

Has our business suffered from an attack from animal activists? No.

So why am I making a submission?

Because the prospect of our work place and home being invaded by a large number of hostile people makes me feel very threatened.

My brother and I work on our own most of the time and we are very isolated which is the norm for the great majority of farmers.

The prospect of a large number of hostile people (*the SBS report from 24th May said that 70 people invaded Gippy Goat*) arriving when we are working with stock or even worse at shearing time when we have 5 employees in the shed is terrifying. Even though we have not been attacked I still live in fear of the possibility.

What could happen? Livestock are unpredictable and they can react to strange circumstances with mass panic. This can lead to a whole mob of sheep or cattle rushing, crushing fences and trampling anyone and other animals in their wake. I have seen this happen; such events are hard to get under control, very dangerous and can lead to some animals having to be put down. You do not get time to think about how to handle these events, your reaction is driven by your stockman's instinct and training. It is very important to keep livestock calm when working them. I am very pleased to say that such events are rare.

A shearing shed is a very hectic place. A comb and cutter on a hand piece is a dangerous instrument. The shearing team that we employ are very professional, jovial and hard-working blokes. Shearers are paid by the 100 sheep that they shear. They work them selves to the limit of their physical ability. A good shearer is more than just a tradesman, the very best of them practice an art form.

The greatest part of that art form is learning to keep your cool when your body is aching, the sheep are fighting and you are wet through with perspiration. Not everyone has the ability to keep their cool when they are provoked and even less so when they are under pressure.

The prospect of a large number of hostile people arriving with the intent of disrupting work conjures up images of the whole situation getting out of hand, people and animals getting hurt. Help for us is a long way away and I would think it would be at least an hour after we made a call for help that any assistance would arrive; that is a terrifying prospect.

I am concerned that this could happen on our farm like at "Gippy Goat". The prospect of it creates mental anguish and generates feelings of helplessness and vulnerability.

Law and Order.

We are very lucky to live in a peaceful democratic society. As a society we respect each other's right to go about our daily lives in the way we see best. This gives the great majority of people the ability to develop their talents and build a good life for themselves.

We have seen that it can be a very fine line between peace and anarchy. We saw this in Australia in 2005 with what has become known as the Cronulla riots. We have also seen numerous riots in America and England. Northern Ireland is another case of a society where there is a history of violence and deep hatred. Wounds and divisions like those take generations to heal. Living in a society where there is an ever-present threat of violence that threatens people's life, limb and property would be a terrifying existence. Once it has started it is very hard to regain the peace. If people do not feel that the law is able or, even worse, unwilling to protect them, they are very inclined to find ways of defending themselves or meting out justice to those who they feel have wronged them.

So, I think this brings up a very obvious and relevant question and that is; what is the message that has been sent by the Justice system when the fine for a large number of hostile people (*reported as 70*) raiding "Gippy Goat" was \$1.00? Can I take this as a message that farmers rights before the law are of lesser value than those of the perpetrators of the crime?

One of the fundamental principles of our justice system is that "all men are equal before the law". It is my understanding that this principle can be traced back to the Magna Carta from the year 1215 in the English common law tradition. It now enshrined in Article 7 in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

To demonstrate my point, you should watch the Land Line story on the "Gippy Goat" incident which went to air on 2nd June 2019. If you watch the program you will note in the interview with Cara Garret. She reported being stalked and receiving death threats. There is a report in the Age on the 13th April about this.
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/you-re-a-walking-talking-corpse-vile-threats-toward-vegan-activist-20190411-p51d2z.html>. Also, a report on the SBS web site dated 24th May 2019.
<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/the-feed/this-woman-stole-a-goat-now-she-s-receiving-death-threats>.

This is clear demonstration of someone taking the law into their own hands and then expecting the law to defend and protect them when they have broken the law and violated others rights.

Seventy people invading a farm is not a spontaneous voluntary event. This is a well planned invasion. A very hostile act. In my view there are 2 guilty parties here. One the people who invaded the farm and two the organization/s and the people behind them who organized this invasion. Why is it that charges were not laid against those who recruited the invaders and were responsible for the planning, organising and probably funding as well?

The Weekly Times 24th July 2019.

A heart-breaking story of a free-range poultry farm being invaded. The trauma and stress has resulted in the family deciding to give up their chosen profession. I note that the article in the paper states significant property damage and the death of about 300 birds. There is something very nasty and sinister about this. *A farm being invaded by people who claim to be acting for animal welfare have been responsible for the death of 300 birds.* I have to ask

the question. Were those responsible for the death of these birds charged for cruelty to animals?

Photo of Meat Product in shopping trolley. Photo from NZ Herald.



Now this photo shows another frightening trend. If the people behind these actions are prepared to put stickers on meat products in a retail counter what else are they prepared to do to food products? Food safety is a critical community security and health issue. What else does this suggest about their motives?

I happened upon some quotes from Adam Smith 1723 to 1790. Smith may be the founder of modern economics, but he was first and foremost a moral philosopher.

In **Lectures on Jurisprudence (1762)** he wrote.

