



WAFarmers is the largest and most representative rural lobby group in Western Australia.

With more than 4,000 members, WAFarmers represents the collective opinion of Western Australia's primary producers to help ensure a viable long term local future for agriculture.

Media Release

Tuesday March 8, 2011

WAFARMERS CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ASIAN BEES

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc.) (WAFarmers Beekeepers Section) is calling on the Federal Government, to reverse its decision to cease the Asian bee eradication program in order to retain the biosecurity of Australia.

The decision has not been made on the best scientific research and evidence in this area and failed to consult the leading authority on this matter, that being Dr Denis Anderson from CSIRO.

In early February, the Asian bee, which is not an effective honey producer, was declared endemic by the Federal Government appointed Asian Bee National Management Group (AB NMG) without wider industry consultation.

WAFarmers Beekeepers Section President, David Leyland, said that beekeepers believe that the decision to stop the eradication program was premature, and will lead to dire complications.

"The declaration of the Asian bee as endemic will destroy Australia's \$5 to 7 million live bee export market, impact on Australia's Agriculture Industry, and lead to numerous problems including environmental damage, public health issues, property damage, and damage to food security," said Mr Leyland.

Naming the Asian bee endemic will also ultimately lead to the introduction of other pests, such as the Varroa Mite (as the Asian bee is a preferred host), that Australia has previously managed to keep at bay.

"Although it may take a financial commitment to control the Asian bee, it will save millions of dollars from being spent at a later date to control larger problems," Mr Leyland concluded.

In response to these concerns, the WAFarmers Beekeeper Section has contacted both the Federal and State Government Agricultural Ministers and applicable Politicians in writing to urge the reversal of this decision.

More information on the Asian Bee can be found at www.securefoodssavebees.com.

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