers in dealing with the Animal Rights Activists. A one dollar fine is a total slap in the

face to the people who feed this nation. Seeing that these people appear to have time on their hands perhaps a penalty of them having to work for a month at the property they invaded may be an appropriate deterrent and an education for them, and to understand how misguided their beliefs and actions may have been. Farmers have every right to carry on with their business knowing that the law can adequately deal with the misguided individuals who think otherwise.

I personally consider this to be a very important issue in a industry I hold dear to my heart, no farmers no food so why are we allowing fools to interrupt our God given rights. In my line of business as an agricultural machinery consultant I speak to farmers every day and the activist topic is constantly raised with major concern for Government inaction.

I appreciate this opportunity to have my say and trust that common sense will prevail and the rights of farmers will be taken into consideration.

Thank you  
Geoffrey Wade