



New prices for macadamia nuts have fallen after historic highs.

## Nut drop in line with the currency

RECORD high prices paid for macadamia nuts that launched an enormous increase in plantings in recent years have tumbled 15 per cent to levels not seen since 2014 as the world's largest processor Marquis has announced a nominal price of \$5.10 per kilogram at 10pc moisture content.

This year's offer is a full dollar below what the company paid last harvest and mostly reflects a rising Australian dollar. Covid-19 has also had an impact, said Marquis CEO Larry McHugh, noting nuts lost market share when cafes and restaurants closed down.

In response the company, a merger between Alstonville based MPC and their South African equivalent, has negotiated deals with major supermarkets to include packets of pieces in their cooking aisles.

"At \$5.10 the price still allows industry expansion and for farmers to make a reasonable profit," said Mr McHugh. "This was the price a few years ago and at the time growers were saying they were pleased."

— JAMIE BROWN



Terry and Brett Tibbett of Dalmorton stumbled across cattle that had been retrieved from the Guy Fawkes National Park. Photos: Lucy Kinbacher

# 'Lost' cattle sent to sale

BY LUCY KINBACHER

LANDHOLDERS surrounding the Guy Fawkes National Park in the state's north were left "disgusted" after stumbling across a multi-agency muster where cattle displaced from bushfires were sold without warning.

A combination of bushfires, floods and lost fences in the last 18 months meant a large number of displaced livestock were able to wander anywhere from Jackadgery to Ebor and access neighbouring Crown land parcels.

Dalmorton beef producers Brett and Terry Tibbett, who had just battled the worst drought in living memory, estimate they had 100 cattle die in bushfires. But they believed they still had a substantial mob unaccounted for and made a written attempt in June to access the closed park and locate their

stock. Those requests were unanswered and it was only by chance the father and son drove past a muster in progress.

That operation involved NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Police Rural Crime Prevention Team, Local Land Services and the RSPCA in December.

A total of 47 head were mustered with 17 sold prior to the day the Tibbetts chanced upon the operation, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service confirmed.

The Tibbetts were able to identify and recover 10 of their cattle including eight with an ear mark and two cleanskin calves. But they say if it weren't for the encounter their recovered stock could have been sold and they have questioned if the unidentified cattle may have been theirs too.

"There was no meetings

called, no phone calls, no letters to say we have got a cattle issue how are we going to deal with it?" Brett said.

"We just got on with our jobs and try and put our heads down and get on with recovery and maintain our business."

A NSW NPWS spokesperson said another 20 head were returned to their owner while 17 unmarked cattle, the majority full mouthed, were sold. The Tibbetts said a Rural Crime Prevention officer at the scene told them everything from "calves right through" had sold the week prior.

"NSW Police Rural Crime Prevention Team determined ownership of the cattle," a NPWS spokesperson told *The Land*.

"In instances where no owner could be identified, NPWS sold these unmarked cattle to recoup some of the

costs of the operation."

A Rural Crime Prevention Team spokesperson confirmed they attended the operation last year to assist; however they declined to comment.

NPWS was unable to clarify with *The Land* if an animal without a brand, ear mark or NLIS tag automatically became the property of national parks. Under the *Rural Lands Protection Act*, stock is considered to be 'abandoned' if they are left unattended on a public road or public land and subsequently may be impounded.

Mr Tibbett and others in the district were prepared to pay the cost of DNA testing on any unmarked cattle knowing that a number of their calves were too young to move or mark before the drought, fire and floods. But the cattle had been sold before they were made aware.

"At the time of year that it was, any cows that did have a calf on them, they weren't in a moveable state and you just had to feed them and try and maintain them," Mr Tibbett said.

"We have been requesting from [national] parks to come to the party and muster them up and get them together before and their idea was just to sell them for profit.

"We had zero contact from parks prior to this and we wouldn't have known anything about the muster, it was only the fact we were driving up and saw them in the yards."

NPWS said they had worked with neighbours on cattle incursion issues and five consents had been issued in the past three weeks for people to go into parks in the Northern Tablelands with horses and dogs to remove their own cattle.

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