

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Submission

Date submitted

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Name of Organisation/Individual

Australian Olive Association

What are the top policies from the Green Paper that the Government should focus on in the White Paper and why?

2. Keep families as the cornerstone of farming by establishing career paths based on financial stability, training and succession options.

It is challenging for youth to want to stay on the family farm when all they have seen is their parents struggle. Australia is a country that allows all manner of food into supermarkets without any protection for the domestically produced product. Producing food in Australia is expensive; producing Olive Oil in Australia is more expensive than in Europe. The playing field is not level and until it is then it will always be difficult to help farmers to become profitable and in turn it will be challenging to get young people to want to take over the reins of a family farm. If there is good money to be made in farming then young people will flock to it.... just like they did when mining was paying huge wages for labour.

3. Building infrastructure of the 21st Century to improve transport and communications linkages to domestic and international markets

Australian exports have to generally travel for a long time to reach their destination. We need cheaper and more efficient options. Better cold storage or ships with on-board freezers or guidance for dockers about where to place food items on a ship so as to avoid spoilage.

It would be helpful to see Australia's rail network revamped and used more. When trains stopped stopping in country towns it added to their demise. We need better access to reliable and trustworthy online shopping sites so that we can sell our products more safely. the cost of posting food items through Australia post is high and often it is cheaper to get the food item from overseas than it is from Australia.

6. Promotes access to key export markets

Australia needs to do more to promote our high quality, safe food to overseas markets. A lot of people don't know where Australia is and what we make so we, as a country, need to do more to put Australia on the map as your one-stop-shop for all safe, healthy, clean & green food.

8. Support strong and vibrant regional communities.

I see rural communities slowly dying all around me. The banks, chemists, doctors, stores, post office and fuel stations have left. Once this happens, people leave, schools loose kids, their funding gets reduced, bus services get pulled and the town dies. Not that long ago a farm family of 6 could make

a good living off a relatively small holding of land. Now that same family would have to own 4 times as much land to stay in business. With many smaller farms being bought up by bigger ones, this has reduced the number of people in a town to the point that services leave because there are no more people. It's a catch 22. If farmers can make money out of their produce then everyone wins.

Farmers are loyal to their towns and communities and ensure that the majority of their profits ploughed back into their communities. The Government cannot expect farmers to compete head to head with products that are made in countries where they are subsidised or don't have the same standards imposed on them. It isn't working the playing field needs to be levelled. Yes, it will make Australia slightly unpopular with those countries who dump all their products here, but Australia needs to look after their own and help the farmers to help the people. Without food we all die.

9. Maintains access for all Australians to high-quality and affordable fresh food.

This makes sense and is important for us all.

What policies from the Green Paper don't you support and why?

4. It doesn't make sense... create will paying jobs in agriculture?? well that can only occur if the farmer is making money; "including the downstream sectors of food manufacturing, food retailing and hotels and restaurants". Lovely concept, but how much is the end "food product" likely to cost?? who will buy it? Number for contradicts itself in my opinion.

5. reduce unnecessary regulation

I might be reading this wrong but in some cases where consumers are being ripped off by imported product that is being fraudulently labelled as something its not, then in my opinion increased regulation is needed. This idea of reducing regulation is a "mother hood statement" and might sound good, but in some cases more needs to be done to protect farmers and consumers and unfortunately the Government needs to sort this out.

7. Focussing on Australia's competitive advantage so we are prepared to realise the food demand of the growing middle class in our region.

This bothers me as why aren't we focussing on supplying food to the lower class people, why has the middle class been singled out. Australia will only have a competitive advantage if the farmers are making money out of their products and can compete with the cheap and subsidised imports.

General Comment

Reduce regulation when it hinders and impedes on farmers profitability BUT consider new regulation when cheap imports are sent to Australia that undermines their ability to be profitable.