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**Australian
Competition &
Consumer
Commission**

Our Ref: C2004/433
Contact Officer: Gavin Jones
Contact Phone: (03) 9290 1959

PO Box 1199
Dickson ACT 2602
470 Northbourne Ave
Dickson ACT 2602
ph (02) 6243 1111
fax (02) 6243 1199
www.accc.gov.au

23 September 2004

Name
Address

Dear Name

**Application for authorisation A90914
lodged by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association**

On 23 March 2004, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (the Commission) received an application for authorisation (A90914) from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (the TFGA).

Application for Authorisation

The application seeks authorisation for an agreement between present and future TFGA vegetable grower members to collectively negotiate, through grower representatives on their various commodity group boards, terms and conditions of growing contracts with the processors to whom they supply, namely McCain Foods (Aust) Pty Ltd and Simplot Australia Pty Ltd. Authorisation is also sought for an agreement between TFGA vegetable grower members for the TFGA to assist them in their negotiations with processors.

A copy of the application for authorisation and supporting submission is available on the Commission's website – www.accc.gov.au or by contacting Scott Gregson on (02) 6243 1107.

The Commission has issued a draft determination proposing to grant authorisation to the proposed arrangements as requested by the TFGA for a period of five years.

A copy of the draft determination is enclosed. The draft determination will also be available on the Commission's website: www.accc.gov.au.



At the time of lodging its application, the TFGA also requested interim authorisation to permit vegetable grower members to collectively negotiate the terms and conditions of growing contracts while the Commission makes a decision on the merits of the substantive application. On 22 April 2004, the Commission granted interim authorisation. Interim authorisation will continue to protect the proposed arrangements from action under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (the TPA) until the date that the Commission's final determination comes into effect or until the Commission decides to revoke interim authorisation.

Before the Commission makes a final decision regarding the application, it provides an opportunity for the applicant and interested parties to make submissions to the Commission. The processes for providing submissions, both oral and written, are provided below.

Pre-decision conference

In accordance with section 90A of the TPA, an interested party may notify the Commission in writing by close of business on **Friday 8 October 2004** if that party wishes the Commission to hold a pre-determination conference in relation to the draft determination. The TPA does not allow the Commission to extend this deadline.

A pre-determination conference provides the opportunity for interested parties, particularly in the event they are dissatisfied with the Commission's draft determination, to make oral submissions in response to the draft determination. In the event of such a conference taking place it would be held as soon as possible. The TPA requires that the conference be held no later than **Monday 8 November 2004**.

Submissions

Submissions to the Commission should be made in writing. Unless confidentiality is requested, they will be publicly available and placed on a public register for that purpose. If you wish to include information in a submission which is of a confidential nature, it should be clearly marked as such and a claim for confidentiality for the material should also be submitted. You will be informed of the outcome of that claim and, if it is refused, the relevant material will be returned to you if you wish. Material for which confidentiality is granted will not be publicly available, but may be taken into account by the Commission in making a final decision regarding the application. Guidelines for seeking confidentiality are attached.

If you wish to lodge a submission, would you please address it to:

General Manager
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
PO Box 1199
DICKSON ACT 2602

Alternatively, submissions may be faxed to (02) 6243 1211 or emailed to adjudication@acc.gov.au

We request that submissions reach the Commission no later than close of business on **Friday 15 October 2004**. If you have any queries or if you wish to discuss any aspect of this application further, please contact me on (02) 6243 1107.

Yours sincerely

Scott Gregson
Director
Adjudication Branch

GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY CLAIMS

The process whereby the Commission assesses applications for authorisation is very public, transparent and consultative. The *Trade Practices Act 1974* (the Act) requires the Commission to maintain a public register in respect of authorisation applications.

Applicants and interested parties can request that a submission, or a part of a submission, be excluded from the public register.

The Commission is required under the Act to exclude from the public register upon request details of:

- (i) secret formulae or processes;
- (ii) the cash consideration offered for the acquisition of shares in the capital of a body corporate or assets of a person; or
- (iii) the current manufacturing, producing or marketing costs of goods or services.

The Commission also has the discretion, under s89 of the Act, to exclude material from the public register if it is satisfied that it is desirable to do so, either by reason of the confidential nature of the material or for any other reason. The Commission expects that a party claiming confidentiality on these grounds will present a case for its treatment in this manner.

Under Regulation 24 of the *Trade Practices Regulations*, when a request for confidentiality is made to the Commission:

- (a) where the request is that a whole document be excluded, the words “**Restriction of Publication Claimed**” should appear in red writing near the top of each page; and
- (b) where the request is that part of a document be excluded, the words “**Restriction of Publication of Part Claimed**” should appear in red near the top of the first page of each document, and the part for which confidentiality is claimed should also be marked in red. A submission of more than 5 pages should also include a description of the whereabouts of the parts for which confidentiality is claimed.

However, even if a document does not meet these technical requirements, the Commission may still grant confidentiality where, in the Commission's view, it is desirable to do so.

If the Commission denies a confidentiality request, the requesting party may ask that the material be returned. As a matter of practice, the Commission will specify a period (usually 14 days) in which they can request the return of such material. Upon response, the Commission will return the original material and destroy all associated copies. The Commission will not consider this material when reaching its decision.

If the Commission does not receive a response within the specified period, the original material will be placed on the public register.

Mr Phillip Beswick
McCain Processed Potatoes
17905 Bass Highway
Sisters Creek TASMANIA 7325

Mr Craig Medwin
McCain Brassicas
203 Boyndey Road
Black River TASMANIA 7321

Mr Keeton Miles
McCain Seed Potatoes
394 Gaunts Road
Nietta TASMANIA 7315

Mr Andrew Nichols
McCain Peas
152 Broomhalls Road
Sisters Creek TASMANIA 7325

Mr Ian Young
McCain Beans
265 Greens Creek Road
Sassafras TASMANIA 7307

Mr Glen Connors
Simplot Brassicas
1378 Sheffield Main Road
Barrington TASMANIA 7306

Mr Mike Cresswell
Simplot Carrots
PO Box 103
Deloraine TASMANIA 7304

Mr Chris Fielding
Simplot Seed Potatoes
159 Masters Road
South Riana TASMANIA 7316

Mr Bruce Goss
Simplot Peas
936 Bishopsbourne Road
Bishopsbourne TASMANIA 7301

Mr Philip Richardson
Simplot Processed Potatoes
315 Zig Zag Road
Sulphur Creek TASMANIA 7316

Mr Geoff Richardson
Simplot Beans
580 Chapel Road
Sassafras TASMANIA 7307

Mr Sergio Canala
Executive General Manager
Supply Chain
Simplot Australia Pty Limited
Private Bag 4
Flemington VICTORIA 3031

Mr Tony Ford
Director of Agriculture
McCain Food (Australia) Pty Ltd
PO Box 105
Wendouree VICTORIA 3355

Mr John Pauley
Food, Agriculture and Fisheries
Department of Primary Industries, Water and
Environment
GPO Box 44
Hobart TASMANIA 7001