

Corryong Branch VFF
Secretary Pamela McKimmie
"Kimbridge"
Towong 3707
May 13th 2004

The Secretary
Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Committee
House of Representatives
Canberra ACT 2600
Chairperson Mrs Kay Elson MP

Dear Mrs Elson,

On behalf of the members of the Corryong VFF Branch I wish to submit this submission on the Impact of Pest Animals on Agriculture.

Farmers throughout the Upper Murray area of North East Victoria have had to endure attacks and killing of their livestock over many years. This has increased in the past 10-15 years to unacceptable levels, and since the bushfires of 2003 to crisis point for many. The problem does not ever seem to come under control and improve, farmers have made plea's to the State Government Departments over the years for assistance and feel this is never taken seriously, as the program is never resourced adequately enough to bring the situation under control. The dogmen that are employed do an excellent job and catch many dogs, unfortunately there are just not enough dogmen on the ground. Wild Dogs have gradually come closer to cleared farmland and the dynamics have changed, with dogs being harder to trap or bait once out of the bush.

Because the problem never seems to improve, farmers have chosen to go out of sheep, which for many means a loss of income as their properties are more suited to producing quality wool than fat cattle. This also places more stress on farmers that are still in the industry, as dogs will travel a long way to get an easy feed of lamb. If the situation is not turned around the losses will be more calves. Farmers have also noted that once sheep are removed from farmland the weed problem exacerbates.

Another change to the local environment has been the development of large Pine Plantations both Public & Private along with the increase of Public land in National & State Parks and Wilderness, these areas are extremely under resourced and there appears to be little done to eradicate Pest Animals or weeds. Many farmers believe that these areas are harbours for breeding up of Wild Dogs, in recent years there has also been an increase of Deer, Pigs and Goats let go by hunters. Often hunters do not recover their hunting dogs and these are left to roam on to farmland with possible cross breeding with Wild Dogs.

Many feel that stricter Local Government control is required over the management of domestic dogs, so they are not left to roam onto neighbouring farms killing stock. There is also concern over the spread of Hydatids and Neosporin through the movement of Wild Dogs, effecting domestic stock.

Yours faithfully,
Pamela McKimmie