



Department of
**Primary Industries and
Regional Development**

ATTACHMENT 3

Your reference: DA – Proposed
Animal Establishment, Meckering
Our reference: LUP 1879
Enquiries: Grant Stainer

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Date: 18 June 2024

Dear Mr Hobley,

Request for comment – Development Application – Proposed Animal Establishment (Alpacas) – Lot 205 (No.4079) Goomalling-Meckering Road, Meckering

Thank you for inviting the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to comment on the above proposal.

DPIRD objects to the proposal as the proposed stocking rate exceeds the maximum sustainable stocking rate for the property. DPIRD offers the following comments.

Livestock stocking rates are standardised using Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSE), where a 50 kg wether is the accepted standard. In the context of rural small holdings, stocking rates refer to the numbers of livestock that can be consistently kept on an area of pasture all year round with minor additional feed and without causing environmental degradation such as wind or water erosion, tree decline, or increasing nutrients in waterways or groundwater.¹

An alpaca is 0.8 DSE. Therefore, 15 alpacas are **12 DSE**.

The mapped soil landscape unit for the property is the Greenhills York subsystem (256GhYO). This unit has a [land capability assessment grazing code of B1](#), which can sustain 6 DSE/ha.

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Only areas of open pasture can be counted when assessing the area available for livestock. Areas covered by infrastructure (eg: houses, sheds, tracks, roads, debris etc) and native vegetation cannot be included in the available area. Bare areas of ground are by default zero DSE/ha and cannot be stocked or included in the calculation of available area. Livestock also need to be excluded from waterlogged areas.

The proposed grazing area is approximately 0.91 ha.

0.91 ha multiplied by 6 DSE/ha equals **5.49 DSE**.

This calculation uses the *Stocking Rate Guidelines for Rural Small Holdings*, which are designed for use in higher rainfall (>600mm areas). As Meckering has a lower rainfall than that of the Stocking Rate Guidelines, the maximum sustainable stocking rate will be less than the rate calculated here.

As the proposed stocking rate of 12 DSE exceeds the maximum sustainable stocking rate of 5.49 DSE for the property, the proposal cannot be supported.

Other matters of consideration

There must be a minimum of 50% groundcover maintained evenly across the property at all times of the year to prevent land degradation through soil erosion, with a target of 70% groundcover.

Any clearing requires a relevant permit from DWER. Native vegetation must be fenced off to protect the vegetation from the livestock. DPIRD does not support clearing of native vegetation on small rural holdings.

Western Australia has a mandatory livestock ownership, identification, and movement system, known as the [National Livestock Identification Scheme \(NLIS\)](#). This requires owners of animals, including alpacas, to register even if these animals are kept as pets. DPIRD's Brands Office then allocates a property identification code (PIC) to owners, to indicate who owns the animals and where they are kept. This is important for managing any outbreaks of emergency animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease. It is acknowledged that the applicants already have a PIC.

For more information, please contact Grant Stainer on 90813 113 or grantley.stainer@dpird.wa.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Tim Overheu

**Acting Director, Agriculture Resource Management Assessment
Sustainability and Biosecurity**

¹ Van Gool D, Angell K, and Stephens L, 2000, *Stocking rate guidelines for rural small holdings: Swan Coastal Plain and Darling Scarp, Western Australia*, Agriculture Western Australia, Miscellaneous Publication 02/2000