

Growing the Business of Farming



**Geoff Knight, Regional Service Manager, Region 8**

**Questions on Notice**

**Red Tape**

With regard to red tape, there are always complaints from Farmers about the amount of paperwork and time involved in complying with legislation. Two instances I can provide as fact are:

- 1 Recently Laurie Norton from Cooma applied to the Murrumbidge CMA for a grant to provide conservation measures on his farm. He had a PVP done on his property and agreed to offset designated areas as required. However, he did not expect that after a lifetime of managing his family farm, he would be required to complete an 8 day course in Landscape Management before any financial assistance would be provided by the CMA.
- 2 Every farmer complains about having to do a refresher course every five years to maintain their Chemcard accreditation. This involves a two day course off farm and costs them around \$350. Most see this as pedantic because they always go over the same basic information and learn nothing new. For the previous five years they have had to keep records of spray applications, have had to calibrate their spray rigs, have had to file reports to various Government agencies and sometimes employ contractors and put them through an induction program before they are allowed to work on the farm. They have had chemicals stored in adequate facilities, have erected signage to alert visitors about chemicals, have had to transport chemicals in the correct manner and comply with all requirements. They see no reason for having to be trained again in all this.

Legislation is indeed important but in many cases causes undue expense and time. There seems to be an overlap of Government agencies which causes repetition, eg, CMA's, DNR and DPI. They all deal with aspects of Agriculture and administer legislation which is mostly all embracing. Again there is no uniformity between states where farmers trade interstate and transport produce across borders. In conclusion, there is a need to streamline processes for compliance with legislation.

**RTA Issues**

The Grain Harvest Management Scheme is a nightmare for just about every farmer because they are finding it impossible to comply with load limits applied

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by the RTA. They do not have facilities to weigh their loads and a small tolerance limit needs to be available to allow small overloads.

RTA Inspectors are seen as intolerant and revenue raisers. Often Farmers complain about being fined for small discrepancies with loads and again the lack of uniformity between States is making it very difficult and expensive for Farmers. One example I can supply is;

A Grazier from Engonnia north of Bourke purchased a trailer and stock crate over ten years ago and every year it has been inspected, measured and passed for registration by the RTA.

Recently his father was stopped by the RTA Inspectors, the crate was measured and a defect notice was issued because the crate was 28mm too wide. He was told to have the crate adjusted to make it smaller which meant cutting it down the middle, cutting out 28mm and then welding it all back together. The cost of doing this was estimated at \$7000.

A copy of his letter to the RTA is attached for your information.

Another mushroom grower from the Sydney basin has been stopped and a defect notice issued for not having clearance lights on a load of baled hay he was carting. He was not sure how he was to attach clearance lights to such a load.

With permission and a paid fee, these problems can be overcome in certain circumstances if it suits the RTA. This gives credence to the claim of Revenue Raising as a fee seems to overcome minor discrepancies.

It is important that rules and regulations safeguard motorists but there needs to be some "common sense" associated with enforcing such legislation. At the moment this common sense seems to be lacking in favour of raising revenue.

Thank you for your hearing

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Knight', written over a light blue horizontal line.

*Geoff Knight*

**Regional Service Manager - Region 8**

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19 October 2005

Mr T Ryan  
PO Box 334  
Parkes NSW 2870

Dear Mr Ryan,

Re: My conversation with you this morning, 19 October 2005, about my 1994 Dickinson Stock Trailer, registration number N64092.

My trailer was defected on 17 October 2005, at its yearly HVIS inspection in Bourke. The trailer was primarily defected for exceeding 2.5 metres in width. In addition it had two other minor defects. It is a stock module trailer.

The trailer in question is overwidth by 28mm. It has had no modifications and so must have originally been built this way. I am the third owner of this trailer and it has continually been registered since new (1994).

It is a priority to me to have my truck and trailers in very good working condition in all aspects including brakes, lights, running gear and tyres, to cope with the extreme conditions we face in far western NSW.

I believe that the manufacturer, Dickinson Stock Trailers, and the RTA are both responsible for this error. Firstly the trailer was not built to specifications and secondly the RTA passed it to be roadworthy, initially in 1994, and every year subsequently.

With this in mind I am requesting an exemption and clearance of my defect (defect no. 5500 375282). I feel I am not liable for the expense of altering the trailer. I am sure the trailer would never have the same strength again if it was to be cut and re-welded.

I hope you take the time to consider my situation very carefully and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

*H.C. Courts*

Howard Courts