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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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To whom it may concern,
I do not usually take the time to enter into this type of thing but but I do feel it's necessary on this topic for both sides to be heard fairly given all the media backlash on the topic.

My father is a sheep farmer in Western Victoria with around 1000-1500 ewes at any given time and is responsible for the sale of anywhere between 1000-2000 lambs each year. I was brought up seeing every part of the business and even participated from a young age. I worked on the farm for 18 months full time once I finished school. I personally saw how hard farming can be and how hard it can be on farmers.

If it wasn't that I was brought up doing it and had been around it my whole life I'm sure I would be more scarred by what I saw and did.
It is routine for children to participate in the weekend work that is "lamb marking" this is the standard practice of cutting off the tails of live 6 week old lambs while they scream and bleat in pain.
This was done with gas heated scissors which are red hot to try and cauterise the wound. They then have a tag hole punched through their ear and a needle to the thigh for immunisation before being thrown back to the flock.
The male lambs would have a tight elastic band placed around their balls until the blood supply could no longer keep them alive and they would rot and fall off.
Some years we would do this for the tails too, while looking less gruesome it still was extremely painful to the animals as I found out when I tested the band on a finger for a second before removing in pain.
Fortunately for me I was the aggressor and the victim in that encounter..

Later at the age of 16 I participated in the act of mulesing, this is when a lamb has the skin from around their tail once was cut off with sheers.
There is no anesthetic given; a firm grab of the skin to each side of the tail pull up an inch and cut straight from their body.
They would kick and kick as hard as they could screaming, as anyone would when being

mutilated or tortured.

The reason this is done is under the guise of aiding to prevent fly strike.

In my experience all it aided in was lowering the work load. No fewer sheep died on our farm.

These are just some of the standard practices that I thought were normal; that I thought everyone knew about, but it's not true.

While they are completely legal and normal in the sense that every farmer does them, they are not normal in the sense that the general public and the majority of the public who pay for these practices to occur would be mortified that they are allowed to happen.

I am all for each individual to make up their own mind on what is right and what is wrong but when we stop the flow of facts and information we are not helping anyone.

A few things which need to be addressed;

Farmers who are doing nothing wrong have nothing to hide, I would welcome anyone who wants to know about how animals are kept to see our farm.

Information on where animals are raised, sold, mutilated and slaughtered should be public. Personal names of owners are of no use and should be kept to themselves but a businesses name and contact details should be public knowledge.

Whistleblowers are not interested in going anywhere near a farmers place of residence or their family.

While biosecurity is constantly talked about it by the media it is not truly understood or spoken of. From the research I have done whistleblowers and rescuers pay far more attention to biosecurity than the standard Australian farmer.

From my experience farmers routinely drive from their property for a friends and do not decontaminate their tyres.

High intensity farming is the most at risk to biosecurity but that is due to the very nature of their type of operation, this is only an issue because some farms are allowed to hold and contain tens and often hundreds of thousands of animals in extremely close proximity.

There is no footbath for wild animals, no washdown area for birds or hairnets for the mice that run freely from one property to the next. There is also no recorded instance of a biosecurity issue being caused by a none worker on a farm that I could find.

I'm not saying for one second that biosecurity should be disregarded but the facts around it should be known.

Without documentation of these practices by whistleblowers and the documentaries that are made from undercover investigations the general public will never be able to make an informed decision on what they are directly contributing towards.

If a vale of secrecy is thrown over an industry we as a society are endorsing the malpractices of the worst offenders as they will be allowed to run rampant.

It is bad enough that these industries are able to in the most part self regulate and while that is done there will always be atrocities such as live baiting and live export.

Moving forward as a minimum slaughterhouses should be force to install the cameras they have already been requested to do so.

Mulesing should finally be banned as in so many other developed nations.

There needs to be a place for the facts about farming to be shared with the people that are

paying for it to happen, the consumer. one documentary that shows the facts behind each part of animal agriculture in Australia called Dominion, it shows the standard practices in each industry and I urge the parliament to watch it.

If in my family's story we had farmed Labradors or cats we would be thrown in jail. Why is it that because there is a market for it and that money can be made off the backs of these animals suffering it is allowed to happen without scrutiny?

No farmer is truly afraid of people entering onto their property or into their home, these are some of the strongest people in our country; they are scared that the public will learn what is happening behind closed doors and decide it is no longer a moral thing to do.

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File1:

File2:

File3: