

10th August, 1982.

Hon. Eric Kent, M.P.,  
 Minister of Agriculture,  
 Box 4041, G.P.O.,  
MELBOURNE. 3001

Dear Mr. Kent,

Members of our Association -the Commercial Egg Producers Association were introduced to you in your office in Parliament House by David Kennedy on 25th May this year, when matters concerning the Egg Industry in Victoria as it affects our members were discussed with you.

Our Association represents egg producers in Northern Victoria having branches in Bendigo, South Bendigo, Euroa, Ballarat, Wedderburn and Murrabit. At that time you requested that we present in writing to you the matters raised.

We congratulate and commend you and your Government's policy of retaining hen quotas and orderly marketing of eggs in Victoria. We would suggest that transfer of quotas be negotiable, providing that a limit be placed on farm size. If the past Government's policy of abandoning demand supply management and quotas had been allowed to materialise the industry would have returned to the chaos of the years prior to licensing, when a wasteful and unmanageable surplus could not be disposed of - this benefited neither the producer nor the consumer. The present means of orderly marketing is the only means whereby the domestic market is guaranteed a plentiful supply of eggs without incurring huge losses on surplus, which ultimately must be passed on to the consumer, if producers are to survive. The egg industry has never asked for any Government financial support or subsidy.

FARM PACKING:- We believe all eggs should be vested in the Board and that Keysborough grading floor facilities be utilised to the fullest extent. This would help justify the capital that has been laid out and also allow the Board to keep closer control on quality e.g. internal quality, egg weights, cleanliness, shell quality, haugh units, etc.

black rot. Farm washing of eggs has caused problems such as Therefore, we believe there should be no more farm packing permits issued and any producers found violating quality standards or cheating have his permit cancelled.

*Copy sent to  
 Mr. David Kennedy M.H.A. 34 Views  
 Mr. Don Foster V.E.B. Saved.  
 Mr. Duneed R.S.D.  
 Belmont 3216.*

Direct Sales to distributors is making this situation easier for those who want to be evasive.

FARM SIZE:- Limiting of farm size to a maximum of 20,000 birds either to a person, company or subsidiary of companies, would be a viable and reasonable unit. This would allow more people to participate in the industry and prevent monopoly control. Many of our members on smaller mixed farms depend on some egg production to supplement their income especially in difficult times and bad seasons such as the present.

BOARD MEMBERS:- Our Association stresses again the retention of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board to handle eggs produced, otherwise the stability of the industry has gone. We were not happy with the performance of the previous Board, as we believe they did not act in the best interests of all, but with one change it's hard to see the situation improving, unless attitudes of Board members change.

BOARD:- Board administration costs are too high, especially considering the small number of eggs being handled at Keysborough. The present Board is dominated by Chairman, as has been evident at each meeting we have attended with the Board.

EGG PRICE:- If the Government considers price of eggs too high, we suggest a cost of production Committee be set up as in Western Australia, so that prices may be fair to producers and consumers alike. Evidence available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the price of eggs has steadily fallen in relation to the Consumer Price Index and the Consumer Food Index since the introduction of stabilisation.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS:- We view with concern that Department of Agriculture Officers have opposed the concept of egg stabilisation since before the commencement of the scheme. They have failed to view stabilisation and orderly marketing objectively. They are employed to service the industry and should not get involved in industry politics. We would like to see more research done on internal and external egg quality.

The Executive of our Association would like to discuss with you the future of Hen Quota legislation and other important issues in relation to the Poultry Industry Act at a time convenient to you in the near future.

Hoping this information will be of use to you,

Yours sincerely,