1stThe first and chief design of every system of government is to maintain justice; to prevent the members of a society from encroaching on one another's property, or seizing what is not their own. The design here is to give each one the secure and peaceable possession of his own property. {The end proposed by justice is the maintaining men in what are called their perfect rights.} When this end, which we may call the internal peace, or peace within doors, is | secured, the government will next be desirous of promoting the opulence of the state.

I find this very interesting. What was Smith driving at and how would we interpret this using today's language? My view is that it is very simple. What he is saying is that we should all be able to go about our lawful business without fear of interference, threat or intimidation. What gives one group of people the right to enter on to another person's property and disrupt their lawful business?

Summary.

The civic glue and the culture that maintains the peaceful harmonious society can be a fragile thing. These attacks will build resentment and anger in the community that could

boil over if the provocation continues and the justice system continues to demonstrate a bias towards the perpetrators.

The attacks on farms and meat processing plants are more than just attacks on individual people and business. They are direct attacks on the civic glue and culture of our peaceful and harmonious society.

Maintaining the peace should be the governments highest priority.

Animal Welfare on our farm.

Animal welfare is the highest priority in our business.

Our farm is accredited with Livestock Production Assurance (LPA).

We follow the requirements of element 7 in LPA.

1. We keep a copy of the current version of the 'Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for cattle and sheep with our LPA records folder. This folder lives in the metal cabinet in the shearing shed.
2. My brother and I have successfully completed training in relation to the 'Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines'.
3. Any employees are given instruction on the required standards of animal welfare.
4. In addition to this, our management system is designed to keep the morbidity and mortality rate as low as possible. This is the most important aspect of the whole process.

The process of setting animals up for a healthy life starts before the lambs are born. The pregnant ewes are vaccinated and drenched prior to lambing. This gives lambs passive immunity and knocks the worm burden down. We try to save pasture for the ewes to lamb on so as to provide good nutrition. Then at marking time the lambs get the following vaccines. Glanvac 6S B12, this gives immunity to the clostridial diseases as well as giving the lamb some selenium and vitamin B12. Guidair vaccine to protect them from OJD a wasting disease and Scabiguard vaccine to give immunity to scabby mouth. Then 6 weeks later the lambs get a Glanvac 6 booster as well as a selenium shot that will last them for 3 years.

Our breeding program selects against traits (I call these death traits) that leave an animal subject to the possibility of ailments such as fly strike and becoming lame.

We cull sheep with structural problems i.e. bad legs, feet and mouths.

We select for sheep that do not accumulate dags (manure) on their backsides.

We select for water proof wool that is resistant to fleece rot and dermatitis. These conditions attract blow flies in wet, warm and humid weather.

We select for sheep that are resistant to internal parasites.

We select for sheep that have positive breeding values for muscle and fat. Promotes vigour.

We monitor the flock for faecal egg counts. We use preventative treatments for internal parasites.

Sheep are jetted (treated with insect repellent) at times of the year when blow fly activity is most likely and the sheep are most vulnerable. Managing drench types so as to inhibit the build up of drug resistant parasites is also an important component of this.

In times of drought such as we are experiencing now, rations are carefully calculated so that the animals are maintained in good condition. Young sheep are given enough so that they can grow and reach their potential. Shy feeders (animals that refuse to eat) are removed and treated separately.

Animal Welfare transparency and the broader community.

The accountability of people who run livestock is much greater today than it has ever been because of community expectations and the pocket phone with a camera built into it.

The activists who invaded “Gippy Goat” claimed that the business was not transparent as justification for their actions. Nothing could have been further from the truth. My wife and I visited this business prior to the attacks and we were very impressed with what we saw. We spoke to the manager and because we were farmers, they allowed us to walk through the sheds where the milking Does were housed. I was very impressed with the condition of the herd and the whole management system. Once again, this business practices a proactive whole of life animal health system designed to keep the stock in good health and condition such as I have outlined on our own farm.

Some animals were kept in an area where people could have direct contact with them. The rotary dairy has a public viewing platform. Entry was free to the public. The business only made revenue from the visitors if they purchased something from the café. This was very good for urban based families and it was educating the community about food production.

Value add your business and product all the experts tell us. There is a new lesson and that is you will be attacked for having a go and doing so.

What have we got now? No more access for the public! The people who worked in the café serving the visitors have lost their jobs. Transparency and education for the public has gone! An opportunity lost!

This behaviour is at such odds to the Australian tradition of admiring people who “have a go”.

There are very good mechanisms for people who see things that they do not like, or, are not happy with to report these instances to the Department of Agriculture or the RSPCA.

All complaints are investigated by trained officers.

As a result of the investigations appropriate actions are put in place depending on the circumstances. That can range from some advice being given, right up to charges being laid.

The identity of the person reporting the incident is kept confidential.

Based on what I am aware of I think this system works very well.

In my view it would be fair to say that the great silent majority want Australian farmers to get on with the job of producing clean, safe, wholesome food at an affordable price as well as exporting to the rest of the world so that we can support the standard of living people enjoy in Australia.

I think that the people who produce the food you eat deserve some respect in a civilised society.

People who organise and instigate invasions and those who invade and steal from farms are not protesters. They are criminals and they should meet the full force of the law.

If this trend is allowed to continue there is a risk that it will boil over with very serious consequences.

Maintaining the peace should be the governments highest priority.