



PASTORAL UPDATES September 2009



Dear PGA pastoralist

In the last six months, the pastoral committee meeting agendas have doubled in size. In writing to you on behalf of the Pastoral Committee it may help you understanding the many issues the committee deals with at each of its meetings. It points out the desired outcomes of the committee and what it has achieved for you. The last meeting was held on August 19 and included the following agenda items:

Land Tenure

We face a critical and delicate time with Sandy Hayter, Rob Gillam and the Committee preparing, reviewing and drafting another blueprint that PGA prepared at the request of Minister Grylls at a recent meeting held with Kimberley pastoralists.

Pastoral rents

Letters and discussions are continuing. Ministerial meetings are now in progress. The PGA has also requested that the Pastoral Lands Board be reinstated in the interim as a matter of urgency.

Wild dog control

The PGA is investigating tax relief for wild dog-proof fence construction. Sandy McTaggart will report on a meeting he attended in Sydney regarding wild dog control when the latest PGA Wild Dog NewsFax is released next week. We despair at the low priority status with WA Governments over many years in comparison to other State Governments.

Handguns

The first sign of light is finally here when the PGA and the Police Commissioner agreed that regulations relating to handguns required amendments to contain conditions whereby a revolver is considered a tool of trade to protect those against wild cattle and camel attacks. The Commissioner and the Minister are in the process of formalising these recommendations to come into effect soon.

Southern Rangelands Review

The final report is due to be in the hands of the Minister next week. The PGA will wait on the recommendations of the review. These will be available to us next month.

AQIS Federal subsidy review

The PGA watchdog is looking at the \$40 million invested to improve AQIS efficiencies. Where is the money really going? We have spoken to numerous Federal Senators to ensure that the money is invested to improve AQIS services only.

Beef Stocktake program

The Pastoral Committee has real concerns on how particular recommendations (such as a Beef Council) are to be funded and will not agree to further input costs from the producer.

National Heritage Assessment of the Kimberley

A PGA request was made to the National Heritage Branch for funding for consultation work with members on the Heritage assessment claim in order to offer a balanced report. We are now arguing against the reply from the Branch telling us that the Kimberley Land Council is the only agency funded to work on this assessment.

NLIS Working Group

I have been nominated by the Pastoral Committee to be the additional member on the NLIS Working Group. PGA asked for three extra producer members. This is too late unfortunately. The committee strongly objected to the recent highhanded approach demanding separation of NLIS and transaction tagged cattle for live export by producers. We will keep you posted.



Main Roads fencing and fence maintenance agreements

The PGA is attempting to start a forum with other road user groups to address the issues of road safety in pastoral areas, with the hope of establishing a more proactive rather than reactionary approach to road safety for increased traffic in pastoral areas.

Regional ports

The Transport Minister and the regional port authorities are now fully aware that we are not going to take the rough 'throw away' treatment often experienced with our northern ports. The lack of consideration for perishable cargo at higher costs than anywhere else in Australia is amongst our first targets.

Codes of Practice and Codes of Conduct

The committee understands that Codes are a new world practice. Members of the pastoral committee have spent many hours negotiating simplicity and practicality to the Aerial Mustering Code of Practice, the Code of Conduct for Mining and Exploration on Pastoral Leases and the Code of Practice for Windmill Contractors. Sue Walker also spends many hours reviewing water management plans for our benefit.

MLA Beef Levy Review

The Committee has real concerns over the inequitable position the \$5 per head levy currently imposes on Western Australian and Northern Australian cattle producers where live export of high volume, low income subsidises low volume high income cattle and processed beef. There is a new groundswell of discontent. As this is sent to you, we are discussing the issue with MLA and Cattle Council. The levy was also discussed with MLA representatives Michael Finucan and David Thomasson. With terrific support from Rob Gillam, negotiations have now opened up in regards to the advantages of an ad valorem inclusion in the levy debate.

