

TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION 12/13/2008
Points to take into account for continuing Drought Assistance passed 2010

I have been in farming for the past 50 years, and 32 years on our Riverina Irrigation Property "BROADFIELDS", at Jerilderie. N.S.W.
 Up until 3 years ago the 394 ha farm turned over \$300- \$400,000 dollars worth of yearly production. BUT.....with low rainfall and Nil allocation of Irrigation water for the last 3 years, the farm has NOT produced any major income to cover farm operating costs, [which keep going up!] and surplus, to put next years crops in . Our debit level is now over half a million dollars.

Because of 08 spring being a total failure, no feed, no water, no income, and our sheep having to be agisted out to other farms at \$1.00 per week (1000 head) costing \$1000 a week. Last year I did the same, hoping the drought would break in 2008—but it did not. The lambs from those ewes were sold 4 weeks ago, we only averaged \$72 for those lambs—we needed \$92 to cover costs! Yet the supermarket multi-nationals will make over \$400 per lamb by the time it is sold to the consumer..... YET their costs to get those lambs from saleyard to supermarket shelf is only \$30 per head. So a 300% profit margin!!!! With little work!!!!-----

WE ARE NOT BEING PAID A FAIR PRICE FOR OUR PRODUCE , TO COVER COST OF PRODUCTION , AND MAKE A PROFIT !!!!!

If Government want to have a viable farming industry.....Producing cheap, high quality food & fibre, AND, food security for Australia-----Government's MUST look after the farming industry in dry and drought times. We HAVE, drought proofed our farms--by Irrigation--("Snowy Mountain Scheme")--Because it has not rained, our crops and pastures have failed these last three years-----It is NOT our fault.

Government's MUST assist us in these difficult times...SO when it does RAIN (and it will). We are still here, and can start growing food again for the benefit of ALL Australians--in export income and food security--Maintaining High Standard of Living--which Australian's, at present enjoy.

BUT warning bells are ringing--I am 61 years old, my son 29 (been through Marcus Oldham Agr. College in Geelong)--does not want to come back to the farm???.....The average age of Farmer's is increasing--Simply, Government's must encourage young people into the Industry--Farming IS a very hard life,--Not only weather ,but cost of Production--Trying to compete with Cheap Imports that, DON'T have the Red Tap of, O.H.&S., Quality Assurance that applies to us, ...NOT A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.

To sum-up--IF Australian's want Farmers in this country, E C, Interest Rate Subsidy and Income Support , MUST be continued after 2010.-----Even after it has rained, it will take farmers 2 years to get back on their feet.

Remember--"IF YOU EAT--YOU ARE A PARTNER IN FARMING"

Yours Sincerely

M. G. Kettlewell

Mike Kettlewell, '