10 October 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Inquiry into the proposed importation of potatoes from New Zealand

The NFF has always stood firmly behind Australia's science based system of quarantine and defended its rulings in the face of international criticism. Australia's animal and plant disease status is the envy of countries everywhere and has been vital in:

- boosting the productivity of our agricultural production systems;
- maintaining access to our export markets; and
- attaining a price premium on some markets.

The NFF is adamant that Australia needs to maintain a stringent, science based system of quarantine to ensure that this position is not compromised. Indeed, we believe that a strong quarantine system is vital to ensuring confidence and transparency for all stakeholders, including:

- Australian farmers;
- Australian consumers;
- export markets; and
- countries looking to access the Australian market.

The NFF does not wish to politicise Australia's biosecurity outcomes and in doing so, bring into question the science based nature of our system. The NFF has been supportive of measures that build on the scientific rigor and the transparency around Australia's quarantine system. The NFF and its members feel that it would be unforgivable should Australia incur a significant quarantine incursion and risk our production capabilities.

The NFF has maintained a keen interest in the inquiry into the proposed New Zealand potato import protocols. The NFF position is clear – Australia's quarantine measures should be based on the most advanced, robust and sound science to ensure that Australian agriculture production both domestically and in international markets is not compromised.

Yours sincerely

JOCK LAURIE
President