



**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
FARMERS FEDERATION**

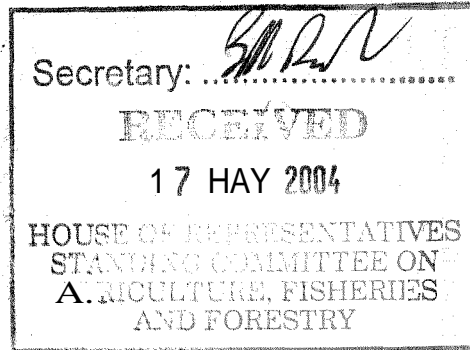
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13<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Bill Pender  
Inquiry Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr, Pender,

**RE: Inquiry into the Impact on Agriculture of Pest Animals**

On behalf of the South Australian Farmers\* Federation I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Inquiry into the impact on Agriculture of Pest Animals.

Pest animals in Australia pose enormous costs to agriculture in terms of economic loss and control measures. Because pest animals are not just native species out of balance with the environment (i.e. kangaroos below the dog fence) but also exotic species, it is essential scientifically based quarantine protocols are maintained.

The Federation believes strongly in a combination of biodiversity gains and productivity gains and so seeks effective control protocols for all nuisance species. **An integrated, whole of community approach for pest management is required.** Government, industry and conservation groups must work together with the aim of achieving sustainable agriculture and biodiversity outcomes. Management needs to occur on a regional scale and be incorporated into the current integrated natural resource management approach. Regional plans with environmental outcomes linked to agricultural productivity need to be developed by NRM Boards.

**A proactive approach preventing animals from becoming pests should be supported.** Prevention is much more efficient and cost effective than trying to control or eradicate pest animals once established. Also the emotive issues attached to the publicity associated with some of these animals i.e. koalas on Kangaroo Island, make rational management almost impossible.

**Reintroduction of Native Species**

The Federation is aware of the importance and environmental reasons for reintroducing native species. However, it is important that proper management plans are developed. While we give provisional support for reintroduction i.e. for the proposed release of Tamar Wallabies into Innes National Park, it is important to realise that the wallabies are being released into an unnatural environment (dingo free) and therefore will need specific management that fulfils the environmental aims of their release, but also protects farm productivity. We would not like to see another "koalas on Kangaroo Island scenario".

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## MANGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The prioritising of pest animals significance based on their impact needs to be developed considering the following;

- Economic damage
- « Biodiversity damage
- Quarantine issues

This needs improved monitoring and reporting from the local/regional level through to the state government so that problems can be assessed before they arise.

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### **Principles for control strategies:**

The Federation believes control strategies should be;

- » Effective in terms of eliminating vermin (100 % kill rate), and cost effective.
- Socially and environmentally responsible

Control strategies should include;

- Long term strategies such as research into effective biological control
- Short term strategies such as regional baiting programs and smart targeted bounty systems.

### **Bounty Systems**

SAFF supports the concept of national eradication programs for certain feral species (e.g. foxes) based upon a bounty. In the absence of a federally funded, national program, **the Federation does not support a state based bounty system** unless they can effectively target problem animals in key production areas.

SAFF supports effective techniques such as,

- Regional baiting programs
- Smart targeted bounties involving licensed individuals
- Research into effective biological control methods

## SPECIFIC ANIMAL ISSUES

### **Management of Pests in National Parks**

Lack of expenditure on pest animal control within National Parks for both native and non-native animals is a major issue. **Poor pest control in parks impacts badly on adjoining private land.** Cooperation between States is essential to prevent management issues such as kangaroos in the Murray Sunset National Park in Victoria crossing into South Australia to graze on the adjoining properties of private landholders.

Consideration needs to be given to the biodiversity impacts the eradication of a pest animal will have on local ecosystems.

For example, with the eradication of rabbits and goats in the Flinders Ranges National Park native pine has reached pest status leading to the elimination of native plant species in the understorey and soil erosion.

Management plans to prevent such outcomes should be integral to regional natural resource management.

### **Macropod Management**

The Federation has been involved in developing South Australia's Macropod Management Plan and supports the following principles;

- Sustainable macropod management
- Operational details of macropod management should be region specific to allow for fine tuning of the program
- Kangaroos are a resource from which financial and social gain can be extracted - they should not be ignored or treated as a pest when in excessive numbers
- The harvesting component of the management strategy needs to be fostered and developed and shoot and let lie permits need to be phased out
- **Implementation of both commercial harvest and/or cull should be initiated and controlled by land managers.**

### **Dingo Management**

- Dingo management needs to be region dependent. That is, it should be based upon the recognition of the different environmental and production factors associated with dingoes north and south of the dog fence.
- South of the dog fence SAFF supports the eradication of dingoes in recognition of the massive economic damage which they and dingo/domestic dog hybrids can cause commercial livestock industries.
- North of the dog fence SAFF recognises that Dingoes are Australia's 'wild dog' with a right to a place in the natural environment. Control of dingoes in these areas should be limited to the current practice of controlling populations in the Dog Fence buffer zone area and when dingo numbers increase to the point of becoming a production/management problem to South Australia's northern cattle industry.

### **Rabbit Management**

The Federation supports a national eradication control program based on biological control.

### **Fox Management**

The Federation recommends a national eradication program based on a combination of baiting and smart targeted bounties.

The Federation would like to see linkages established between fox and rabbit management strategies as it has concerns that decreases in rabbit numbers may result in increased damage by foxes to native fauna and commercial species.

### **Other Pest Animals**

Pest animals which receive the most attention and are of most concern to Federation members are those that cause high economic impact and high biodiversity damage. Pests that affect smaller industries still have significant impact and should be addressed e.g. feral bees. The Federation believes it is the responsibility of all landowners - **including national parks** to implement effective control measures. Management plans are an effective tool as they involve strategic planning, set goals, are outcome driven and enable landholders to do future planning.

Partnerships between government and private industry need to be furthered and effective management techniques employed by both. More scientific research (and funding to undertake it) on pests and their ecological impact is required to gain a more comprehensive understanding of effective mechanisms to control or eliminate pest populations. This is critical to achieve economic and biodiversity gains.

### **Management Plans**

Releasing wallabies and all other macropods into national parks and elsewhere, needs to be managed under the guidelines of a well-developed management plan. Noble endeavours such as the Tamar Wallaby release can have unintended consequences, which highlights the need for practical biodiversity laws that can be integrated into the natural resources management reform process under way in South Australia

If you would like to discuss any of the points in this submission please contact me on phone number: (08) 8739 3058 or Libby Hunt on (08) 8232 5555.

Yours sincerely



Kent Martin  
Chair, Natural Resources Committee

Libby Hunt  
Executive Officer, Natural Resources