

1/5/04

The Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir or Madam:

We operate a sheep and cattle property in the old Omeo shire of East Gippsland Victoria. We have approximately 30 kilometres of boundary to State forests. The impact of pest animals on our enterprise is enormous in both financial and emotional terms. We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your inquiry.

Firstly we found it staggering that the DSE and their advisory boards were stopped from contributing but we were not really surprised based on past performances.

Our main pest animal concern is wild dogs. Emerging concerns are deer, foxes and pigs, and at times roos.

We consistently lose 1000 or more sheep per annum to wild dogs in spite of having many kilometres of electric fencing.

After the 03 fires (we lost 2500 acres to the fire) we were still reasonably well covered with grass. But within two weeks the roos, emus and deer had moved in and stripped the country bare. From then to now we have been in drought conditions. This highlights the effect a neighbour's management policies (or lack of) can have on others.

A pest or weed can best be described as something in a place where it is not wanted. What is not a pest or weed on private land is on public land and vice-versa.

Issues we regard as vitally important to Pest Animal Control are: -

1. Public land management-

a) Stock number management

-There is no recognition at the moment that population numbers are critical to healthy ecosystems. There is a perception that if left alone numbers will balance themselves out. This not the case as many parks around the world have found out.

-Wild dogs pose a great threat to native animals survival. They are not an important link in the food chain.

-the greater the numbers the greater the pressure on adjoining

landholders.

b) land management

-2003 fires pointed out that land management is a major issue.

-there is a need to rethink what we are protecting and how we use it and who pays

and indeed if we can afford it.

-the proliferation of weeds on public lands

-lack of biodiversity .the bush is now basically a monoculture, a eucalypt desert where it once was semi open woodland.

-lack of fuel reduction a major issue

## 2.Fencing (Public and Private land interface)

-two different ecosystems, side by side, both can be sustainable but only if there is a distinct division line (boundary)

-need to protect one from the other

-cleared boundaries make great access tracks, fire breaks and are critical to maintenance of fences.

-well maintained fences can contain animals.

-fencing shouldn't be part of wild dog budget but part of neighbour policy

## 3.Disease

-Wild Dogs -Hydatid and Neosporin

-Pigs -potential carriers of many diseases

## 4.Intra and Inter State Coordinated approach.

-Animals don't recognise State boundaries

-Landholders achieve a much better result when working together. So to will the States.

-Apparent unwillingness of Victorian State departments to work with others.

Culture of maintaining the status quo.

-Lack of transparency of Wild dog Management Budgets.

## 5.Hybridization of wild dogs.

- more pups per litter

- more litters per year.

- changing habits

- more aggressive.

## 6.Dogmen to be maintained.

Thankyou I hope this is of some assistance

Sincerely Fraser Barry Bindi Swifts Creek Victoria.