

**Submission
No 40**

**PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (VIRTUAL STOCK
FENCING) BILL 2024**

Organisation: Newbury Farm

Date Received: 16 May 2024

I am writing to express my strong support for the legalisation of Halter's innovative virtual fencing and cattle shifting system in New South Wales. As a former tech investor, and owner of multiple farms, I have firsthand experience with the challenges faced by farmers and how Halter's technology can offer a transformative solution that can revolutionise the way we manage livestock and enhance both environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and profitability.

We recently acquired 1,005 acres in the Southern Highlands, an area with weather conditions similar to Tasmania and New Zealand. The conditions make it an ideal location for pasture farming. I also own an additional 2,300 acres with around 700 head of cattle on other farms in the Southern Highlands. We aim to double our headcount in the Southern Highlands within the next 2-3 years.

Our focus is on improving pasture and soil quality and working with the environment. We want to grow our own feed on farm to carry through winter and produce crops sustainably. We also want to keep cattle off our riparian corridors. But for this to occur, we need to seriously invest in our infrastructure - currently, this would require a lot more physical fencing.

Why We're Interested in Halter

Our large paddocks (e.g., some 100 acres +) require subdivision for efficient grazing. Halter's virtual fencing allows us to create smaller grazing areas without the need for physical fences. Smaller grazing areas equal better soil and pasture quality and better outputs. Traditional fencing would be cost-prohibitive and impractical for our scale. We would be looking at a prohibitive amount to fence our land for our desired grazing system to increase head count along with pasture and soil quality. Physical fences necessitate water infrastructure (troughs, pipelines, etc.), whilst virtual fencing gives us flexibility in water management, as well as efficiencies in cropping when not grazing. Virtual fencing and shifting allow improved shifting habits and the creation of virtual paddock sizes that are optimally tailored to the needs of the farm, and the animals. With higher productivity, I gain the flexibility to consider reducing their reliance on external inputs such as nitrogen and fertilizers. Halter could enable us to manage and optimise cattle movement without compromising on other farm and environmental aspects.

Our farm has many riparian corridors and three rivers/creeks that lead into the Sydney water catchment. While there is no specific regulation preventing cattle from waterways, WaterNSW and Local Land Services encourage responsible management. Last year, state funding supported fencing materials to keep cattle out of watercourses, but even with this funding for materials the cost to erect the fencing was cost prohibitive. We want to naturalise and regenerate these waterways, virtual fencing allows us to do so whilst also having other benefits such as controlled access to waterways during non-grazing periods, seasonal variations in fenced boundaries, and not needing to rebuild physical fences after flooding.

Virtual fencing and cattle shifting promotes better animal welfare by utilising a data-driven approach to grazing management. Stress and lameness can decrease with virtual cattle shifting, whilst overall welfare outcomes are improved through the constant availability of information relating to animal health and location.

Halter aligns with our vision of a 21st-century farm that harmonises with the natural environment. We believe that Halter's technology is the future of livestock management. Halter's virtual fencing system offers a win-win scenario: improved grazing efficiency and animal welfare, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced profitability. I urge the NSW

government to recognize the immense potential of this technology and take steps to legalise its use. Let's embrace innovation and create a more sustainable and productive future for our agricultural sector.

Sincerely,

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