

**Sent:** Friday, 14 March 2008 9:15 AM

**To:** Grocery Prices Inquiry

**Subject:** Meat Prices/Drought -ACCC inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries

COMMITTEE,

We have been brainwashed for years into thinking that there was a shortage of meat in Australia due to the drought but this does not appear to be true. ABS and Austrade statistics indicate that Australian exports of beef and other meat products have risen substantially in the last few years making it the country's third largest export? So why are we paying so much for it?

I think the drought was a convenient excuse used by the MSC's initially to cover the rise in meat prices. Once this was accepted by consumers, we began to see an increase in the price of fruit, vegetables, bread, milk, eggs, in fact, anything that came out of, or was derived from, the ground. Enter higher petrol price rises, well of course 'transportation costs' need to be passed on to the consumer!! All this when labour costs have never been cheaper, standard of service has never been lower, and profits have never been higher.

Another thing worth mentioning. February 15 2008 - Woolworths Drought Relief Day (where they donated the days net profit to struggling farmers). Am I the only person who saw the hypocrisy of it? Perhaps they should consider paying the farmer/grazier a decent amount for their produce all year round so that a 'Drought Relief Day' is not necessary.

I am looking forward to reading the Coles and Woolworths submissions.

Regards,

Roberta Martin  
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