

THE HIDDEN COST OF COAL SEAM GAS TO FARMING



Coal seam gas versus farming might seem a clear-cut, two-sided affair, but as primary producer and Rural Resources Online founder Brigid Price explains, it's anything but.

Far beyond the legislation and the fight over rights and entitlements, farmers are feeling effects that impact every element of their rural way of life. Brigid's organic beef business and others in her wider rural community of Injune in Queensland have just completed their latest round of coal seam gas negotiations.

Standing in a green paddock with a backdrop of snuffling horses and quietly grazing cattle, Brigid says it's the hidden impacts that many fail to consider.

"The sound you can hear is the sound of our home," Brigid explains, gesturing to near-silent green pastures and distant hills.

But what of the impact of hundreds of contractors traversing that landscape whenever they require?

Brigid notes in the relevant coal seam gas legislation that spans reams of paper only a page is dedicated to the implications for primary producers in a section entitled the Five Heads of Compensation.

"These are the five areas under legislation that we as landholders are actually entitled to in terms of compensation for impact.

"What's really hard to explain is when this is your home, you're used to seeing pretty much no-one except us, how do you account for the effect of hundreds of contractors coming and going?"

"There could be gates being left open, possible bio-security issues. How do you make sure cattle don't get into areas where they just can't be because of coal seam gas activity?"

"There's the checking, the maintenance, the loss of control, making sure people are adhering to speed limits, and then there's the dust and dirt involved with the roads.

"When you drive on unsealed roads the dust spreads and it affects the grass. When there's dust on the grass, quite simply the cattle don't want to eat it.

"All of these are impacts that we have to be aware of, but it's really hard to articulate and the time involved with checking all of this is what's really not considered in the actual cost to our business by third parties.

"For anyone thinking there's money involved and we are paid compensation, yes there is an income component but what needs to be understood is the actual cost to our business of coal seam gas mining is significant on both a personal and business level. Legally we have to negotiate so it is something we try to manage as best we can."

To learn more about Coal Seam Gas at ruralresources.com.au, or for the full video with Brigid Price see [Facebook @ruralresources](https://www.facebook.com/ruralresources)
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About Brigid Price and Rural Resources Online – Brigid Price is an organic beef producer near Injune in Queensland.

She is also the founder of Rural Resources Online – a seminal website for the rural sector that draws together tools, wisdom and stories for Australia's vast community of primary producers.

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