



from the

PRESIDENT'S DESK



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SPIN, DIVIDE, CONQUER

FROM a suspension of live exports to Indonesia following questionable footage shot by Animals Australia on the ABC, to a West Australian GM canola grower being tried in the press over allegedly causing his organic neighbour's property to be decertified, all commercial farmers, from livestock producers to grain growers were forced this past year to defend their livelihoods following continual attacks in the urban media by animal liberationists, anti-GM activists and environmental groups.

And the bad news is these attacks are going to continue until commercial farmers and their representative organisations stop focusing on repairing this imaginary chasm between the city and the bush, and concentrate on ensuring that the policy makers and the media stop listening to these extremists and promoting their propaganda.

Every day the Australian public is bombarded with actors, celebrity chefs, rock musicians, and sports stars telling them they should only buy or grow ethically organic biodynamic humane carbon friendly free range non commercial products. And thanks to the Internet and social media, every two minutes someone feels compelled to support these *paid endorsements*, or put their own opinion out for the entire world to see.

It is no wonder that every month there is another Government inquiry on everything from the price of milk on the supermarket shelves, to live exports, to GM food labelling. It is no wonder that politicians continue to defend knee jerk policy decisions by saying that rural Australia has lost its social license. And it is no wonder that the Australian public continue to believe the myth that there is a great divide between rural and urban Australia.

Throughout history there has always been a divide between the city and the bush - between those who consume the food and those who grow it. However for the first time we now have a third group, the activists, who are dictating to the consumers and the producers what they should eat, how it should be produced, and who should produce it. And it is this group that, unfortunately, the policy makers and the media are listening to.

January 1 begins the Australian Year of the Farmer 2012, which is about celebrating and enriching the connections between rural and urban Australia. Yet it is important for all commercial farmers to remind their Federal and State politicians that all producers, from farmers to pastoralists are running commercial businesses in a very competitive industry, and that policy decisions should not be made in an attempt to appease activist groups bent on ending commercial farming in Australia.

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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