

Submission regarding the Agricultural Competitiveness Issues Paper

From Merri Harris

It is truly unfortunate that the Issues paper has paid no attention to the destructive nature of the agribusiness model of food production that is currently being promoted globally. The almost universal acceptance of the globalization of food production is not seen for the “ponzi” scheme that it is, that it has no long term future and nor is it sustainable.

There is no recognition of the cultural value of food systems or the important society functions that occur around food. The superficial attention paid to the building of regional centres based on agriculture does not give justice to the pivotal role that food production should have in all societies.

There is no real recognition of the demise of the numbers of primary producers in Australia. Farming corporations cannot take the place of genuine farming families or local firms.

Free trade agreements are not FREE. They are trade agreements that may well come at the cost of loss of food security and diversity.

There is no accounting of the cost of imported foods that are being dumped on the market in Australia and for what ulterior motives.

There is no accounting for the risks and costs associated with the monoculture developments, the increasing reliance on pesticides, artificial fertilizers made from fossil fuel sources and increasingly resistant strains of pests and weeds.

There is no accounting for the intolerable corporate ownership of the majority of seeds in the world and the inherent risks for food security from that factor alone.

There is no accounting for the problems associated with increasing monoculture crops and increasing external inputs that keep adding to the costs of production. There is no recognition of the role of total cycle management of a bio-diverse farming system that has minimal external inputs and maximizes production through diversity.

There is only lip service paid to the issues surrounding the dwindling resources that currently make up most of the external inputs to large corporate farms. Globalisation of the food system presupposes that there is no end to fossil fuel sources, that all cultures can be fed on the same foods and that all animals can be manipulated to produce more and more.

I commend to you the “Peoples Food Plan” as a wholistic and integrated food production system that is fair, healthy and sustainable for Australia. We should be supporting other countries to do the same thing and support their own agricultural systems.