



from the

PRESIDENT'S DESK



TIME TO SPEAK UP

"Everything lives. Everything dies. And death with a purpose gives full meaning to life." – Trent Loos, Animal Agriculture Advocate

THOSE of us involved in animal agriculture (pastoralists, graziers, intensive animal operators, abattoirs, live exporters) understand that quality care of animals means better profitability. There is always the odd rogue operator in any industry, but on the whole, we do a fantastic job with the animals in our care. Happy well cared for animals are rewarding to all who rear them.

In the realm of animal behaviour and facility design, our industry hired the likes of Temple Grandin and Bud Williams long before any bureaucrat or animal rights group knew anything about them. We constantly strive to do things better, not for appearance sake or to pacify activist groups, but for our own satisfaction and progress.

Sometimes "mother nature" can cause unplanned stock losses. In a paddock, it's possible that at any point in time, one or several sheep might be in trouble. They could be bogged in a water-deprived dam, or perhaps be sick or injured. They might have been attacked by wild dogs.

What happens, in those instances, if an animal rights activist finds that animal before the owner does? Increasingly, the owner of that animal is charged, and in most cases, impugned in the media, presumed guilty without trial.

The latest example is another attack on Westpork, WA's largest pork producer, whose outspoken general manager serves on several industry boards. This accusation has the intended effect. All other producers see that the best way to avoid problems is to keep their heads down and their mouths shut. While we remain invisible and silent, then, extremists advance their cause to eradicate animal agriculture.

Do we want to continue to produce efficiently? We cannot do so if we have non-producers following us critiquing everything we do. Will we make mistakes? Certainly. But more than anyone else, we are impacted by and learn from those mistakes.

Society has to accept that sometimes, stuff happens. But in the absence of mal intent, producers should be left to do what we do best – produce safe, healthy food and fibre for a growing world population.

Rob Gillam

THE PGA REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF FARMERS AND PASTORALISTS FROM ALL AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF WA, FROM ESPERANCE TO THE KIMBERLEY. PGA MEMBERS ARE MAJOR PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORT COMMODITIES – INCLUDING GRAIN, BEEF, SHEEP AND WOOL – AND BELIEVE IN FREE TRADE, OPEN MARKETS, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.



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