

This is a private submission to the white paper on Agricultural Competitiveness from Jim Vandore, chairman of AgriMinds (which has made a separate submission). The first 3 steps below are taken from the AgrMinds document and the balance of the paper is my personal contribution.

21st Century Food Production in Australia

Step 1 Create a new elite degree course in Food Production

- AgriMinds has developed a course template
- Implement at 4 suitable university campuses, using Government and/or Industry support for first 3 years

Step 2 Government to back new degree course with investment in new Food Science and Processing Technology R&D facilities on the campus

- AgriMinds wants Science and Technology centres to specialize in Food Packaging, Food Preservation etc where each campus develops specialist expertise

Step 3 Offer seamless transition from Food Production to Food Processing degree(s) on the university campus

- The technology of adding value by processing primary foods is conveyed to regional businesses

Step 4 State and Federal Governments to modernize their involvement in primary industries by establishing a Department of Food (Industries) and a separate Department of Fibre (Industries)

- This will enable governments to focus very clearly on the task of building real expertise in Food and Fibre production, processing and marketing

Step 5 Advocacy Groups for each of the Food and Fibre Departments to be limited to three

- It is clear to many in Agribusiness that the multitude of lobbying bodies representing the agricultural industry to governments is incapable of getting clear, concise

messages to and from government and is an industry expense which could be greatly reduced .

The following are simply thought bubbles recognized as imaginative comments, based on the “blank slate” approach suggested by Minister Joyce in his foreword.

- Government to incentivize the development of regional food processing either by individuals or a cooperative, could a sum of money be made available to back a regional business incentive with an approved sound business plan and an existing progressive track record. To make it realistic could a sum of \$1 million be made available for one project per community of 250,000 people over a 3 year time frame (to be selected competitively by the community). When a business became successful and created 50 regional jobs, it would be eligible for a further \$1 million grant.
- Government to contemplate a fleet of large, fast moving Australian-built catamaran ferries plying daily from Port Hedland, Darwin and Townsville and reaching various Asian destinations, carrying fresh food products from Australia and returning with appropriate cargoes.

Jim Vandore

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