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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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As a farmer and part owner of a mixed farming business I'm disappointed (but not surprised) with the increasing impact animal activism and invasions are having on farming and rural communities.

Our enterprise involves farming activities including food and fibre production such as lamb / wool, dairy, irrigated dryland cropping and fodder. We take pride in our work and the humane manner in which we treat all animals reared on the property, along with ensuring staff employed have a work ethic in sync with our own practices.

To date, we have been lucky and have not experienced trespassing by activists first hand however it is something that is concerns us for the future.

As a mother, who is often at home alone on the farm with our children (40km from the nearest police station) I worry about our safety and the psychological impact the latest spate of invasions is having on our children. But more importantly I think about why farm invasions are happening and what not only Government but what we ourselves can do to prevent it.

Property owners rights

I as a property owner would like to know what our legal rights are to defend and protect ourselves from intruders and think this could be promoted in a context that shows clearly to both parties involved at what stage the activity they are undertaking becomes an illegal activity (or responding in an inappropriate/illegal manner).

Promotion of farming through education

In my opinion, the most effective change is achieved through education. Including the basics of food and fibre production throughout junior and senior education, without sugar coating how the end product is achieved, should be paramount. Children that are not raised on farm generally have an extremely poor concept of how food and fibre is produced, let alone where it comes from. Teaching students about the humane and respectful practices a majority of farmers undertake would go along way to positively promoting our industry.

Biosecurity

This space is crucial to maintain a successful Agricultural economy. Biosecurity is a risk to all farming production and the penalties for breaching biosecurity rules on farm should be significant and pose a serious deterrent. The impact a biosecurity failure will have on all involved should be proportional to the punishment and cannot be understated.

Animal welfare powers

Improving the powers for animal welfare staff to act accordingly and in a timely manner when agricultural codes of conduct are broken may aid in promoting how seriously farmers take humane treatment of their stock. So if you're farmer doing the right thing - you won't be impacted. But if you're a farmer doing the wrong thing - you won't be operating for long.

Factors such as the growth in the average farm size and improvements in Agri technology are contributing to the reduction of rural populations in contrast to city populations and consumers continue to demand Agricultural products. Eating meat and animal products is not something that has been a recent addition to mankind however societies disengagement in the food chain is increasing and there has been a decrease in those who understand how ethically Ag products can be produced. Australia has an opportunity to positively promote Aus Ag and it's time to lead with pride, diminishing the impact targeted, illegal and biased animal activism is having on farming communities.

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File1:

File2:

File3: