

SE News
HD **FIVE years ago, Kane Booth had a plan to add value**
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FIVE years ago, Kane Booth had a plan to add value to the 1700 calves born each year on his family's Charleville **property**, Spring Creek Station, and its 500-breeder block at Mitchell, Arlington.

It involved taking them to Brentleigh, a 445-hectare block he had recently **purchased** at **Chinchilla** and putting them through a 499-head feedlot he had approval to build on.

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But as part of QGC's Kenya-Gladstone pipeline route, Brentleigh ended up instead with a trench 3km long, and deep and wide enough to "lose a D9 down" as its main feature.

Mr Booth said the pipeline easement rendered the **property** unsuitable for use as a feedlot development **site** and a place for young cattle in the months that the pipeline was being laid, and during rectification works which finished this month.

"I walked on that fill over the pipeline after it rained and found myself up to my belly in slop," he said.

Despite Mr Booth's repeated suggestions, QGC did not fence off their easement, which runs along the **property's** longest boundary.

Mr Booth said there was "no way" he could put young cattle, which are known for hunting fences, in his pipeline-affected country.

That country was to be used to introduce young cattle to supplementary feed, and for holding stock.

"Running a feedlot isn't just about shoving as much feed into them in a pen from the word go.

"The plans we had for our cattle operation have stopped because of this."

Mr Booth believes income from his calves born in recent years and **sold** as young stores instead of grain-finished cattle direct to works has cost in the millions in lost earnings.

"And that's just the start of it," he said.

QGC said it was compensating Mr Booth for loss of use of the easement during construction, and for up to a further two years during rehabilitation.

But Mr Booth said he had found no comfort, either through financial compensation or management arrangements, in the two agreements he signed with QGC over operations on Brentleigh, one for three non-productive wells and another for the pipeline.

Mr Booth said he believed QGC has fallen well short of its obligations to reinstate land disturbed by the building of the pipeline.

"Their words are 'back to how it was or better'. It's been nothing like that."

A spokesperson for QGC said, apart from some short sections which were kept open until May 2013 for testing, the trench was backfilled directly after the pipeline was laid in late 2012 and early 2013.

"Rehabilitation of the pipeline easement on Mr Booth's **property** began in September 2013 and is being done in line with our environmental authority," the spokesperson said.

"The trench was filled in line with the environmental authority, and the agreement signed by QGC and Mr Booth."

Mr Booth believes animal welfare, biosecurity and other issues that are important to cattle producers have been hopelessly compromised by QGC's presence on Brentleigh, and he has all but abandoned the idea of establishing the feedlot.

It is an issue he has engaged legal **firm** Creevey Russell Lawyers to take up on his behalf in court.

Creevey Russell Lawyers partner Dan Creevey said the Booth case rests on whether or not a court believed a feedlot and the pipeline could co-exist on Brentleigh.

"Kane is just trying to get his rightful return under the Queensland Petroleum and Gas Act," Mr Creevey said.

When the Booths bought Brentleigh, they expected to live there.

Mr Booth and his wife and two children have found themselves instead producing chickens on an established broiler farm at Mareeba. They **purchased** it three years ago in order to get the kind of cash flow they had hoped to obtain from the feedlot, the licence for which expires in August.

"We've had to turn our life around because of QGC," Mr Booth said.

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