DRIED FRUITS LEVY AMENDMENT BILL 1984

Date Introduced: 29 February 1984
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. John Kerin, M.P., Minister for Primary Industry

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose
To impose a dried fruits levy on fresh fruits delivered for drying; to increase the maximum permissible levy rate specified in the legislation; and to facilitate any later variation in actual levy rates paid.

Background
The Australian dried vine fruits industry produced some 60 kilotonnes in the 1981 season, of which 56 per cent was sold in overseas markets and 44 per cent consumed in Australia[1]. Total production in the years 1982, 1983 and 1984 has been 81, 75 and 75 (estimated) kilotonnes respectively[2]. The industry is dependent on export markets for clearance of production but has reduced this dependence since 1976 when an Industries Assistance Commission inquiry identified dependence on low return export markets as the primary cause of the industry's predicament at the time.

Levy contributions during 1982-83 totalled $120,000. The Commonwealth Government matched this amount on a dollar-for-dollar basis to fund research in dried fruits. The dried tree fruit industry chiefly comprises prunes, grown in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and the Young district of NSW, and fruits, mainly apricots, grown in the Riverland area of South Australia[3]. The total production of the two areas in 1983 was approximately 3.5 and 4.4 kilotonnes respectively.

The Australian Dried Fruits Corporation was established by legislation in 1978. Its functions concern the export markets for Australian dried vine fruits (currants, sultanas, raisins). Other legislation enacted in 1978 imposes export charges for the export of dried vine fruits, and supports an equalization scheme which imposes in
certain circumstances a levy on Australian consumption of
dried vine fruits.

The dried fruits levy imposed under the Dried Fruits Levy Act 1971, which this Bill would amend, is for
the purpose of promoting research in the dried fruits industry. It is imposed on fruits received for packing and
covers both dried vine fruit and dried tree fruit. "Dried tree fruit" is defined enumeratively in section 4 to
comprise dried apricots, pears, peaches, nectarines and
plums. Dried apples are not included.

Main Provisions

The Dried Fruits Levy Act 1971 imposes a levy on
dried fruits "received into a packing house". Clause 3
amends section 4 so that fresh fruits received into a
packing house and then dried become leviable when dried.
The provision commences with the 1985 season.

Clause 4 amends the maximum levy rates to double
existing levels, and, in line with levy legislation applying
to other primary products, removes the need for the
Governor-General, in setting a levy rate, to consider
representations from the Dried Fruits Research Committee.

For further information, if required, contact:

5 March 1984
Economics and Commerce Group
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

References

1. Third Annual Report of the Australian Dried Fruits
2. Tankard, H., Grapes - Industry paper presented at
National Agricultural Outlook Conference, January 1984,
p.2.
3. Annual Report of the Dried Fruits Research Committee