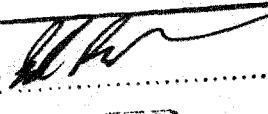


Secretary: 

SUBMISSION NO. 8

- 7 MAY 2004

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES
& FORESTRY

5-5-04

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, & Forestry,
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

Dear Sirs,

Re your inquiry on the impact of pest animals on agriculture, I wish to make the following submissions.

- 1) In the Wingecarribee Shire, native animals can be as much pests as introduced animals.
- 2) The introduced, viz. rabbits + foxes, are relatively easy to control, using 1080 poison. Having used, initially, burrow fumigants, then 1080 baits, for 36 years now, the small fox population has virtually controlled the rabbits. I prefer to regard the foxes as helpers, although, last year, for the first time, I poisoned 4 foxes, which were worrying calving cows, the first trouble in 46 years.
- 3) Re natives, the worst, by far, are wombats. Their extensive burrows cause extensive land damage + degradation, initiate erosion, undermine buildings, + affect gateways + stockyards. Even small numbers can dig many burrows. Control is very difficult, as their burrows are too large to fumigate easily, + their nocturnal lifestyle makes shooting difficult. This is complicated by their being protected fauna, + having no real predators.
- 4) Grey Kangaroos only eat valuable pasture, + cause some fence damage. Small numbers can be tolerated. They, also, are protected fauna, but permits are available to shoot excessive numbers.

The kangaroos have no animal predators in this district, + appear to have no health problems, + shooting is the only control. The numbers are insufficient to support a meat industry, + they appear to be confined to grazing land adjoining large areas of bushland, which describes my personal situation. This is probably also the case with the wombats. Shooting requires a high-powered rifle, in the hands of an expert marksman, +, in closely settled areas, great care is necessary. The use of 1080 has never been considered.

5) There are a few wallabies, but never in significant numbers. I think 1080 has been used against wallabies in Tasmania. I have heard of wild pigs in the Southern Highlands, but have no personal experience of these pests.

To conclude, my personal problem is with wombats as a cause of land damage, although they may not much affect the productivity of the land, just make it more difficult to work.

Yours faithfully,

B. M. Sleeman (B.V.Sc. Sydney. 1945).

P.S. My first position, on graduation, was as a Stock Inspector for the Eden Pastures Protection Board, which comprised the Far South Coast of N.S.W. A major duty was policing eradication of noxious animals, viz. rabbits + dingoes. The district was heavily infested. Rabbit control was by shooting, trapping, + fumigation of burrows with cyanide, + poisoning with strychnine. It was a losing battle, farm production was affected, + rabbit skins were an important source of income.