

SHIRE OF NARROGIN
43 FEDERAL STREET, NARROGIN 6312

Inquiries:

30 November, 2009

Mr Alan Sands
Acting Director, Environmental Regulation Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
The Atrium
168 St George's Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Sands,

Licence - Narrogin Beef Producers

The Shire of Narrogin has been advised that Narrogin Beef Producers (NBP) recently ceased operating, resulting in its staff being laid off and a number of unsecured creditors having amounts unpaid. It is understood that the business is unable to get ongoing finance to keep operating and this is primarily due to the uncertainty surrounding any future licence(s) and the conditions that may be imposed. There is very real fear that this business may not survive this current situation and will be lost to our community.

The position that the Shire of Narrogin has taken in the past supports NBP having a licence allowing it to have up to 10,000 head of cattle. Further, it identified the need for NBP to demonstrate an improvement in its control of odour emissions. The Shire considers that NBP can accomplish this at the 10,000 head level. In my opinion the DEC did not have sufficient justification for the forced destocking to 6,000 head.

The current licence is due to expire at the end of March 2010 and the Shire requests that urgent action be taken to commence the process for its renewal. If there is any delay in movement to a new licence it will surely spell the end on NBP. In this regard the Shire would like to offer the following comments:

- The licence must allow for the keeping of up to 10,000 head of cattle;
- The term of the licence needs to give NBP certainly so that it can secure ongoing finance. A one or two year licence will not do this and the period of any new licence should be for at least five years. This will give potential financiers confidence that the business has a legal right to operate under current legislation;
- During the term of the licence no action is taken to enforce a reduction in cattle numbers and that any non-compliance of the licence conditions be dealt with through a negotiated outcome or enforcement of the approved Waste Management Plan;

- The process of odour assessment be managed using scientific means and local monitoring, and where complaints are received they are confirmed as valid only when verified;
- The capacity of the current effluent pond and catchment drains be accepted. Any requirement for NBP to enlarge them will be considered if it is demonstrated that the infrastructure cannot meet the current demand.

The Shire of Narrogin urges the Department to act as quickly as possible on this matter and engage immediately with NBP. Any delay will surely see the demise of this business which will be a tremendous loss to our community.

If you require any assistance from the Shire of Narrogin in this process, I would be very pleased to offer whatever help is needed.

Yours faithfully,



Richard Chadwick
Shire President

cc: *Wayne Elliott, DEC Regional Manager Wheatbelt*
Hon Wilson Tuckey MP, Federal Member for O'Connor
Hon Terry Redman MLA, Minister for Agriculture
Hon Terry Waldron MLA, Member for Wagin
Hon Jim Chown MLC, Member for the Agricultural Region