



Pristine Forage Technologies

Building whole farm profits.

Response to the Green paper on Agricultural Competitiveness

Having studied the Green Paper, we can find no clear or obvious reference to the critical issues raised in our previous submission.

The undeniable fact is that our agricultural competitiveness in the longer term is fundamentally dependent on at least maintaining, and short of extreme global famine becoming the norm, on improving productivity per unit of land area.

Despite this, ABARES statistics clearly show that the Australian wheat-sheep zone is going in the opposite direction where we now produce considerably less per hectare than we did 20 years ago. In real terms, yields of our major crops are 30% lower, and animal production is 50% lower per hectare than in 1990s. We cannot compete with the rest of the world on that basis; they continue to build their productivity and efficiency of production while ours declines.

The science behind this declining productivity is simple and unequivocal. You cannot take more nitrogen out of an agricultural system than is being put in and expect soil conditions and productivity to be maintained. Yet it is very clear from multiple lines of evidence that this is precisely what our broad-acre farming systems have been doing for more than 20 years.

The wheat sheep zone is arguably the backbone of our agricultural production and its value to Australia is a very considerable number of billions and a measurable percentage of our GDP annually. That value should grow, but on its present productivity path, it will fall, and may even collapse completely. We may be accused of catastrophism, but to date, no similar bleeding of the soil nutrient base of any agricultural system in history has managed to avoid such a collapse.

Any final report on our agricultural competitiveness that overlooks these fundamental problems of productivity, will fail the quite reasonable expectations of industry, government and the community.

We re-direct attention to our previous submission, its supporting ABARES data and relevant references. We further offer our services, knowledge and understanding of these wheat-sheep zone systems for additional input and backup accordingly.

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November 2014