

## **Inquiry into the impact of animal rights activism on Victorian Agriculture 2019**

Thank you for reading this submission. I apologise in advance for the length.

I recently attended the hearing and it was my first time at one of these forums which I found very informative and interesting. Hence my submission.

I have lived in and around farming communities for about 35 years and have always found the farmers in this area to be honest, hardworking and very caring and concerned for the safety and health and welfare of their animals. Farmers provide the country with food of varying sorts. All farmers from our area keep their farms clean and tidy and provide good sturdy fences so that the animals do not wander onto roads and cause problems. They adhere to strict farming practices and codes of ethics and safety standards to ensure safety of all. Crops are grown to make hay to feed their animals and they provide water sources wherever possible. Farmers in most cases listen to what the consumer wants by reducing the amount of chemicals and pesticides wherever possible. They work long hard hours to ensure that this happens. If the animals are not managed properly it will affect the end result of a good clean and healthy product for the consumer to buy and also the price of the product.

I am very astounded that these activists are allowed to enter and invade properties and cause so much disturbance, stress, intimidation, depression, fear, anxiety, damage, and causing animals to go through fences which could end up on the busy roads onto oncoming traffic.

I understand that one of the activists leaves his family off activists farm map. This is hypocritical. The map sites should be pulled down and anyone using these sites should be criminally charged as it is unauthorised trespassing and invasion.

[Chris Delforce leaves his family off activists' farm map - The ...  
https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au › news › national › news-story](https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au › news › national › news-story)

If a person who was uninvited and wearing a mask went to the Premier's house, there would 5-6 or more security guards and police on that doorstep. So why are these activists allowed to come onto anyone's property and cause all this heartache and anxiety and stress. It is a definitely bullying, intimidation, trespassing and invasion. Why aren't farmers treated in the same way as the Premier or judge or police person's family or activists family? Farmers pay their taxes too and should receive the same protection as anyone else. It is not fair that they are being targeted and made to experience these behaviours by these civil disobedient and disruptive activists. Where did all of this come from? What has happened to Australia and its warm spirit of helping our most vulnerable people? These people are nothing but disrespectful and am sorry to say they are terrorists. How dare they trespass and invade? The farmers deserve better at this time of their lives. Where is the protection for people on farms and properties?

Our judicial systems are a complete joke and the judges make a mockery of our laws. How can a judge only hand out a fine of \$1, that's outrageous.

## **Bio Security:**

Bio security concerns are a real threat and more protection and laws to be established and enforced around this. When you come into Australia there is a huge fine if you bring in inappropriate material and there is a fine of \$420,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years and they can get a criminal record, why isn't the same law and rule applied to these animal activists invasion and trespassing? Anyone that is going onto for example a pig or chook farm is breaking this law.

There is the African Swine flu that would absolutely kill our pork industry should it be in Australia. North Korea appear to have issues.

*North Korea latest: Fears state may be overrun by deadly ...*  
<https://www.express.co.uk › News › World>

Last year we have had people walking onto and through our farm via river and creek access which is a concern for spreading of disease especially if they walk from the chook farm through a pig farm and then beef cattle farm etc. The people that walked through this day, left the gate opened and the cattle got out. It was lucky that the cattle didn't go onto the main road and cause an accident. There needs to be more done in the biosecurity protection and also trespassing laws before there is a bigger disaster. It would be detrimental to any farm and surrounding properties if a disease was spread onto a farm. Animals would have to be destroyed and the farm quarantined along with loss of income and production and the destruction of the animals, and the stress and trauma suffered by the farmer and the family and the community. People have forgotten about the anthrax outbreaks over the years. This would be a huge human and animals cost impact.

The water management boards need to be on board with this issue as well with regards to bio security and trespassing. The activists don't appear to have a working knowledge of how farms work.

I noted at the hearing one of the speakers mentioned that the farms needed to be bordered.

Most farmers apart from in the outback have fences and gates to stop unauthorised access, keep animals safe and protected and avoid wandering onto oncoming traffic.. When activists leave the gates open and especially near a major road, they are the ones that should be held liable and responsible and should pay for any damage caused to fences, animals and drivers. The "who is" liable needs to be reviewed especially if the farmer was not at fault. When someone is tied up with litigation, it affects their mental health and causes strains to their health causing illnesses such as depression, anxiety, suicide, their families, their relationships, their work and their finances. Noone should have to be in these positions. These situations destroy your soul. The Gippy Goat saga was a good example of how the lives and business of these people were destroyed. Litigation can take years and it is the human element cost that causes the most destruction.

## **Social Media:**

A lot of people are stalking and bullying on facebook, twitter and other social mediums. They appear to have formed private groups so that they can plan their attacks. These people are civil disobedient terrorists and there should be higher criminal charges and on the spot fines of about \$5000 or more with criminal convictions. The bullying and intimidation that occurs on social media is frightening and

very concerning and the comments are very nasty and rude. We are becoming a community that is not law abiding and if people don't agree they believe it's their right to bully and name call.

