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Belombre Pastoral Company

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20th March 2018

Attn: SDNRAIDC Committee

Submission pertaining to: Clause 37 Fodder Code

(This should not be a political football)

My opinion on the current new fodder laws - they are unworkable and to over regulated - VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEEDS A DIFFERENT PLAN FOR THE ARID ZONES!

We are the owners of a sheep/cattle property which is located in the most arid mulga zone. Our property has been family run in excess of 100 years in Far South West Queensland, the area is not wall to wall mulga as in many cases further east. After 85 years of using mulga fodder to sustain us through relentless severe droughts, areas of mulga are thicker than ever for the following reasons.

- Lack of natural occurring wild fires, once prevalent prior to European settlement keeping mulga thinner than is the case today.
- Since the use of heavy machinery (i.e. dozers), commenced in the drought of the 1960's. Mulga scrub has regenerated thicker due to more ground disturbance from the process of fodder harvesting. As opposed to early fodder harvesting in the early 1930's where axe men killed the trees resulting in no regrowth.

- When stock is starving there is no place for to and froing with impractical vegetation laws. This is playing with our lively hood and the wellbeing of our live stock. We have been caretakers for the previous century and wish to be for the next and beyond!
- We are not in the business nor do we condone broad scale clearing in our area, it would not be in our best interest to the long-term productivity to kill what keeps us going in the bad times, giving some hope for the future.
- 15 years is not a long enough period in arid areas to allow regrowth to regenerate to a useful, usable size due to unreliable rainfalls. Thus, why we use this valuable resource with care and frugality in a rotational manner. We fodder harvest no more than what we need with thoughts for our future keeping fodder in reserve for when the next drought rolls in (this seems to be the one certainty).
- It is insulting after successfully surviving long relentless droughts, to then be told how this land needs to be preserved. Managing mulga lands effectively is a high priority and necessity. It is in our best interest to preserve our vegetation successfully, to survive droughts without been reliant on government handouts, low interest loans, both during and recovering from drought. This saves the added burden of a debt looming over the business.
- Unmanageable levels of debt which, occurred during drought, forces landholders into spiraling unsustainable management practices. When the land and its carers (graziers) are under huge pressure; facing survival, intractable fodder clearing laws and fines creates severe depression. With a sense of hopelessness and failure when all you are trying to do is survive and protect your live stock.

Don't lump us into the same category as broad scale clearing for the purposes of improving pasture in the higher rain fall areas.

With all due respect this is what I really think!

Don't blame us for climate change and use graziers to appease the greens. Or use us to offset the massive pollution footprint produced by urban living (where clearing trees to build more houses doesn't seem to be a problem). We are doing what we do to feed the urban dwellers and export products to bring export dollars to the state

(read: BETTER STANDARDS OF LIVING FOR ALL!)

It has been quoted; "that every dollar earned from primary production is worth 17 dollars by the time it does the rounds." Not that we see much of it!

NB: Primary production means we efficiently produce valuable saleable products from nothing but "good old mother earth". Then add breeding stock, seeds, rain, heartache with a lot of worry. And finally, good luck mixed with hard work, tones of hard work! We are not excavating huge mines to resource irreplaceable raw materials or creating more pollution

PRIMARY PRODUCTION ("CREATING SOMETHING FROM NOTHING")