

TRIBESMEN PLAN TO 'RUN THE GAUNTLET'

Goat trek faces disaster

DARWIN. At the weekend the Gurindji tribe will "run the gauntlet" with 700 goats along the Murrnaji stockroute in the Northern Territory outback.

The militant tribe claiming land rights and the territory's now-famous overland goat drover Mr Kelvin Gardner, 41, plan to begin a 230 mile journey fraught with trouble.

Not the least is that Federal Government agents will try to stop the goats now grazing at Elliott, 480 miles south of Darwin, from being droved to Wattle Creek, the controversial stay-put camp of the Gurindjis on land controlled by the giant Vestey meat empire of Britain.

INFESTED

"The goats will be running a poisonous gauntlet all along the Murrnaji trail," said Mr Godfrey Letts, one of the Territory's most knowledgeable agricultural men.

Mr Letts, former director of N.T. primary industry and now an agricultural consult-

ant in Darwin, yesterday telegraphed the student Abschol group in Melbourne supporting the Gurindji campaign, to tell them the Elliott-Wattie Creek goat movement was facing disaster.

"Although there is no poisonous iron wood tree growth at Wattle Creek the Murrnaji trail leading to it is infested," Mr Letts said.

"These are Queensland goats brought by Mr Gardner about 1600 miles overland. They don't have the instincts of territory goats as Mr Gardner found out to his despair.

"If they see green leaves they'll eat them."

The very thing which prevented Mr Gardner from using his Berry Springs farm on the outskirts of Darwin as a new home for his 1000 Queensland goats from near

Longreach, WA, was that like most areas of the far north it was inundated with ironwood trees which have leaves poisonous to stock.

But Mr Gardner and the Gurindji leaders know about the ironwood hazard on the Murrnaji trail.

They believe they have the ability to "run the poison gauntlet" without losing many of the herd.

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