People who choose to be Vegans and vegetarians have been well catered for and accommodated in cafes and restaurants, motels, planes, hospitals, but the same tolerance and acceptance has not been given to people who choose to eat meat. The comments about murdering animals and not eating meat because of climate change is totally unfounded. People should be able to eat whatever they like without being intimidated and bullied and insulted. There is nothing wrong with meat, it's needed for protein and iron especially in children. A lot of activists appear to be younger and haven't yet had a life journey and don't appear to have an understanding of the impounding consequences of their behaviours and actions.

*Vegan diet: Sydney parents' neglect of baby caused long term ...*  
<https://www.news.com.au › lifestyle › real-life › news-life › news-story>

### **Animal activists who take photos:**

The animal activists who go onto a property because they claim that an animal is being mismanaged, how do they know this? Photo's don't always tell the whole story and it's not their place to go onto a farm to do this. That's trespassing. Those animals could have been left because they were getting help, it could have been killed by dog or fox or bitten by a snake, or tripped on something. It doesn't mean that the farmer doesn't care or is not looking after their animals. If you go out into the outback with the great distances, they are bound to see dead animals because there is usually a drought out there. Why don't these people who take photos actually look outside the triangle? Why don't they go and help these farmers instead of being a nuisance? The activists cannot generalise and say all farmers mismanage their animals if only one person may do the wrong thing. .

### **Education:**

Our education system needs an urgent overhaul. Some teachers are just pushing and promoting their personal agendas. There now appears to be such a disrespectful culture towards farmers, the older people and parents, kids are protesting about whatever is fashionable on the day. There are too many ideology indoctrination programs promoted in schools. Schools are for education and not indoctrination. A lot of children believe that milk comes from the supermarket. How about the children are taken to a working dairy farm where possible and see the animals and see how milk is processed in the factory and made into delicious products like cheese, yoghurt, icecream etc etc. They teach them how to grow vegetables and grow a garden. The kids should be taught about where all their food comes from. We already have bodies in place to protect animals, RSPCA comes to mind.

### **Farm safety and Workplace safety:**

Farms are the farmer's place of business and in most cases their home. They should be able to feel safe and protected just like the activist. They should not have to lock themselves and hide because activists want to control the world. If an activist was to come onto a farm site where a child was playing in the back yard, or an elderly person was gardening and then be faced with people with masks and yelling and causing disturbances, that could create a traumatic situation.

If you go to New Zealand or any other bio security place you may have to wash your boots at the airport. The same practice should apply on the farms that have bio security concerns. All people should report to the office.

People in workplaces and farms over many years have worked hard to eliminate bad practices and addressed the issues of occupation and health and safety programs and reviewed other policies and regulations to make it a safer environment.

### **Educating Farmers and activists:**

Farmers in our area attend a lot of field days, and are invited to visit other farms to learn about different practises. The children of the farmers now attend agricultural Universities so that farm practises can be improved and they can get the best out of the farming business for the future. And farming is a skill that is continually improving.

Farmers are not neglectful, I have never ever seen a mismanaged animal, if anything I have always seen a farmer call a vet, sit with the animal and look after the animal. In our area most farmers help their neighbours and support one another.

Has anyone asked these activists how they do feel when they go onto a farm and steal the animals, taking the animals from their mothers, leaving the mothers crying, ruining the lives of the farmers and their families? Where is their conscience?

Would these activists be happy if someone broke into their home, interrupted their dinner or family time, threw their belongings around, scared and caused anxiety and stress and depression to their parents, children or grandparents, caused their emotional or physical harm to their animals, and be left with a costly cleanup bill ? There is a lack of understanding, empathy, and compassion by these activists about the human cost and how a person actually is left feeling.

These activists need to be drug and alcohol tested when and if the police are on the scene.

The magistrates in the city are out of touch with the country people. Maybe they should go and spend some time with the families who have been affected by these traumas and invasions and who are suffering with anxiety and depression and suicide.

### **The law**

Parliament needs to change the laws so that these animal activists are dealt with by the full force of the law and that there is a deterrent. A one dollar fine is a joke. And It's not just the animal activists, it's the nudist runs that the rebellion group performed on the weekend, it's the stupidity of stopping the traffic, it's the die ins and false information and fake blood and spreading unfounded fear and scare mongering. They have no regard for morals, values or the community who had to attend medical appointments. There are children around. Where is the protection for our children?

Bio security concerns are a real threat and more protection and laws to be established and enforced around this. When you come into Australia there is a huge fine for inappropriate material being brought in of \$420,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years and they can get a criminal record, why

isn't the same law and rule applied to the animal activists? Anyone that is going onto for example a pig or chook farm is breaking this law. It could literally devastate the whole country.

