

Submission to the Senate's Environment and Communications Legislation Committee inquiry into three bills relating to establishment of a Carbon Farming Initiative.

I believe the whole idea of a Carbon Tax and the CFI is a whole lot of idealistic hog wash to fix a non-existent problem such as global warming – climate change – extreme weather events. The world, according to scientific research in the Antarctic, using core samples discovered that the temperature was 8 degrees warmer 9,000 years ago. So what if we warm 2 or 3 degrees. The amount of carbon, CO₂ which can be sequestered on the land compared to what is absorbed by the ocean is so infinitesimally small it is hardly worth talking about let alone taxing.

Most of Eastern Australia was open woodland with an odd patch of scrub, storing very little carbon. Alluvial mining started locally in the 1850's, in the 1880's the change in vegetation was noted by Sydney B.J. Skertcilly [in a report to the Queensland Government in the 1900's]. After the mining boom was over agriculture came to the fore and a lot of the trees were killed destroying the open woodland allowing tree seedlings to germinate in their thousands in the proceeding years, and then killed in their 1000's using various types of timber treatment – clearing and re-clearing, and in recent years planting improved pastures. The point here being comparing carbon dioxide sequestration today to what it was 100 years ago, today agriculture absorbs three to four times the quantity of carbon dioxide, this sequestration is due to the use of super phosphate, change in burning practices and the value of millable timber.

Many Australian soils lack available phosphates (phosphate is essential for plant growth), some of our soils are so low in phosphate and other nutrients there is negligible plant growth. If one wishes to increase CO₂ sequestration, the subsidy on phosphate has to be increased. There is enough validated scientific evidence showing the relationship between phosphate, plant growth and soil health hence CO₂ absorption.

In the 1900's with so few trees per hectare it would be hard to find 50 tons of carbon per hectare and the amount sequestered by grass was almost neutral. The grass was burnt at least once a year by the original inhabitants. This practice was continued by the early grazers to produce better quality stock feed. When we purchased this block there was only a few large trees most of the trees were saplings, we were happy to leave a lot of these saplings to grow into millable timber, this turned into a dense forest – we have about 100+ hectares of this dense stand of timber containing about 400 tons of carbon per hectare. We have applied super phosphate and planted improved pasture – I believe this pasture sequesters approximately 3 – 4 tons of carbon per hectare, this is typical throughout the district.

All agriculture sequesters carbon, some facets of agriculture more than others, growing of crops for green manure was popular years ago and was a method of incorporating

carbon directly into the soil – this practice is in decline because of economic pressures , this is an area which should be investigated.

All existing timber should be allowed for carbon trading, this is the timber that was stolen from us to meet some Kyoto protocol.

In this day and age we talk of Market Forces and Free Trade and hypothetically if we had free trading of carbon in Australia you would be hard pressed to give carbon away because since the drought broke many million of tons of carbon has been sequestered in the rampant vegetation.

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