

Peter Neal

Re; Native vegetation enquiry

To the inquiry panel,

Our family run our dairy farm on the flood plains of the Manning Valley. We milk just over 500 cows and employ 8 full time staff. The family has milking cows in the area for over 100 years.

Laws regarding land use and changes to the zones have happened with limited landholder consultation. This has resulted in landholders being disadvantaged financially as the land would have almost been used in some way to generate income.

A further 10 acres has been zoned koala habitat. This happened because we as farmers and guardians of the land left part of the property uncleared and untouched. But with this zoning it has restricted the use of the land.

In both of these cases we still pay rates on the land but have no real say in the management of the land. We are still expected to control the declared noxious weeds (Blackberry, Lantana) in the area as no one else will.

If farmers are the guardians of the land and they have laws imposed on them by the greater community then there would be an expectation that the community would pay for this. The community has benefited in a number of ways by the laws that have impacted on our property directly

1. More fish breeding grounds and habitats protected.
2. The timbered area adjoins a native vegetation reserve, effectively increasing the area by 10%. With a larger area it is able to support a larger and more diverse population of flora and fauna.

If landholders are to be compensated then the farmer needs to be given the option to sell land, or still be the guardians. Then this land needs to be purchased at the rate it has been valued by the governor general. To maintain this land then the authority which is to own the land must control noxious weeds and pests that are on these lands, or pay landholders to. It would be unfair if farmers are expected to burden such costs for the wider community.

The carbon pollution reduction scheme is not right if it is going to disadvantage farmers. If a farmer is going to have an extra cost because it is believed animals pollute the environment, then it is not fair. If a farmer is going to be disadvantaged then the cost should be passed onto the consumer.

The same rules need to be worldwide. As Australian farmers are reliant on exports then countries which do not apply the same rules as Australia, then Australian farmers will not be competitive and industries will collapse.

How can animals be polluters, they are only consuming what is in the pasture which has been locked in plants from the environment they live in. It is one of Newton's laws that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but transferred from one form to another.

**COWS CANNOT PRODUCE MORE CARBON THAN THEY EAT!!!**

If a soils organic carbon is going up there is a net gain on the farm as there is less carbon in the atmosphere and more in the soil. Farmers should receive carbon credits for this. And visa versa if soil carbon is going down.

Farmers need to have mature forests acknowledged on the carbon credit scheme as these forests have helped and will continue helping in the reduction of carbon in the environment.

Regards Peter Neal