Cows are not causing global warming, and there needs to be better water management strategies for the farmers all over Australia. If the water management authorities cannot do their job then they also need to be sacked. If animals are not able to receive water because of drought that's not the fault of the farmers, that's the fault of the water management authorities in most cases

### **Cameras:**

Cameras are costly but could be placed in and around the sheds and maybe at the front gate. The NBN and internet and phone coverage reception is not always efficient or effective in the country.

These activists are trespassing and spreading diseases and causing animals to run through fences and end up on roads causing accidents and sometimes can end up in death of a person if they hit the animal.

Theft of animals is animal cruelty especially if taken away from their mothers. It is really disturbing to learn that these activists are putting nappies on animals and transporting in inappropriate vehicles.

### **Meat alternatives:**

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/v2food-hungry-jacks-rebel-whopper-vegan-burger/2c7382dd-64a7-4f83-a9bf-dff82e5a2b1a>

There is an actual ignorance of what farmers do by a lot of these activists. They appear to be wanting to destroy farmers and agriculture because they believe eating meat is a problem and animals are being harmed. Chemically processed alternatives made from legumes is not meat and should not be branded as such as it is possibly high in glyphospat and other chemicals. These products contain a lot of colours, preservatives and additives which are very unhealthy and if you have allergies will not be able to tolerate them.

Meat comes from animals that are processed in controlled and regulated environments to provide food and products to the consumer. Animals are not murdered as these activists are saying and pushing the inaccurate information of how they are being housed and treated is nothing but fear and scare mongering. The activists don't have the life skills nor the life experience to tell anyone how to live their lives. Most farmers in our area care about their livestock, make improvements and have sound farming practices.

### **Trespassing:**

After the hearing the last week I spoke with farmers in our area and they are concerned that these activists can trespass and snoop onto farms and properties where there are machinery and tools and sheds. Cameras around the sheds may be an answer but people should not have to live confined in fear of being attacked and invaded. The laws around trespassing and home and farm invasions need to be reviewed so that farmers and the property owners are protected and feel safe and can get on with their daily lives.

If the activists are bored, how about they go and help a farmer to feed out hay during the drought and bring water to the livestock? How about they go and help the people in outback NSW and help them clean up the properties that were ravaged by the fires?. How about they go and volunteer in a nursing home where the elderly would love some company? What has happened to the Australian spirit and helpful way of life? What has happened to the community that these activists think they have the right to destroy and invade and trespass and dictate to farmers how to run their business?

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion I would like to see the panel ensure that :

- That harsher penalties are given to these activists and also jail time for the civil disobedience and trauma and stress it causes the farmers and their families.
- Review of the bio security laws and also a harsher penalty enforced. It should be the same as when coming into Australia with a fine of \$420,000 and a 10 year imprisonment and a criminal record. This could wipe out more than an industry if a bio security was to occur. It's the lifeline of our country. It should be applied to the animal activists trespassing onto the farms.
- Review of the trespass and invasion laws. Activists should not be allowed to just walk onto a farm whenever they feel like it. Its invasion and breach of privacy and it's a bio security threat.
- That more protection and assistance be given by the police and issuing of on the spot fines of \$5000 and above.
- A judicial system that actually listens and supports the community, farmers and their families.
- And a court system that deals with these invasions in a timely and expedient manner.
- A transparent and honest parliament than can act and change the laws and policies so that the community can feel safer and farmers can go about their daily chores and business.
- Mental health support and help for the farmers and their families who have been invaded by these activists and especially who have been close to suicide.
- Also a review of the social media content and how activists intimidate and bully and try to stop farmers and other people from going about their business.
- Also a review of how the media report incidents and only show one side of any story.
- An education program be included in the curriculum so that children learn about farms and see how animals are managed. Reintroduce the show day holidays so that kids can interact with the animals as well.
- Teaching activists about the impounding consequences of their behaviours and actions and how it impacts on the lives of the farmers and their families. The activists need to learn about life journeys.

These activists are destroying the very souls and hearts of farmers who put in blood, sweat and tears, and hard work and long hours and have to battle the elements of the weather, low prices, low feed stock, drought and other natural disasters. Farmers are the backbone of this country, who feed the communities and help to bring jobs, they operate under safety laws, help fight fires, help their neighbours and deliver and create export products and provide food for the Australian economy and the rest of the world.

I hope that this is sorted out with the utmost urgency before we lose our farmers to depression, suicide, illness, putting risk and pressure on families and relationships and before someone is hurt. We don't want to be importing food that is mediocre in food standards and or diseases or see our meat and livestock industry wiped out or destroyed by these very dangerous diseases or invasions.

Food for thought, pizza does not taste good with plastic cheese. We as a nation should be more community minded and should have the freedom to carry out our everyday business and without intimidation and bullying.

Thank you for the opportunity of providing this submission.

Kind regards

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