Apologies for poor English, grammar, set-up etc.

Was not going to present anything but after attending Roma I felt that should put in my one cents worth.

Farmers are not good at this so we are disadvantaged before we start.

- some farmers get help but organisations essential to long term benefit to farmers and ultimately all Australians ie MLA, GRDC - do not get any help – the RD&E they do is essential and it is vital that their work continues – most is project based – once it is reduced these people go elsewhere and do not come back – Rural Skills report stressed the rundown in RD&E - reduced drought induced levy funding just accelerates this trend – surely this RD&E is a public good

- the point should be stressed that agric has a huge multiplier effect and a $ invested in agriculture has a very good return – "the drought has reduced national growth rate from 3.5 to 2.75%". Costello – and this was only after the 2002 drought BAE said same after the 1983 drought "if agric catches the flu then the whole economy catches a cold "Author O'Mara”

- my experience says that generally the mavericks are right and the consensus view is generally wrong – look for the different thinkers, they probably have the solutions – as the climate change sceptics may have seen an article which said that in NZ when all farm support was withdrawn a lot of initial pain but farming has since thrived – I question this but maybe a few answers there????

- if you can not help producers with IR subsidies maybe you could help with labour assistance – my workers were put off during the drought – they are not coming back

- Sue Dillon (Agforce) said at Roma that we are struggling to fill office bearers – no time and no reward and at significant cost – ultimately the whole community will suffer

- -look at those who have not had assistance - some lessons there???

- -reward those who have not had a drought - not those who have

I SUGGEST YOUR REWARD STRUCTURES ARE WRONG????

BY ASSISTING SOME AND NOT OTHERS – YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE ONES YOU WANT.

ARE THESE THE RIGHT ONES?????? and not the ones reliant on the gov titty????

- read “beyond drought” CSIRO publication

- your inquiry is biased before you start – until we all understand what the wider community wants/needs from agric/the bush – we can not answer your questions – we think you want food and fibre (as this is what we are rewarded for) yet we are being asked to look after the environment etc for free!!!!

- by providing drought assistance you are sharing some of the risk – does this perverse/skew the outcomes/directions?????

- no mention of the banks - if EC not available would lending policy/criteria be different

- by calling it a drought you are accepting it is an unusual event – where as it is a natural cyclic event

- went to a workshop years ago which said of Qld that it was a state of drought interrupted occasionally by flood - 40 years later I think they were spot on

- have we shaken out enough farmers/producers? (and possibly the wrong ones) if we wish to retain what left some level of transfer payments are required - wise and well founded of course????

- why should not farmers share in the overall prosperity of the economy????

- are there lessons from the 70's when we had a oil panic and mining out competed for labour also

- Qld has clearing restrictions – Bill Burrow’s early work from memory demonstrated that in dry times (or drought as you say) trees can have a suppressing effect on grass of up to 20 times – thus the veg legislation severely amplifies the effects of drought – a huge impost on producers especially in a return to a more normal drier era – the legislation is not fair or equitable

- ditto re kangaroos etc – we destock in anticipation of drought and promptly the roos move in and grazing pressure increases – what is the point??? we destock our animals you do not – practice what you preach

- your eg of social capital is too narrow – football index – are there enough people to field a team but more importantly is there someone to organise a team?

- how many areas pass the first test but fail the second – this is the real loss of social capital - the leaders , thinkers , mavericks, organisers etc.

- go speak to Ian Plowman UQ

- most farmers are making a profit to be on the land not on the land to make a profit

- $ is not the major driver

- you can not split the economic, enviro and social - also add cultural

- the role of government to make the long term strategic decisions

- is much of our problem due to the closer settlement policies of the 50's – the wettest period in the last 250 years – I would suggest the old timers protested strongly at the time – have they been proved right and what do we do to avoid this mistake again

- there are lessons from the 1930's and 1860's - but who remembers them in the 1902 drought

- 75% (or 2/3rds) of stock/cattle died in Qld. The Balonne did not flow for 20 years in the 1800's - so this dry spell is just that comments on issues paper

- I suggest the major impediment (and driver) is gov legislation

- multiplier effect of agric - is this appreciated?

- social effects – look overseas - Japan huge number of farmers over 60 and some are as huge reduction in population – do we want this to happen here???

- why are there 2 places side by side - one in "drought" and one not ??????lessons again

- current drought - "unprecedented" - come off the grass!!!!!!

- climate change policies are based on models - limited data set?-many farmers do not believe in climate change - they are closest to the coal face - maybe they know more than the scientists and modellers????

- p6 - NDP has failed badly on these criteria!

- p7 governments have run down the RD&E capacity - and the people who had the vision and strategic ability

- p8 - you suggest ways of coping with drought - look at objective not the pathway - maybe cash or increased equity is the best way - I would suggest your pathways are not the best way for a region with a highly erratic rainfall - rainman for Roma only guarantees one mm in January

- look at the families who have survived 3 generations and learn from them - they may have something to offer

- assistance means you are taking some of the risk and thus change the decision tree- is this what you want???

- tax incentives are very powerful eg investment allowance - also Aust film industry

- resilience comes at a cost – we would like to reduce it so when times are tough we take on further risk by reducing costs – we need to be a position to act long term - never been there

- p21 – never been able to use any of these

- should you be asking the question – if we are committed to paying a certain amount of $ - what is the best return - $, environ and social

Maybe Australia has to come of Age and accept farmers need to be reimbursed for the other services they provide for free - because it has a good payoff to the whole community – if you do not we will all be worse off.

Do not misunderstand me – agriculture will always survive but not in a manner which benefits the whole community.

You have a huge task – do not waste this opportunity.

Best wishes

Charles Nason
Producer (or peasant?)
"Banoona"
roma

PS much of training should be aimed at policy makers rather than farmers