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30-6-11.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA,
GPO BOX 858,
CANBERRA, ACT 2601.

DEAR SIR / MADAM,

RE: FIRE BLIGHT - NZ APPLES

I wish to protest against the present advice given by Biosecurity Australia concerning the proposed export of New Zealand apples to Australia. It is far too weak!

No country that has had FIRE BLIGHT anywhere in the world has been able to eradicate it and yet the World Trade Organisation and yourselves seem to think that "the Science tells us we can control it". Please! What about commonsense as well as Science working together. If it can be controlled - it would have been done before this.

They cannot even supply their own small population with pears from their depleted orchards and when they are low in stock they import pears back from Australia - the height of hypocrisy - and why not? - our pears are disease free and come from orchards with a "clean, green" reputation.

Here in the Goulburn Valley in Victoria we grow 85% of Australia's pears. I'm not a fruit grower myself but a concerned citizen of this area. If you let in FIREBLIGHT all of these orchards which employ thousands of people - both directly and indirectly - will be ruined. Imagine what that will cost the economy. Our pears not only are sold in Australia but are exported overseas under brand names such as SPC-ARDMONA, G.V. FRUITS etc.

There will be a great number of people left unemployed, bankrupt, with orchards, houses, cars and other possessions repossessed. Local businesses will suffer and many will close. The huge local transport industry

at present while the locals are trying to catch up from the very long drought.

I understand that FIRE BLIGHT affects more than pears but also roses, some other garden plants as well as apples and if it takes hold in Australia could affect the Nursery industry. As it has not affected Australia so far at this stage we do not know if it will strike down Australian native plants in some areas as well.

It is most unfortunate that BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA'S budget was cut in a previous budget. I will be advising everyone I know to write to MP's to recommend that your funding be increased so that more people can be employed and given more practical, on farm experience when it comes to matters such as this.

Australia needs a revision of your advice so that the Protocol put in place has appropriate strength to keep diseased apples out of our country. We can't have NZ growers

owned an orchard /s yourselves
you wouldn't stand for it
either.

Australia needs food
security for the future, not
only for ourselves but to
help feed the rest of the world
as well. Free Trade is all
very well but not at the
expense of wiping out good,
clean food that we can use
here and export and have as
a viable industry. Please - say again!

Yours faithfully,

Margaret North.