

FACTS AND FIGURES.

1. When all factors are considered, grazing cattle in the high country is usually of higher cost, but more reliably available than pasture on lowland freehold land. These costs include an average loss due to mismustering of two per cent (these cattle generally perish — McGowans survey).
2. Alpine grazing assists in fuel reduction and fire prevention. It is good land management to keep alpine pasture short and green. It also encourages dramatic wildflower displays, since growth isn't suppressed by old and rotting material.
3. Cattlemen provide a presence in the area which cannot be emulated by any ranger. Their expertise and advice is readily available at any time to the people who visit the area, and is willingly offered.
4. Alpine access tracks are kept open by the cattlemen. Their huts, dozens of which dot the mountains, remain open to provide comfort and refuge for travellers. This is surely unique in Australia.
5. The mountain cattlemen's contribution to search and rescue work is well documented. There are many people who owe their lives to cattlemen's knowledge of the mountains.
6. The 20,000 high country cattle are among the best breeding herds in Australia. They are conservatively valued at six million but the annual turnover in cattle sales combined with service industries is far in excess of this amount. Mountain cattle provide a breeding resource and gene pool that underwrites the supply of fattening and breeding stock throughout south eastern Australia.
7. There are about 120 Mountain Cattlemen families.
8. About 10 per cent of Mountain Cattlemen's families will lose all or part of their runs by 1991 because of previous Government decisions. The remainder are now under serious threat.
9. The area grazed per adult beast in the high country is on average in excess of 70 HA depending on the quality of the country, and for only four months a year. Claims of overgrazing in the high country have no foundation in fact. Because of the wide ranging access to grazing and low stocking rates, mountain run cattle never have need for Government subsidy in times of drought.
10. Rugged gullies, rolling grasslands, towering cliffs and majestic stands of timber, all combine into an irregular mosaic in the High Country and surrounding public land. It is a magnificent natural and renewable resource. The cattle grazing, timber and Alpine recreational industries should be allowed to continue in harmony with people wishing to escape the pressure of every day living and visit these remote areas. Because of the large expanse of the Victorian Alps, there exist very large areas where no trace of man can be found. Much absolute natural wilderness can be found only a short walking distance from any road that penetrates the Great Divide.

MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ROOM FOR ALL IN THE HIGH COUNTRY.

If you are worried about the future of the High Country and the undue influence national parks will eventually exert on community rights please write and ask pertinent questions of the conservation and planning Ministers or the Premier. Questions require Politicians to think about the issues in order to answer your queries.

Send a copy to your local Members of Parliament for their information.

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Mountain cattlemen care for the high country