

P.C & D.F Foster

the Secretary
Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

10/05/04

Dear *Sue Mutton*,

Secretary: <i>[Signature]</i>
RECEIVED
25 MAY 2004
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

In the late forties and the early fifties my father was having terrible trouble south of Omeo with wild dogs. This was after the thirty nine fires and most of his fences were new netting fences. Rabbits were in plague proportions until myxomatosis devastated them. This put more pressure on the wild dog food supply. Kangaroos and wallabies were seldom seen and lyre birds were not active and were not heard. Wombats were plentiful and of course they made extra work for maintenance on the fences. Sheep were being killed in large numbers.

There was a full time dogman working the area south of Omeo. This was his area but the dogs were still killing. My father used to poison rabbit heads and lay these baits around his boundary quite regularly but still the dogs killed.

The then Lands Department decided to try aerial baiting. I cannot remember when it first started or how long it went on for but it was in the fifties. This devastated the dog population and I might add the fox population as well.

By the late fifties kangaroos and wallabies were starting to breed up again; lyre birds were heard again and bronze wing pigeons were seen. During this time the slaughter of sheep virtually ceased but the dogman was still working close in to the sheep country to catch the odd killer dogs.

By the late sixties and early seventies the dogs were back after aerial baiting ceased. The bush

was being opened up with logging and access tracks going in. This made very easy highways for the wild dogs to travel from their breeding areas to farming country and to invade the sheep and calf population of this area with the result that a great deal of country has been abandoned for sheep production.

The Department of Primary Industry's policy on wild dogs is to protect domestic animals. There is never any mention of Australian fauna being protected. In the Old Omeo Shire extra dogmen have been employed since the January '03 fires. Altogether 600 (six hundred) dogs have been trapped by D.P.I. employed trappers.

The Good Neighbour poisoning program has Yielded 171 dog takes. In addition farmers and hunters have shot numerous dogs. The presence of dogs in the bush, even with this enormous cull is still there, as evidenced by the sign and howling of the wild dogs as well as constant sheep harassment. The situation is much the same scenario as after the "39" fires.

I submit that the logical way to control wild dogs is aerial baiting and that all dogmen must be retained at all costs.

Signed 
Peter C. Foster