

We wish to express our deep concern of the devastating rise in the cost of fertilizer. We operate a mixed farm of 800 acres in the western district of Victoria. We have had to move more and more into cropping to make our enterprize viable, with the wool prices still not paying to be able to continue producing. We also produce fat lambs - so are still very heavily reliant on fertilizer for pasture management as well as cropping.

It is nothing short of daylight robbery to increase our fertilizer costs from \$550 per tonne last season (which we thought was far too high !!) to \$1020 per tonne that we have had to pay up front this season.

A \$30,000 super bill up front is a lot of money to find.

Dare I mention that we have been in a ten year drought as well.

Not to mention the ever increasing fuel costs.

We have gone off farm contracting to make a living - which has meant very

long working hours for us both over the years. Lucky we were prepared to stick our necks out and raise a substantial loan to set this contracting up.

Because when we needed drought assistance we have been knocked back because our assets are too High. So much for having a go. Better off to have sat back and gone heavier into debt like many others.

NOW TO TOP EVERYTHING OFF THIS UNBELIEVABLE INCREASE IN FERTILIZER

How on earth are farmers meant to stay on the land? Increased fertilizer

costs will impact right through the chain so we will be paying for it in a lot of other costs in the long run as well.

Thankyou for the opportunity of airing our concern.

Patricia and Bernard Heard