

Megafloods, HRH Prince Philip Savage Australia's Food Production

by Robert Barwick

Jan. 16—The recurring floods in eastern Australia and northern Western Australia have devastated major food production areas of the nation, wiping out huge chunks of wheat, beef, and fresh vegetables production. The total damage is as yet uncalculated, but reliable estimates paint a grim picture for Australia, and for the world food shortage. Preliminary damage estimates run at AUS\$10-13 billion; in reality it is almost certainly AUS\$100 billion or more.

The tropical and subtropical state of Queensland has been virtually wiped out: An area equal to that of Germany and France combined was inundated (75% of the entire state), decimating its two biggest economic sectors, mining and agriculture, and most of the supporting infrastructure. Queensland supplies 28% of Australia's consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, but it also accounts for 45% of Australia's meat exports (Australia is the world's second-largest beef exporter, after Brazil), 23% of live animal exports, and 23% of fruit and vegetable exports.

The dramatic flash-flood in Toowoomba on Jan. 10, when an 8-meter-high wall of water crashed through the city with almost no warning, wiped out the state's last functioning food bowl, the Lockyer Valley. Central Queensland food producer and longtime LaRouche activist Maurice Hetherington gave an interview to this news service on Jan. 13 (see below), and commented on the situation facing Queensland food producers: "They've lost just about everything, the second time around in many cases," he said.¹ Dozens of people have been killed, and dozens more are missing.

The wheat situation is particularly alarming for the



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Floods in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, on Jan. 10 wiped out the state's last food-producing center.

world. Australia is the world's fourth-largest wheat exporter, and due to a debilitating drought in the wheat belt of Western Australia (usually the biggest area of wheat production), Queensland was set to be the third-biggest wheat-producing area this season, after New South Wales and Victoria, both also affected by floods. As recently as December, the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) estimated that Australia was on track for record wheat production, for the year ending March 31, of 26.8 million metric tons, thanks to the plentiful rainfall on the east coast this season, but that will now plummet. A substantial portion of the crop has been damaged by the continuing moisture which has caused sprouting, rendering it useless for milling. This is happening even as Cargill, the world's largest food cartel, is, at this moment, buying up the commodities division of the Australian Wheat Board, whose single-desk export control was dismantled two years ago.

1. For a video of the interview, see: <http://tinyurl.com/4mv24tk>.

Green Policies

In 1963, Britain's Prince Philip founded the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) as an arm of his World Wildlife Fund, and the ACF-run Green mafia in the country has stopped any dams from being built in Australia for the past two decades, such as those championed by LaRouche's associates in the Citizens Electoral Council. Had several long-proposed dams been built, the flood damage would have been greatly mitigated.

But Australia's agriculture is being devastated not only by floods, but by the savage Greenie dismantling of the nation's primary food bowl, the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB), one of the greatest agricultural miracles in the world. The MDB contains 40% of Australia's farms, 75% of all its irrigated crops, and provides 30% of Australia's food, as well as food for some 50-60 million human beings outside Australia; yet it is being shut down at a staggering rate. Notwithstanding that the MDB has been in a severe drought over much of the past decade, Prince Philip's Green fascists in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) cut water supplies to irrigators during that period by two-thirds, diverting the water for environmental flows for "river health" and to maintain wetlands.

In October 2010, the MDBA released its "Guide to the Basin," proposing permanent water cuts of as much as 45%, to maintain some of the 30,000 wetlands in the Basin, in fulfillment of Australia's obligations under the fascist international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, a subsidiary of the WWF. The prospect of the decade-long drought being made permanent under the MDBA/Ramsar Guide, has led to a virtual mass epidemic of rural suicides in the MDB, and to the beginning of mass foreclosures by the banks on the heavily indebted farmers. The MDBA/Ramsar mafia has proclaimed that agriculture in the Basin, particularly irrigated agriculture, should basically be shut down altogether, and entire towns and other areas of the Basin abandoned.

CEC Emergency Call for Action

CEC National Secretary Craig Isherwood on Jan. 15 gave an emergency Address to the Nation on this crisis, calling for LaRouche's global Glass-Steagall standard and Four-Powers Alliance to defeat the British monetary system, debt moratoria for Australia's farms, and a mass infrastructure-building campaign, among other things. His speech, "A National War of Liberation Against the British Empire," can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/4eltx57>.