It is definitely not PGA policy to advise for or against this levy review retaining the \$1.50 marketing component of the cattle transaction levy. It is however, the Pastoral Committee's responsibility to offer balanced information so that you as a member may vote accordingly. We believe that because of the way it is collected (\$5 per head rather than based on the value of the cattle) that the retention of the levy is in jeopardy if put to the vote. It would be more equitable if an ad valorem levy were in place.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU TO REGISTER ONLINE OR BY PHONE
(CALL THE MLA MEMBERSHIP SERVICE LINE ON 1800 675 717 AND SELECT OPTION 1.
YOU NEED TO REGISTER BY 18 SEPTEMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BALLOT.**

Pregnancy testing for live export

The committee continues to reduce the imposts and costs to industry with the WA Veterinary Surgeons Board failing to provide usable guidelines whereby qualified pregnancy testers are free to conduct their work without bureaucratic hurdles. We are also seeking to amend the Veterinary Regulations if required.

Fitzroy Crossing Bull Sale

A highly successful Bull Sale was held at Fitzroy Crossing on the 21st August. The presentation of the venue, signage and atmosphere made this a gala event. Vendors, buyers and spectators were all well satisfied. The Cattlemen's Dinner held the previous night exceeded all expectations with over 100 people attending. Out went the old PGA Centenary plates at auction with patrons paying up to \$200 a plate. Congratulations go to Edgar as the main PGA organiser, Farmworks with the commitment of Harold Sealy and Peter Stowe, the Bull Committee headed by Jim Motter and the dedicated team of Keith Anderson, Peter Camp, Kevin Brockhurst, Merv Wortley, Jack Burton and other station Managers and owners who provided days of yard building and loans of equipment, the Fitzroy Rodeo Club for the terrific presentation of the venue and providing refreshments, the Kimberley Development Commission, Shire of West Kimberley and the Aboriginal Training Program for their efforts and support. Congratulations and thankyou because the outcomes were good and we all had fun.

So there we are: a general insight of what goes and where your PGA subs go. The above shows the wide content that has to be seriously addressed, followed through and acted upon in order to DEFEND as well as IMPROVE our industry position.



PASTORAL UPDATES – SEPTEMBER 2009

I would like all PGA pastoralists to note the large workload of our Policy Director Alex Burbury and the workload of the Pastoral Committee members who work at it in a totally honorary capacity with limited resources.

Pastoral Committee members vary with experience and circumstances but the quality, links, their commitment and motivation astound me. Brett Pollock has vast Shire experience, David Steadman has Government Rural Policy Committee links and contacts but prefers cricket, Jano Foulkes-Taylor has Telstra Countrywide and ICPA experience and exudes wisdom and grounded common sense. Richard Shallcross has had first hand battles and experiences with National and World Heritage listings. Allan Padgett from ILC has good common ground across pastoral issues. All Committee members add value in their own way.

Therefore I am now identifying how important it is for each and every PGA member to have a say. Your financial support is also important if you don't wish to have a say. Holding a meeting of two or three in the bush can be just as alive with interest, drive and passion as a meeting held at Pastoral House. We all add strength to our industry through PGA. It is about action, promotion and solutions rather than negativity.

We need to increase our resources through encouraging pastoralists to pull their weight in the scheme of things. We need to encourage 100% pastoral membership, join the fight to defend and the fight to promote food, economy and pastoral culture. Take the opportunity to learn and have fun with like-minded people.

Our NewsFax system keeps you up to date with our major issues that we fight on your behalf. I hope that this letter has given you some insight into the extent of the workings of the pastoral committee. It could not be possible without the full function of PGA personnel, the Executive Committee (which comprises of Grains, Private Property Rights and Resources, Native Title, Economics, Meat and Livestock) and of course our President Rob Gillam who takes on the full responsibility for all of us.

Finally, the PGA is pleased to announce a new partnership with Wellard Rural Exports to address and promote key issues affecting WA's livestock and farming industries. A three-year partnership will be aimed at developing innovative policies for agriculture and will draw on an exclusive base of production, shipping and trading experience. We expect the new PGA-Wellard alliance not only to assist in reversing WA's rapidly declining sheep industry, but also to provide a more secure underwriting for our cattle industry by promoting strategic alliances between producers and overseas consumers.

Yours Sincerely

Ruth Webb-Smith
CHAIR of PASTORAL COMMITTEE
Pastoralists and Graziers Association

**Wellard Rural Exports is
proud to announce a joint
venture partnership with PGA**



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