

Expand environmental stewardship payments: NFF

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IN marking the launch of the 'International Year of Biodiversity, the National Farmers' Federation is calling for an expansion of the Federal Governments environmental stewardship payments for farmers.

The NFF says biodiversity and agriculture are interdependent and both are pivotal in addressing looming climate change and food security pressures.

But the challenge before the Government is striking the right balance between biodiversity and ensuring that farmers are able to increase food production by the 70 per cent needed by 2050 to feed a projected world population of nine billion people.

NFF president David Crombie said the environmental stewardship program, which is currently in Phase One, has been "overwhelming embraced by farmers over the past two years".

"In fact, under the 2010 Federal Budget, we are calling on the Rudd Government to expand the Environmental Stewardship program to cover all endangered species and ecological systems listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act," Mr Crombie said.

"Farmers are Australia's frontline in dealing positively and proactively in managing environmental needs.

"Farm-gate environmental management is two-pronged. Firstly, sound natural resource management drives effective and efficient farm techniques, making farming viable and sustainable.

"Increasingly, environmentally-friendly practices are generating long-term profitability, improved drought resistance and making our resources more sustainable.

"Secondly, beyond the business, farmers are often required (by various local, state and federal laws) to lock-up large sections of their properties to preserve native vegetation... essentially having stewardship of those natural resources on behalf of all Australians.

"However, as a consequence, farmers lose the productive capacity of those areas from their properties, while incurring ongoing costs to conserve and protect the land, including pest and weed management and maintaining green corridors for wildlife conservation."

Mr Crombie said farmers need help when taking extra responsibility for environmental management.

"Expanding the Environmental Stewardship program would recognise that farmers have been improving environmental sustainability on-farm and taking greater responsibility for ecological land management – delivering positive outcomes for farms, the community and the environment."

NFF

Source: <http://www.nff.org.au>

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This latest statement from the NFF dovetails nicely into the new 5 year strategic plan from the Red Meat Advisory Council. The first was a grading system; we got MSA a grading system that failed to be mandated through to the consumer so had no effect on lifting domestic consumption. The second was traceability; we got RFID/NLIS a half billion dollar white elephant that now has 34% of cattle having lost their traceability and we have lost market share since it's introduction. Interestingly the NFF supports the importation of beef from BSE-affected countries without NLIS. The third strategic plan from RMAC is the environment and animal welfare. Meat and Livestock Australia can easily enact the environmental module on the LPA/NVD to facilitate this. By getting a few large processors aboard that tell farmers that they will not buy unless they have the new LPA/QA paperwork just as they did with the original LPA. Some may say that I am being unduly cynical, however remember the NFF supported Rudd's ETS with amendments and the advantage to ag being in on the credit side yet failed to mention the estimated 8 billion already owed by farmers by the native veg act. The courageous Spencer is doing this.

Posted by **Brad Bellnger**, 12/01/2010 10:05:33 AM, on The Land

Crombie says - "Farm-gate environmental management is two-pronged. Firstly, sound natural resource management drives effective and efficient farm techniques, making farming viable and sustainable." Crombie says - "Increasingly, environmentally-friendly practices are generating long-term profitability, improved drought resistance and making our resources more sustainable." Crombie says - "Secondly, beyond the business, farmers are often required (by various local, state and federal laws) to lock-up large sections of their properties to preserve native vegetation... essentially having stewardship of those natural resources on behalf of all Australians." I say – I have never read such a contradictory and injudicious piece of utterings in all my life. Losing touch with core principles is one thing, but losing touch with reality is entirely another matter.

Posted by **Rob Wass**, 12/01/2010 11:42:49 AM, on The Land

Expand environmental stewardship payments. What a croc of shit. Where do these so called farm leaders spend their time. One of the largest farmer protests is currently unfolding with the Peter Spencer protest on land right theft to do with land lock up and this idiot talks about expanding environment stewardship payments. Some initial payments or compensation would be the best start let alone expanding locked up areas. Theft from those green farmers who had some retained timber areas and they talk about paying other farmers to lockup and plant additional timber areas. How hypocritical. Spend your time and effort getting compensation for the already locked up areas before you even dare think of talking about additional areas.

Posted by **Max**, 12/01/2010 5:05:54 PM, on The Land

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NFF president David Crombie

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