

**Sent:** Thursday, 22 May 2008 9:33 AM

**To:** Grocery Prices Inquiry

**Subject:** submission

I am a fourth generation farmer from the Orange District of NSW. I have read with interest many of the submissions submitted to the inquiry on grocery prices. Many of these contain a great deal of statistical information regarding the supply chain and anti-competitive behaviour.

But my logic tells me as has my bottom line over the last ten years that unless something effective is accomplished by the ACCC on completion of this process in curbing multinational greed the last nails will be hammered into Australian agriculture's coffin.

Graham Samuels' appeal for individual farmers to come forward with specifics of unfair treatment astounds me, surely the ACCC has the staff who are capable in tracking farmgate price to retail price daily, the information is so easily accessible.

I and my family run a large lamb breeding operation, on which I have been working and managing for 25 years... When I first came back to the farm my father had two full time employees, who were well looked after. They lived on the property in housing provided to them and their families, we all aspired to a simple but fulfilling healthy life on the farm, which we all achieved. Currently I run the farm single handedly with help from my wife when she is not off farm working, we are running more sheep more efficiently than we were 25 years ago and still the squeeze is on, we are barely profitable.

I am 46 years of age, yes a young farmer, and my family's experience is terrifyingly common. Australia is now left with, in general, a resilient highly skilled farm sector but I can assure you that resilience is waning. We are being forced to push our resource base beyond environmental sustainability to seek a meagre existence from our farms.

Currently we receive \$3.60/kg carcass weight for our lambs that same lamb averages \$15.00/kg at retail, someone in the chain is making big profits, the ACCC has to determine who is getting the unfair dividend, and determine a more transparent system.

Mr Samuels, the ACCC, and Australians in general need to decide, and quickly, do they want an Australian farm sector and healthy regional towns and economies. This grocery price inquiry has ramifications far beyond its terms of reference and I hope the staff of ACCC are aware of that.

Good luck Mr Samuels, may you have the information and courage to determine a fair outcome for Australia's food producers.

Yours Sincerely

Chris Blunt

"Bondonga"