



Southern Downs
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Our Ref: RF:SR (Agriculture)

8 July 2011

Mr Colin Grant
Office of the Chief Executive
Biosecurity Australia
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir

SDRC: Importation of New Zealand Apples

Southern Downs Regional Council would like to express its concern for the Biosecurity Australia acceptance of New Zealand orchard practises as an appropriate means protecting the Australian Apple industry. As such, we fully endorse the submission made by the Australian Apple & Pear Association Ltd. And urge Biosecurity to enforce stringent measures for the protection of this vital industry.

The apple industry is the single largest employer in the strategic Granite Belt region, with additional value-adding businesses and support industries multiplying the \$30 million per annum value of the industry. Therefore, the protection of the apple industry is instrumental to the economic survival of the town of Stanthorpe. Being the only region in Queensland capable of producing apples, the Granite Belt is strategically important for the future food security of Queensland.

Southern Downs Regional Council therefore urges Biosecurity Australia to reassess the protocols for the importation of New Zealand apples and implement additional measures to ensure protection of the industry from damaging bacterial diseases like fire blight, European canker, leaf curling midge and other pests.

Council appreciates the necessity of free trade in a globalised economy and the subsequent responsibilities as members of the World Trade Organisation. However, trade agreements must be secondary to disease management controls to ensure the long term viability of our agricultural industries and the communities that depend on them.

If you need to discuss this matter further, please contact me on 07 4661 0300.

Yours faithfully

Rod Ferguson
Chief Executive Officer