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

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Introduction

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for accepting and reviewing this submission into the impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture. I am optimistic the outcome will improve animal welfare in Victoria, and the introduction of key recommendations will eliminate the need by concerned people to risk their own health and welfare to expose THE TRUTH behind animal agriculture. I am hopeful this enquiry will lead to a thorough examination of the entire animal agriculture industry to minimise HARM to animals.

In order to prevent and deter activities by unauthorised persons one must ask the question WHY do the activities happen – answer this question and all your concerns are solved. To assist in the decision making I make the following recommendations:

I recommend each person making judgement on any part of this submission

- Visit an abattoir for a day to witness the entire process from the animals being unloaded through to the slaughter and the process chain – this will enable you to witness the animals screaming, the look of panic and dread in their eyes before and during their slaughter.
- Witness how animals are carted to the abattoirs, do they need water? How long are they on the truck, the temperature (considering pigs have difficulty lowering their temperature)?
- Examine the health and safety of the entire process chain and that of the workers.
- Visit a piggery, high density poultry breeding farm and a high density feedlot.
- Discuss the measures in place to manage animal welfare.
- Conduct a thorough examination of all feed including additives and/or antibiotics, growth hormones and how the information is recorded.
- After partaking of the above may I suggest you have a thorough discussion with informed and knowledgeable animal rights activists in order to completely understand and comprehend their motivation(s).

Summary of key points

1 Animals are sentient, they like you and I and our children experience a range of emotions

and have complex social networks.

2. Animals have emotional lives, they can suffer deeply, and if we continue to use them for food we need to at least alleviate and help minimise their pain and suffering.

3. A majority (95%) of Australians are concerned about the treatment of farm animal; they consider farm animal welfare in Australia to be an issue. Community distrust of the industry and government and the perceived lack of transparency is driving outrage on farm animal welfare (Australia's Shifting Mindset on Animal Welfare. Futureeye Pty Ltd CAN 081 569. Windsor, Vic 3181. 2018).

4. Introduce transparent and accountable animal agriculture industry practice and food production in the law. CCTV and independent, random, unannounced site inspection visits along with other measures.

5. Encourage whistle blowers (many employees witness various activities). This will highlight and reduce the number of illegal activities, i.e. unlicensed slaughter houses.

6. Report openly and to prosecute non-adherence of animal welfare standards.

7. If the reporting, accountability and transparency measures are introduced then this may mitigate any additional actions.

Terms of Reference

a. The type and prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian farms and related industries, application of existing legislation.

1. History has shown the activism has exposed a number of practises on farms which are cruel. The recent Bridgewater Poultry Farm and exposure of unlicensed slaughter houses for example.

2. Lack of transparency within the farming sector is lacking – how the animals are treated, what and when they are fed, the experience of the workers and their background.

3. What checks and balances are in place to replace the truth being exposed (hidden from the public) if whistleblowers are to be replaced.

b. The workplace health and safety and biosecurity risks, and potential impacts of animal activists activity on Victorian farms, to Victoria's economy and international reputation.

1. Biosecurity risks currently exist from the practises employed within the industry. Consideration must be given to the consequences of over use of 'additives' to the animals' food and how this is now impacting on the health of humans, other animals and the potential of being a major catastrophe in the future. Where is the evidence based proof of animal rights activists causing biosecurity risks.

2. Very difficult to discuss the effect on international reputation without asking is the truth damaging? If so remedy the situation without 'hiding' the facts and with transparency comes enhanced international reputation.

3. Workplace health and safety is a major concern amongst the workers within slaughterhouses and others involved within the industry. It is now apparent psychological disorders need to be investigated to protect the workers and others.

c. Animal activists compliance with the Livestock Disease control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010, and the Prevention of cruelty to Animals Act 1986

1. Does the animal industry adhere to the acts? Proof is required as camera footage shows otherwise.

d. The civil liability of individuals and organisations that promote or organise participation in unauthorised animal activism activities.

1. Mandatory multipurpose CCTV monitoring and establishing of an independent Australian Commission for Animal Welfare to monitor and enforce compliance is essential for ALL animal industries, slaughter houses, livestock exchanges, livestock cartage and high intensive feedlots.

e. analyse the incidences and responses of other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally

1. There is a growing concern from the general population for animal welfare.
2. Recently the younger generation have been vocal regarding climate change and in particular the lack of transparency and inaction in the past – The same concern is now spreading to the animal industry and will increase exponentially in the future.
3. Climate change will dictate that less people will require animal agriculture in the future – there will need to be a shift towards food production involving less impact on climate change.
4. Studies are now showing the harm of animal consumption to health.
5. It appears people are sympathetic to activists when various animal agriculture practises are exposed.

f. provide recommendations on how the Victorian Government and industry could improve protections for farmers' privacy, businesses, and the integrity of our biosecurity system and animal welfare outcomes, whether through law reform or other matters.

1. Transparency and accountability within the complete animal agriculture industry – CCTV, independent farm visits and inspections without notice, recording of all animal deaths and causes, type of medication and recording of how, when, where and why.
2. Strict penalties for farmers and individual not adhering to the above.
3. Strict penalties for those unduly harming animals.
4. Laws to protect whistle blowers.
5. Codes of practice to protect farm animals – factory farmed animals are not represented in the RSPCA statistics on animal cruelty. Victoria allows inhumane treatment of animals as long as it is for commercial purposes.
6. Support farmers' businesses by supporting them to transition to non animal agriculture away from animal agriculture to not only minimise climate change.
7. In order to provide protection for our biosecurity system a thorough examination is required. Are all workers completely disinfected before and after exposure to the work environment, including clothing. Are all vehicles disinfected (including farm delivery vehicles, cartage vehicles)? Are these farms posing a potential major risk to the human population (bird flu, mad cow, swine fever)?
8. Establish an Independent Commission of Animal Welfare (Australian Productivity Commission, 2016). To avoid conflict of interest the Minister for Agriculture, Federal and State, should not be responsible for the portfolios of both the animal agricultural industry as well as animal welfare standards and practice (the RSPCA is severely underfunded and unable to carry out their duty in the prevention of cruelty towards animals).

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File2:

File3: