

Diamond Valley Egg Farm

A.B.N: 55 068 491 636



22nd July, 2019

Attention: The Secretary
Legislative Council, Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE, VIC 3002

RE: Inquiry into the impact of Animal Rights Activism.

Bridgewater Poultry Farm Pty Ltd has experienced firsthand the damage Animal Rights Activists cause a business and the Agricultural industry.

- Activists targeted Bridgewater Poultry Farm earlier this year whilst the farm was under a Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) quarantine order due to the discovery of Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) brought onto the property through purchased eggs. (A normal industry practices.)
- Animal Activists breached the DEPI Quarantine directive.
- It is believed this trespassing indirectly/directly may have resulted in the spread of SE into areas of the farm which had previously been clear of the pathogen.
- There is also the potential risk by the trespassing activists to spread the pathogen to other farms and industries is high.
- Due to the activists moving from positive SE sheds to negative SE sheds, which may have spread SE a further 280,000 negative SE layers were required to be culled.
- This has meant the loss of the revenue for the next 12 – 15 months before the business can resume full trading.
- The timing of this is poor as the industry has experienced high costs due to the drought and low revenue because of the oversupply of eggs driving pricing down over the past two years.

Moving forward Bridgewater Poultry Farm Pty Ltd are now

having to add upgraded protection to impede trespassers/activists.

Required Actions:

- Enclosure of the property with a 1.8metre chain mesh fence topped with three strands of barbed wire.
- Updated and increased security monitoring systems to record movement on the farm.
- Additional security locks on perimeter fencing and buildings.

The property is in country Victoria in a quiet town and has minimal passing traffic.

The business is/was a major employer in the region helping to support families and businesses within the area through employment.

What has the Animal Rights activists trespassing meant to the business.

- The loss of long-term major supply contracts in supermarkets and the foodservice industry.
- The loss of opportunities in the Export market.
- Loss of 75% of jobs currently with the potential of the business closing down.
- The payout of redundancies to these employees.
- The total culling of all livestock on the farm.
- Expensive clean up costs running into millions of dollars.
- Stress and financial burden on the Employees and Employers.
- It will take approximately twelve to fifteen-months period to fully resume business activity.
- This doesn't mean securing major contacts lost, so new markets will have to be sort.

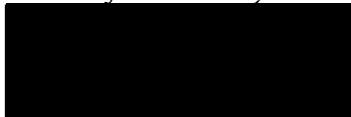
Recommendations;

- The ability for affected businesses to recoup the financial and future earning losses from Animal Rights Activist groups and individuals.
- Jail terms which deter the crime not opportunities to gain exposure for the activists.

- Education programs to show farmers are there to protect and maintain animal welfare.
- Animal Rights activist should be named and shamed when causing destruction and death to farms and livestock instead of the farms having to be fearful and targeted by the media.



Yours faithfully



Impact of Animal Activism

- Activism in itself is a right of all people Australia, in many instances it has resulted in changes of legislation and policy
- We respect the rights of all people to voice their views and opinions in a manner that is constructive and inclusive.
- What we have seen in the past and recently with respect to the Animal Activists goes beyond what may be considered as reasonable and in many cases legal.
- People who are involved in Primary Industry have to consider the whole of the cycle of food production and distribution. The public expects an industry that provides, safe food, cost effective food production and distribution to all areas of the country.
- The demand on farmers and all people involved in the supply chain is ever increasing.

Impacts of inappropriate Animal Activism of the farmers and their families:

- No longer feeling safe in their own places of work and homes
- Being marginalised within their own communities which they often contribute so much to
- Invasion of privacy
- Trespassing occurring on their land and places of work and business
- Loss of income in what is often a marginal business in the first place
- Significant property damage with little ability to apprehend the perpetrators and seek civil damages
- Personal and family stress
- Loss of livestock and the further stress that the invasion of farms causes the livestock on the property
- Loss of trust by the farming community of having a collaborative and open dialogue with all stakeholders