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Re: Inquiry into the exposure drafts of the legislation to implement the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme

SUBMISSION BY ANDREW FARRAN

Pastoral Agriculture should be Exempted Permanently from Comprehensive Carbon Reduction Levies or Similar

Any carbon reduction scheme (then need for which is yet to be irrefutably established) should recognise soil and trees as viable carbon sinks to offset carbon and methane emissions generated by farming activity.

To include pastoral farming in a comprehensive reduction scheme raises the almost insurmountable difficulty of measuring soil sequestration and animal emissions with any precision. Even if roughly measurable, the inclusion of farming would not be cost effective.

A possible compromise, which has the virtue of simplicity, would be to recognise the good that farming does more than offsets the perceived harm (e.g. methane and nitrous oxide emissions). While farmers have a clear interest in reducing their carbon emissions, however derived, measuring emissions from farm to farm, animal by animal, or otherwise, could only be arbitrary in its outcomes. Moreover, the mooted carbon credits to farmers could turn out to be as hollow as the financial boxes traded recently on Wall Street.

Thus, across-the-board carbon taxes or permit fees would amount to yet another crippling penalty on agriculture without regard to its overall profitability or productivity.

The effect of arbitrary carbon emission levies combined with well meant but counter-productive incentives linked to fertiliser use, stock feeding systems and animal breeding techniques could be to drive many farmers out of business altogether, notwithstanding that their enterprises could be seen as efficient by most conventional measures. The further downside is that many of the positives of farming (carbon sequestration in trees and soil, food and fibre production for global needs, etc.) could be lost in the process.

Broadacre agriculture should be exempted permanently from any proposed carbon reduction scheme. These farmers will reduce their emissions anyway in the normal course of efficient farming.

ANDREW FARRAN
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