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Acting Committee Secretary  
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee  
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

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I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation beef grazier and mother of two bush kids and believe our growing beef grazing enterprise would be considered part of the top 30% in the industry.

I wish firstly to express my devotion to the balanced ecosystems of our lands of which we are the stewards and caretakers, to ensure that future generation – our children may have healthy and viable lands and business into future generations. I believe that most family grazing enterprises have this multigenerational vision for the country under their care.

Unfortunately, there are the bottom 10% of grazing operators who damage the balance in the ecosystems. I support legislation that force those operators to care for and repair their land.... or get off it. My concern with the proposed legislation is that you will cause the farming families who are sound land carers and growing businesses, to drown in an ocean of administration.

Family based agricultural businesses in Australia need to run at a much higher level of efficiency to remain viable.

- Our capital investors are banks who require a lot higher return on their investment than the shareholders of the corporate agricultural companies.
- From international viewpoint, Australian beef production has one of the highest costs of production driven by; high labour costs, valuable but costly quality assurance programs, and complex taxation, HR, WHS administration costs along the length of the supply chain.
- Farming families carry additional costs associated with living on our isolated lands.

This means most farming families work from before dawn to past dark, 7 days a week... then come inside and do the 'paperwork' after the kids have gone to bed. You are proposing more paperwork, and I am just not sure we can survive it. The social implications of your bill are quite damaging. You will have fathers seeing even less of their children as they will try to work smarter, harder and longer to make up for the additional burdens. You will have mothers spending even less time with their children as they are often the ones in the office keeping up with this administration - Less bedtime stories because "sorry honey, mummy needs to go do some more office work" The farming family - who built this country, who hold together your regional communities, who feed you, are perishing in an ocean of administration.

How will the proposed Bill impact for our grazing enterprise?

We don't know.

There has been no consultation. I am a Gen Y who is more than tech savvy and who still reads the rural bible (QCL), and I have not heard a whisper of this proposed legislation. No advice on what it will look like for us in the field. If you the government are honestly wanting to make positive change, which we support, then you would be well advised to sincerely talk with the more future forward grazing operators. None of this has happened – you may have consulted with some mid-level departmental 'yes men' who main interest is his salary.... (apologies to those in the departments who are truly passionate about their area of expertise) but you certainly haven't spoken to the boots on the ground carers of the land. – the family grazier.

Very recently Agforce sent through indication of what might be involved for graziers; terribly limited information; far too late in the game for any positive refection; and not from the horse's mouth (you).

After first read I though it sounded reasonable for graziers - As long as our country is in land condition A or B, then there is no further administration required. However, on review, I have the following concerns, drawn from a lot of assumptions, as we don't have any hint of the applicable details of this legislation.

1. Who assesses our land condition? –

Is this something we have to do... and document. Or will the Department be using veg-machine or FORAGE; and dictate a ruling of ABCD from that.

Forage and veg-machine are a great tool, but they are not a precision assessment. The rainfall measuring aspect is not highly accurate to exact location. This will cause incorrect results in the rainfall to groundcover ratio assessment. If a property hasn't been under the storms and is dry, but the nearest gauge got good rain, then the grazier who didn't get the rain will be judged unfairly.

2. What happens in drought conditions?

For graziers in the top 50%, I would suggest that we should meet land A or B criteria in a standard season, and thus save ourselves the extra administration. But even the best land manager has poorer ground coverage in drought. Then, in addition to the financial, social and psychological costs of drought, you add additional administration costs. After no rain a good grazier knows that his land is no longer in A or B condition and the kick in the teeth will come with the insult of administration requirements telling him to document his 'recovery plan'.

3. What is the quality control on compliance?

Who will be reviewing this recovery plan? Nobody? or some academic post-grad who has no real clue? The bottom 10% of grazing operators (the ones who are the problem) are not going to bother with their legislative requirements if there is an understaffed and apathetic gov department in charge of compliance. Rather it will be the better half of the industry, who take their business's legal requirement seriously, who will be burdened with the extra administration.

We have seen this with the new biosecurity act. This legislation had a big penalty written into it for blatant biosecurity violations - but no resources or department

commitment to go find the bottom 10% and enforce the law.... A toothless tiger, and the bad operators know it.

4. Timing of land assessment and prescribed burning activities.

In our part of Qld, prescribed burning at the end of dry season in cooler weather is best practise. It is supported by ancient indigenous wisdom and modern research. It reduces fuel loads (too much grass because we stock conservatively); which protects our land from habitat destroying wild fires in the coming summer. It controls pest flora species and improves our land's grazing ability. Prescribed burning is an arduous and precise undertaking, requiring the optimal temperature, moisture and wind conditions. And when those exact condition present – you go burning. Even on Sunday. Even if the land assessment imagery is going to be done next week.

My limited understanding of land assessment tools such as FORAGE and veg-machine is that they take the images for ground cover assessment on a certain day; and if we have done prescribed burning the week before, then that ground cover imagery assessment will result in unfavourable and unfair judgement of land condition. Again, we don't know how this will impact – because no-one bothered to consult with us.

5. Impact of proposed 'new cropping area' requirements on grazier's pasture regeneration undertakings.

Good graziers rejuvenate tired pasture areas with tillage (required for viable seed bed) and reseeded of this renewed pasture. These areas are then rested from grazing pressure until new perennial plants are established. This improves the environment, invigorating the grasslands with greater ground coverage with more climate adaptable species and investing in long term soil health with the introduction of expensive, nitrogen fixing pasture legumes. Our grazing enterprise generally completes this landcare undertaking upon est 300ha (a different paddock) each year. However, this could be considered a new cropping area under your proposed legislation and would then require a licence, farm design plan, site/ soil suitability assessment (fees apply) and need to demonstrate no sediment or nutrient runoff. This would be a completely cost inhibitive to our business. You are adding a huge administrative burden to the very, 'best practise undertaking' that is required to repair degraded land or maintain our current A and B land condition. I can see on veg machine- on my computer screen now, that land we tilled and sowed with pasture and legume seeds in August/ September 2018 are showing unfavourably in the ground cover layer. Again, will this be more 'punishment for doing the right thing?

In conclusion;

- I agree that the bottom 10% of grazing operators who damage our environment need to change their land care practises to repair the land under their stewardship..... or get off the land.
- I fear that your legislation will only impact the better grazing operators who seek to meet their legislative requirements and 'do the right thing' and will completely miss its targeted audience.
- The economic and social cost of this additional administrative burden will cause further stress and breakdown on the family and small business structure that

already has many burdens to carry yet makes such an important contribution to our communities.

- The lack of consultation will result in negative and unintended implications on the ground, causing a net loss or damage to the ecosystems we all seek to care for.
- The land carer (grazier) is then bureaucratically obstructed in many grazing best practise activities; causing damage of our land and thus degrading the environmental and agricultural future for the next generations.

Just because you have ample parliamentary voting numbers and total legislative power ..... doesn't means its right, or just, or decent.

- Please don't be the cause the demise of; the farming family unit, our environment, our grazing enterprises; and the future viability of all these parts.
- Please avoid this misdirected legislation that is clearly lacking real insight; rather consult with us – the best grazier often quietly get on with it and don't seek out the soap box.
- Please sincerely seek a true agri-enviro solution, that supports the actual land carers - the managers of our vast grasslands – the graziers.

The farming family - who built this country, who hold together your regional communities, who feed you! ..... are perishing in an ocean of administration. Please give us a hand.

Kind regards,



Rebecca Vander Have