

From: Alister Watt [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 14 April 2020 2:23 PM
To: Water for Fodder - Review
Subject: HPRM: Response to Water For Fodder Survey [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

HP Records Manager Record Number:
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Dear Sir/Madam

Response to Water For Fodder Survey

As a Rural Property Real Estate Agent based in Griffith NSW, for the past 33 years and Water Broker for the past 24 years, I have taken a great interest in the Water for Fodder program run by your Department a couple of Months ago. I am constantly liaising with many of my Irrigator Clients and as such we had many lengthy discussions with Clients leading up to them placing Applications in the first Round of the Water For Fodder Program. I have read over your Survey where you asked for feed back on the Round # 1 in which closed on Thursday 9th April 2020.

Rather than complete this document I have elected to write to you with a few points that I feel your Department may like to consider moving forward with future Rounds of such Water Availability Programs. At the time of announcing the Round #1 Program the Eastern Half of Australia was under extreme Drought Conditions, and there were nil announced General Security Water Allocations in the NSW Murray system and minimal announced General Security Water Allocations in the NSW Murrumbidgee system.

I fully agreed at the time that it made good sense for this water allocation to be made available to irrigators to grow fodder to use, to then on sell or on supply to livestock producers and those within the livestock industry. In particular to Irrigators situated on the Murray River system in NSW who have had nil general security allocations for the past two seasons.

At the same time there were also irrigators trying to grow grain crops and vegetables to produce food for human consumption that could have benefited greatly from being the recipient of a 50 megs parcel of Water Allocation. At the time projections for one of the smallest rice crops in the Riverina were being made and additional water allocation to get these crops to harvest would have been greatly appreciated.

Fast forward to today and No One could have ever of thought of such a World Wide Health Pandemic ei COVID-19 would bring about shortages in Australia's stable foods such as Rice.

Given that there has been widespread rainfall across most of Eastern Australia in the first three months of this year and the demand for fodder tapering off maybe the next round of Water being made available could be considered for crops to bolster the Australian Food Chain.

I would suggest that consultation take place immediately not only between members of your Department and food producing Grower Representative Group, but also include those irrigation growers that outlaid tens of thousands of dollars to grow these crops of rice and vegetables the last couple of years.

Surly it is time to take a step forward to bolster our Food Chain Supplies.

I thank you for the opportunity to make comments and wish your Department well with any future Water Allocation Programs.

Regards

Alister W Watt
[REDACTED]