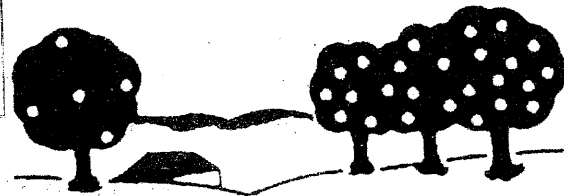
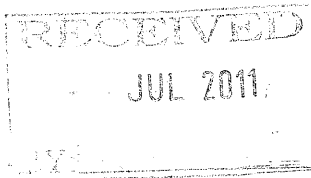


BATTUNGA ORCHARDS

790 Lusatia Park road,
Hoddles Creek, Vic. 3139
Phone: (03) 5967 4655
Fax: (03) 5967 4275
E-mail: battungawarragul@virginbroadband.com.au



To: Office of the Chief Executive
Biosecurity Australia.
GPO BOX 858.
CANBERRA ACT. 2601

Battunga Orchards
38 Hooleys Rd.
Warragul. Vic 3820
28/06/2011

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing to express my concern about your Draft Report that proposes to relax existing quarantine restrictions on apple imports to Australia, thereby increasing the risk of entry to Australia of the dangerous diseases Fire Blight & European Canker and the pest, Apple Leaf Curling Midge. The possible (and over time, almost certain) introduction of these destructive organisms, would have a devastating impact on our production and result in significant extra expenses for our enterprise.

Our orchard, producing high quality apples, is situated near Warragul, Victoria. We grow approx 145,000 apple trees in a modern, high density row system.

Apple production requires large grower inputs in the form of infrastructure such as post and wire trellis systems, hail netting, spray, irrigation and fertiliser equipment and machinery and involves thousands of hours of intensive hands on tree training.

At Warragul we employ 8 full time workers as well as over 200 pickers, pruners and contractors over the course of the season – the security of their jobs will be put at risk. We are responding to consumer demands for clean, blemish-free apples whilst trying to reduce chemical use through an integrated pest management control system. We are confident that we can compete successfully with the rest of the world

BUT ...

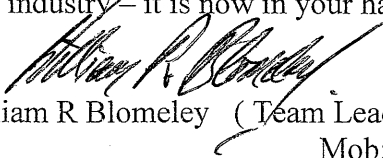
we depend on our government to protect our borders from the introduction of dangerous pathogens and want to express our alarm at the proposed softening of import restrictions on produce from countries that are known to harbour Fire Blight (the control of which involves the use of antibiotic sprays which are not registered for use in Australia), European Canker and the Apple Leaf Curling Midge.

The effective handing over of phytosanitary controls to our New Zealand competition effectively amounts to an abdication of responsibility for our border security.

We therefore call on the Government to adhere to strict restrictions that will keep diseased fruit out of Australia.

I trust that you will take the above comments into account when making your final decisions on the future of our industry – it is now in your hands!

Yours Sincerely,


William R Blomeley (Team Leader – Battunga Orchards)
Mob: 0427681861