Jacqueline Arnold
PO Box 9124
Alice Springs
NT 0870

29 April, 2025

Uploaded to *Have Your Say* website

To Whom it May Concern,

Submission on Buffel Grass Management – initial submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. I would like to raise the following issues:

1. **Unsubstantiated or incorrect assumptions about buffel's benefits**

From published communications some assumptions seem to underpin the understanding of buffel grass which I consider are not supported by evidence.

That it combats dust and erosion

See attached Presentation: Buffel Grass and Soil Stability

That it provides reliable fodder that increases drought resilience for the pastoral industry

There are many studies that show buffel grass is not a good mid-long term pasture grass with a loss of up to 50% productivity or herd weight in a matter of decades after widespread establishment. There are many industry references for this around the world including these Australian examples:

- *Buffel Grass: How to rejuvenate unproductive swards*. (n.d.). https://www.thecattlesite.com/news/40599/buffel-grass-how-to-rejuvenate-unproductive-swards
- Peck, G., Buck, S., Hoffman, A., Holloway, C., Johnson, B., Lawrence, D., Paton, C., & Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. (2011). *Review of productivity decline in sown grass pastures* [Report]. Meat & Livestock Australia
  Limited. https://www.mla.com.au/contentassets/91c28328a3a84affab7208d62b6e33fb/b.nbp.0624_final_report.pdf
- *Sown pasture rundown 1: The productivity decline of sown pastures over time - FutureBeef*. (2022, May 12). FutureBeef. https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/rundown-management-strategy-1/
- Marshall, V. et al (n.d.). Pasture Dieback in Queensland. In *Pasture Dieback in Queensland – a Review of Relevant Literature v7.docx*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e5856a58220896e4dd6b366/t/6080f60d2b34fc0683b7e83f/1619064371202/Pasture+Dieback+in+Queensland+%E2%80%93+A+review+of+relevant+literature+v7.pdf

2. Health Impacts of buffel grass invasion

I am an experienced public health professional. I am finalising a paper on the health impacts of buffel grass invasion. I will send it to you when it is complete. In the mean-time I have attached the following documents which cover just a few of the many negative health impacts of buffel grass invasion:

- Summary for Policy Makers: The Health Impacts of Buffel Grass Invasion
- Presentation: Buffel Grass Invasion in Central Australia: Impacts on Human Health

3. Other Impacts

Impacts on Native Title holders where their country is leased for pastoral purposes

Impacts on the public - access to, and enjoyment of our natural environment

Economic impacts considered by the committee should be based on a rigorous evaluation that includes the:

- Impact on established and emerging industries such as tourism, art, bush medicine and food
- Value of pastoral industry and mid-long term impact of buffel grass on this (see above)
- Impacts on community health and wellbeing.

4. Management

Management must be evidence based, precautionary and rely on rigorous scientific, legal, economic and traditional knowledge.

Fuel reduction

Grazing and fire are currently used as primary methods to cultivate buffel grass and encourage growth.

Grazing – this is a biological control and should be investigated to the standard demanded by such control including consideration of alternatives prior to utilisation.

Fire – buffel grass has a positive fire feedback loop. SA and other jurisdictions with experience managing buffel grass and well developed protocols are clear that fire should only be used as a preparation for other treatment. We should learn from this.

Herbicides

Investigate impacts of herbicides in soils, fauna and flora – at the moment research on this is scant to non-existent.

Biological controls

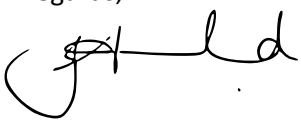
All options should be explored, including those such as dieback that may lead to eradication on pastoral leases.

Planting

This should be absolutely banned. We do not need genetically modified, fertiliser encrusted cultivars introduced. Continued planting anywhere in the NT makes a mockery of effort to mitigate invasion and damage.

If you would like to discuss these points further or need more evidence to support my claims, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



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Attachments

- Presentation: Buffel Grass and Soil Stability
- Summary for Policy Makers: The Health Impacts of Buffel Grass Invasion
- Presentation: Buffel Grass Invasion in Central Australia: Impacts on Human Health