

DRAFT

Letter to Mrs. Kirner.

It has come to my attention that there are plans in Government circles to repeal the Wire Netting Act.

This is extremely disturbing news for land owners who are suffering from the incursions of vermin and wild life from Crown Land onto their properties.

There are thousands of kilometres of frontier fencing where wild dogs, rabbits and other pest species live in the harbour of uncleared Crown Land and invade privately owned improved pasture lands for most of their food requirements.

In recent years, by following their natural food supplies under these conditions wild dogs have at times become beyond the efforts of the official dogman to control them.

It is now being realized that rabbit populations are becoming more resistant to myxomatosis and are having a most damaging effect in many places.

A well constructed wire netting fence with electrified reinforcement on a well-cleared alignment is the ultimate in vermin control fencing. A rebate of half the cost of the netting is valuable assistance to landowners who maintain a barrier of protection, not only for themselves, but also their neighbours occupying the inner settled areas. While wire netting is expensive, it is not disproportionately so in relation to other goods and materials that are essential for efficient production. (see attached example)

Since legislation for the protection of wildlife has been more actively policed, there is a really strong case for increased contributions from governments toward keeping wildlife within their natural harbour and habitat.

To have the existing limited contributions discontinued would be a most serious abrogation at a time when this form of shared responsibility is so urgently needed.

The main reason why much boundary fencing has not been restored is because economic pressures in the rural sector have not allowed sufficient funds for the restoration of thoroughly depreciated capital improvement.

I believe that electric fencing can be extremely effective in restraining the movements of all animals but to maintain an electrified system that might contain rabbits to extensive areas without the use of wire netting, would be beyond the realm of practicality.

I reiterate the point I have often made that a co-operative effort between Department authorities and landowners is long overdue to clear and restore boundary fence lines to enable better control both wild fire and wild life.

Your intervention to retain the wire netting rebate provisions would be very much appreciated.

COST COMPARISON BETWEEN WIRE NETTING AND SUPERPHOSPHATE TO TOTALLY
ENCLOSE WITH NETTING AND APPLY 125KG/Ha OR 110LBS/Acre.

Example:-

2Km. square allotment of 400 ha (1,000 acres) with one side abutting
Crown Land. Half netting cost borne by neighbours and Government.

Freight and labour component not shared by Government.

Total material = 80 x 100 metre rolls of wire netting.

Cost:- (excluding clearing, posts, other wire etc.)

| | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| Netting | @ \$115 per 100 m (Melbourne) | |
| Labour & Freight | @ \$ 60 " " | |
| | $\frac{\$175}{2} \times 80 = \$1,400 \div 2 = \$7,000$ | |
| Add half cost of labour etc. for Crown Land boundary | = \$ 600 | |
| | (not paid by Gov.) | <u>\$7,600</u> |
| 50 tonnes superphosphate (125 kg per ha or 110 lbs per acre) | @ \$190 (on ground) | = \$9,500 |

In most cases it would be necessary to repair or replace an effective
fence on the Crown Land boundary. ^{ONLY} This would result in the above
figures being considerably reduced.

It may well be that in a year of more than 25% below average rainfall
that the establishment of a fence secure against pests and vermin may
be a more profitable undertaking during that year than the application
of 1cwt/acre or 126kg/ha superphosphate over the protected area.

If protected from fire and animal pressure, good quality wire netting
should last in most soil conditions for many years. During the same
period of time there would be a need for numerous applications of
fertilizer to maintain improved production.

It appears that a basic need is to establish a fence to exclude rabbits
and other animal pests. Then optimum production may be achieved by
adding fertilizer while the risk of losing pasture to invading wild
life and losses of livestock to predators is minimised.

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