

## **Death of a Feedlot Operator**

My experience of the global warming debate has been a lot of fun. I've written a couple of books, had a couple of original ideas, influenced the debate, provided succour to the rational faithful around the world and have met the good and the great: Professor David Bellamy and President Vaclav Klaus. Others haven't been as fortunate. What follows is a tale of death and destruction that was visited upon one West Australian business as a consequence of the owners' doubts about the new green religion.

Matt and Janet Thompson own a feedlot business outside the town of Narrogin, about 200 km south of Perth. In June 2008, when the global warming scare was in full swing, Matt attended a beef industry meeting which talked about the cattle industry's contribution to global warming. He expressed doubt in that meeting about the veracity of global warming and handed out some rational literature. Not long thereafter, the West Australian Environmental Defenders Office took an interest in complaints by Narrogin greenies against the Thompsons' feedlot. The volume of complaints rose and the receiving body was primed to receive them: the West Australian Department of Environment and Conservation.

The Thompsons' feedlot business started operating in 2003 at a rated capacity of 1,000 head and an ultimate design capacity of 15,000 head. There is a need for feedlot capacity in Western Australia to level out the supply of cattle to WA abattoirs. In the dry summer, cattle lose body mass just walking around to get grass to eat. Bringing the feed to the cattle means that they don't lose condition walking to get it. In 2008, the Thompsons applied to the West Australian Department of Environment and Conservation for an increase in their licence capacity to 15,000 head. Instead of the increase requested, or even maintaining their then licenced level of 10,000 head per annum, the DEC cut their licence conditions back to 6,000 head. The feedlot needs economies of scale to be viable, so the new licence conditions effectively closed the business. The feedlot remains closed to this day. Right next door to the feedlot is a vast, intensive piggery which continues to operate. You can hear the pigs but not see them, because they are kept indoors. There is another piggery between the Thompsons' operation and the town of Narrogin.

The Thompsons' feedlot had 20 employees at its peak. One of them, Mr Lindley Boseley, took the closure of the feedlot rather personally and suicided. That reminds me of another accidental death at the hands of the State of Western Australia. Last year, an aboriginal being transported from Leonora to Kalgoorlie died from heat stress. The guards transporting him were distraught, and the WA Government recently undertook to give \$3.5 million to his near relatives, who still have the option of suing the State Government for negligence. Similarly, most likely the Environmental Defenders Office, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the greenies of Narrogin did not mean to kill Mr Boseley, but it is very likely that he would still be a productive member of society, if not a completely happy one, if they had not started their campaign to destroy the Thompsons' business.

The Environmental Defenders Office is jointly funded by the West Australian State Government and the Federal Government. The State Government has now been in power for two years and is halfway through its four year term. It could do well to review its funding of ideologically driven NGOs which, by word and deed, work against the people of Western Australia.

David Archibald

August, 2010

Published online on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 at:

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2010/09/11/death-of-a-feedlot-operator/>