

Rural Resources founder Brigid Price explains “drought is like a cancer”



Queensland grazier and agriculture advocate Brigid Price has shared her insight into the drought currently affecting much of eastern Australia, noting for the farmers experiencing it, the repercussions are like cancer.

“This current drought is the worst in living memory for many farmers,” Ms Price noted.

“Like cancer it does not discriminate and as it gets drier, it continues to spread and become more severe.

“Drought doesn’t just impact the person battling the illness. Rural communities are suffering along with their farmers.”

As the founder of online agricultural community Rural Resources Online and a recognised female agriculture leader, Ms Price said many may not appreciate the stress farmers were under or the measures they had taken to mitigate the risk.

“All farmers understand that droughts are part of life in Australia, and most do plan for them. Strategies are put in place. Stock numbers get reduced, grain and silage is grown in good years and stored for times of drought.

“But on the east coast farmers are facing their worst drought in 50 years, and quite simply these stockpiled supplies along with savings and credit are now running out.

“The problem is, for all the planning, farmers don’t know when it will rain.”

Ms Price noted that meant farmers were now feeling it from all sides. They were attempting to secure the future by maintaining livestock and replanting crops, with no assuredty of what would happen next.

“After several seasons of failed crops, debt levels get scary. The gamble of course is that one good season can turn things around. For many over recent years that gamble has not paid off and they are devastated.

“The heartbreak for those who breed livestock is the thought of losing decades of genetics that have been carefully selected for their traits. So, understandably they try to hang on.

“Australia exports much of what it produces, this means people will not starve. But like the small towns that are impacted at some point the economy will feel the impact.

“And lives will continue to be lost because individual farmers and their families are hurting.

“The stories that would really shock Australia are not being heard. That is because drought for many people is a very personal thing. For some people this has been going on for a very long time.

“Like cancer, they live in hope the battle and heartache will have a happy ending, but the reality for some is they simply don’t know.”

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Brigid Price is a Queensland grazier and the founder of Rural Resources Online. Earlier this year she was recognised as an “outstanding” female agriculture leader of the future, with the National Farmers Federation (NFF) announcing she is one of just eight female agriculture leaders selected to be part of the Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program.

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