



Anger vented: mountain cattlemen protest the ban on high country grazing earlier this year.

Freight rates still unknown

By STEPHEN COOKE

GROWERS will be delivering the first of the winter wheat crop this week, but still do not know how much more they will pay for rail freight.

AWB spokesman Peter McBride said there had been talk of a 10 per cent rate rise in Victoria and NSW, but no announcement had been made, despite the fact the Ouyen depot should open this week.

Victorian Farmers Federation Grains Group president Ian Hastings said negotiations had concluded between AWB and Pacific National, the lessee of the state's rail tracks.

But he said Pacific National and GrainCorp had not yet reached an agreement.

"I can't understand why ne-

gotiations aren't complete between GrainCorp and Pacific National," he said.

Grain industry analyst Malcolm Bartholomaeus said he believed AWB had set its freight rates for the season last Friday.

"AWB will be adjusting its freight rates at various sites and this should take place during the next week," he said.

"There will be some minor variations on the rates that AWB have used until now,"

Mr Hastings said a rate rise for the harvest starting this week would be another bitter blow for farmers.

"They already face poor wheat prices and rising fuel costs," he said.

Cattlemen call grants 'an insult'

By MEGAN McNAUGHT
MOUNTAIN cattlemen say they have been "insulted" by a \$200,000 Victorian Government grant to celebrate the history of high country grazing.

The Government announced the grant last week.

Mountain Cattlemen Association of Victoria said the money was a poor substitute for a lost history after the Government banned alpine grazing.

President Doug Treasure said the funding only served to increase cattlemen's frustration.

"On one hand the Government tells us our heritage isn't important by taking away our grazing rights and rejecting the Federal Government's \$15 million proposal. Then they give us this money to celebrate our history," he said.

"It is quite insulting." The grant is designed to commemorate the "life and times" of alpine cattlemen and will fund three events over four years.

Each year the Mansfield



Doug Treasure

Mt Buller High Country Festival will receive \$17,500, the Man From Snowy River Bush Festival will receive \$27,500 and the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Annual Get-Together will receive \$5000.

The festivals are all community events that will help keep alive the importance of cattlemen, Mr Treasure said.

However, he said, now that grazing was no longer allowed, the events would play an important role in commemorating a part of Victorian history.

"We are pleased to get the money because it means the Government

recognises our historical significance," he said.

"The Government still has blood on their hands after what happened a few months ago and now they are trying to win votes."

Shadow agriculture minister Philip Davis described the funding allocation as "laughable."

"Prior to May this year, families were able to visit the high country and experience the uniquely Australian tradition of mountain cattlemen mustering stock," Mr Davis said.

"Now visitors will no longer have the chance to experience this. Instead, mountain cattlemen will be 'remembered' through festivals and celebrations, effectively making them into an Australian myth, like the Bunyip, rather than a part of contemporary society."

Tourism minister John Pandazopoulos said the festivals would keep alive the importance of the cattlemen.



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