

### **Barriers to the development of the Camel Industry.**

The Ngaanyatjarra Camel Company formed in August 2012 and in its first year of operation sold 6700 camels. The company continues to sell between 150 and 250 camels per week and is developing a local workforce and infrastructure in the region. In 2014 our goal is to sell 10,000 camels. There are approximately 300,000 feral camels in Australia recruiting at an average of 5% per annum. 200,000 of these are in the tri-state region. Our long term goal is to bring the feral herd under management and to supply and develop a domestic camel industry in Australia. There is opportunity to develop a sustainable camel industry in by working with commercial partners to develop a domestic camel industry in Australia and to get rid of the institutional barriers that are an impediment to doing business in the remote aboriginal lands of australia.

Barriers to development have included:

- \* Poor roads, roads in very poor condition un-capped and closed when it rains,
- \*Restrictions on using road trains on remote roads in SA.
- \*Declaration of camels, (The world's oldest domestic animal as a feral animal in WA and SA. (camels are not livestock under SA and WA legislation). This has enshrined non supportive state agency behaviour.
- \*Land Clearance legislation. Most of the state Native Vegetation Acts were designed to protect remnant vegetation in the settled areas but having the perverse outcome of being a barrier to the development of Aboriginal Land in remote Australia. The policy around them is being enforced by people ignorant of the needs and issues of remote aboriginal lands in Australia. For example the Ngaanyatjarra Lands Part III Reserves are reserves for the enjoyment of Aboriginal People but were included as part of the national reserve system (to protect biodiversity) without consultation and with the much greater impediments in terms of land development that imposes on industry. The uncertainty over how development matters will be seen by state agency staff and the need to produce costly biodiversity surveys over land that is vast, not endangered but poorly recorded in the literature is a major expense.
- \* The view within the environment industry that any non-native animal is to be destroyed. This view strongly held at Commonwealth and State Agency level greatly affects the potential for Aboriginal People to make their own plans to manage their own country and to get commercial investment. The recent national feral camel project destroyed over 100,000 camels, leaving \$100M of export potential lying to rot on the ground.

For Further reading on camels

RIRDC and WA Dept of Agriculture invested in Research into the camel industry in the early 2000's  
See research publications RIRDC 01/092, 99/118,00/99

It should be noted that at the time of the RIRDC reports there was not an Abattoir that would take large volumes of animals. However since SAMEX started taking large numbers of camels at its Peterborough meatworks in 2012 our business has bloomed. Other markets have emerged including supplying middle eastern breeders and camel milk operators. Also the terms of trade for primary production has improved. Protein is in shortage worldwide and that's been reflected in prices.

There has been alot of prejudice against camels in Australia just as there have been high barriers to the economic development of the people of remote aboriginal Australia. Aboriginal Communities are really behind the camel business. The final report of the Australian Feral Camel Management Project showed that 6 times as many remote Aboriginal People wanted to muster and remove feral camels as wanted to shoot them.

“The camel is an alien animal to **Western** societies and is loaded with negative **prejudices** and misconceptions. However in time of global warming, growing deserts and increasing scarcity of water and food, camels would bean alternative sustainable solution to these problems.

Nowadays, even some Masais and Samburus, who are real cattle breeders, have given up cattle rearing in Kenya and Tanzania for camels. In desert areas camels are far better suited than cattle and small ruminants for animal husbandry. Unlike sheep and especially,goats, which clear every piece of vegetation to the roots and denude areas, camels take only a few bites from a shrub or a tree and then move on.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the global market in camel milk potentially is worth over 10 billion USD. In Dubai, specialized camel milking machinerywas developed, which makes the Camel Farm a modern and practical dairy farm. With improved feed, water availability, husbandry and veterinary care, daily yields could rise to 20 litres milk per day/per dromedary.

Milk allergy and lactose intolerance, which are very common in the western world, are unknown diseases with camel milk.

Although the lactose content in camel milk is as high as in cow milk, camel milk lactose intolerance does

not occur. The reason is also not yet known (Wernery & Wernery 2006). It is known that camel meat contains very little fat and cholesterol.” The Camel From Tradition to Modern Times UNESCO DOHA OFFICE 2012