

Submission for the enquiry into the impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

My name is Melanie Sanderson and I consent to having my name made public, prefer not my address. I am happy to be contacted to discuss any of these issues further.

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The systematic cruelty animals endure as the normalised methods of slaughter in Australia is mostly unknown to the general public.

The adds on TV depicting happy cows grazing on lush green fields is not an honest representation of how those cows become meat and how the milk in the supermarket is produced.

I believe society should have open access to the truth behind everything they purchase and consume so they can make educated choices.

Of all the adds I have seen on TV lately, including the A2 milk, Devondale butter and Jalna yoghurt, they have all focussed on the perfect image of cows on green grass. The Jalna add even had school children learning how the yoghurt is made, all happily smiling. They all left out the animal cruelty involved and accepted as industry standard.

The truth of milk production is a far cry from those happy, peaceful pictures.

Why shouldn't the public know that each dairy cow has to be impregnated every year and produce a calf to make milk? That the calves are removed from their mothers at less than 24hours old? That most of the male calves are then slaughtered for veal or pet food? That the girls are raised in individual pens or crates or tents until they are old enough to join in the breeding program and add to the farmers milk production as their mothers before them did? That the handling of these new born calves is not tender or gentle but forceable and often brutal?

What about the chickens? The real conditions they are raised in? The masceration of the living day old male chicks and females not deemed large enough by industry standards?

Does the public deserve the right to the truth or is it sufficient for them to be deceived by only the industries advertising?

The factory farming of pigs. An animal so closely aligned with human DNA and known to be as smart as a young child. Surely the public must be privy to how these animals are raised and slaughtered so they can decide if they really want to purchase the meat from them? The cramped cages they are forced into then lowered into gas chambers. They scream in agony as the gas burns their noses and oesophagus and lungs until they finally die. Surely in a society as civilised as we like to consider Australia to be, if this is standard industry practice and within the animal welfare guidelines, what's to hide?

The latest case of the unlicensed slaughter house in Koo Wee Rup where sheep have their throats slit without being stunned. How would anyone ever have found out about that if not for animal advocates?

Standard practices of tail docking lambs and piglets, castrating males, de-budding calves horns, teeth removal and more all without any anaesthetic or pain relief. Is this also something that should be hidden from the public?

Clearly the 'strengthened animal welfare laws' are not changing the end result for the animals.

Who is going to speak up for them?

The farmers won't as that's how they make their living.

When did animal farmers become above the law?

How many Victorian farmers have had animal advocates on their farms without invitations?

How many animal farms are there in Victoria?

The answers to those 2 questions are very important to understand the reality that is media hype.

In all the footage I have seen of these exposes, the advocates for the animals have all been wearing PPE including gum boots and overalls.

So, what actual Bio Security problems have these caring people caused?

My guess is none as they are there to help the animals. They want the public to know the truth. To make the meat and dairy industries honest, open and transparent so the public can make informed choices.

What this is all about is the truth. The honest truth and nothing but....the truth.

I believe the truth is that meat and dairy farmers know the public will not approve and will not support or condone them when they find out what actually happens to produce meat and dairy.

The farmers are scared, terrified of the truth becoming public knowledge.

Let's look realistically at the lack of rain, no foreseeable change in that, the costs of raising animals, the damage to the land, the moral issues of the cruelty involved and the declining demand for these products worldwide.

Let's take this opportunity to be honest about the future for animal agriculture and include in this, the considerations needed to address climate change.

Let's not shoot the messengers, the people who stand up for the voiceless.

Let's just be honest about it all.

We live in a free and democratic society. We live in Australia, not North Korea.

We already have trespass laws and hindering laws. They are more than enough.

To charge an animal activist who merely wants to expose horrific cruelty to the public in the hope that these animals with no voice, can be heard, is tough enough with the current laws.

What's happening about charges of animal cruelty in Australia? Are there any?

Let's not forget the farce that was the result of two enquiries into Greyhound Racing. Anything to do with making money off animals in Australia seems to be justified.

The farmers have such issue with Aussie Farms. Why?

Does Aussie Farms lie?

Do they spread deceitful propaganda about animal farms?

No. They do not. They speak the truth.

I thought to be a whistle blower for the underdog was an admirable act.

The Bio Security risk issues form animal advocates are null and void. Take a look at 1000 eyes. Check out the Wacol Piggery footage and see the lack of Bio Security there.

If anything, the animal activists are helping with Bio Security, revealing horrendous conditions and alerting the authorities. Why aren't the farmers being charged with cruelty? Why no charges of Bio Security breaches?

Does it make any sense at all to increase the penalties for the whistle blowers and still not charge the perpetrators?

I do not see any valid reason for further protecting farmers privacy, in fact, after all the exposed cruelty, I believe the farmers should all have to have regular, independent, unannounced audits.

The slaughter houses and sale yards should all have mandatory live cameras operational and available for public and authority viewing.

I believe our governments should be working with all the meat and dairy farmers to help them transition into more viable and less cruel farming.

The tax payer funded handouts, grants and loans can't continue forever and the world is changing. Meat and dairy are on the decline worldwide and our farmers should have the opportunity to get into plant based farming now.

To conclude, my message for you is this; Do we want future generations to shudder with shame of the silencing of whistle blowers into animal cruelty or do we want them to be proud of the changes brought about by them?

'The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.'

- Mahatma Gandhi