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NSW Farmers Association.

Submission to The Productivity Commission Inquiry.

I write as the owner of grazing land on the north coast near Kyogle. The area is high rainfall and fertile country. If not regularly maintained, this sort of country is quickly overrun with noxious weeds like crofton weed, lantana and camphor laurel. That maintenance involves the chemical spraying of weeds which under the current guidelines, I realize, is not a problem. It becomes a problem when operating on steeper country. My understanding is that there will be restrictions put on removing any vegetation on this country to prevent erosion. If this were the case then this country would retain a weed seed bank spreading to the better country every year which would require an expensive and time consuming spraying program just to keep clean the land that is clean now.

Also a native grass, Blady Grass, which is on the list of plants to be protected because it's native, needs no protection as it spreads readily if not controlled. If let go it covers country with a thick layer of dry matter which cattle won't eat, severely reducing the productivity of that land. It requires burning to reduce the amount of dry matter to make the grass more palatable to cattle and to reduce the risk of bushfire. The burning is done at a cool time of the year for safety reasons and also to lessen the damage to young trees growing in it.

An area of the property is forested and there are trees big enough to cut fence posts which I intend to do. Fence posts have to come from somewhere. As yet we don't have an inexpensive alternative for the timber post.

My property is basically cleared except for the forest area and I have no intention to do any "Clearing" that involves the removal of trees. I see the above as normal farming practice so I see the loss of right to do them or the time consuming application to get permission to do them as threats to my farming enterprise.

I have a creek through my property with steep banks. I recognize that it would be desirable for those banks to be protected. I don't believe that large riparian zones are required just protection of the bank itself. This will require money and ongoing costs as floods remove any structure close to the creek. The financial returns from farming have been very poor for several years so, even though I see the protection of creek banks by what ever means as a good thing, if I am forced to do it myself it would make my enterprise not viable.

In summing up I see the threats to my farming enterprise as losing the right to follow normal farming practice and having "Green" ideals forced upon me with no financial assistance. These are my views as they relate to my own farm. This may seem a small minded view but I believe this debate needs some individual views as well as views of those with the bigger picture in mind.

Thank you for your time

Michael Kena