

FarmDay in the Ruapehu

The very much publicised Federated Farms Farm Day 2009 has now been put in the history books.

What a huge undertaking this was to have 27 farms from 24 Federated Farmers provinces throughout New Zealand open their farms to the public, all on the same day.

Here in the Ruapehu, we were very fortunate to have Brian and Sharon Sherson's renowned Shian Stud as our host farm. Their 598ha property is located a few kilometres from Manunui. Being an Angus, South Suffolk and Romney stud and with the enthusiasm from the Sherson family as hosts, this was the perfect farm.

Visitors from the age of a few weeks to 92 years old, from Wellington to Auckland, arrived and were greeted by some of the 20 odd Federated Farmers members who volunteered their time and expertise. After Kerry Blackburn, from Farm Safe, explained the hazards and dangers, they were then taken on a guided tour by Federated Farmers escorts to see the very well bred Angus cattle being feed haylage and the machinery required for the task.

Then onto a farm walk, passing the original yards and woolshed, plus early machinery. Into a paddock of 380 odd sheep, where Paul Byrant and his team of dogs showed folks how vital dogs are to the farming sector.

The tour continued to the cattle rostrum where Brian had one of his very quite stud sires. Here Cherie Richards explained the techniques of AI and showed some of the equipment used for the process. As Shian is also a Romney and South Suffolk stud, there was an excellent example of prime lambs and sheep in the yards for people to draft. Brian, Rob and Dean explained the drafting, drenching and flystrike prevention.

Here the visitors could also handle the sheep; especially the rather large pets John Beck had brought along as well. The tour continued up to the woolshed where we were privileged to have Vaughan Rodgers demonstrating the skill and art of sheep shearing. Vaughan, a very well respected farmer, shearer and ex-shearing instructor, showed his beautiful shearing style and he had visitors queuing up to try their hand. These visitors very quickly realised Vaughan

made it look as easy as combing ones hair.

Also, in the shed, we had Ann Niven with a display of wools from different breeds of sheep and a spinning demonstration. This was very well received by everyone, even us farmers, especially the beautiful hand-spun wool garments, which seem to have all but disappeared and been replaced with plastic clothing.

The ladies from the pre-school had the smell of the sausage sizzle going all day, which was also very much appreciated.

This was not only an excellent day to bring together town and country, but for Federated Farmers members to have a social day together in our own environment. Judging from all the positive feed back, it appears to have been an extremely successful day nation-wide. This event will now to be run annually.

**Annie Carmichael - Ruapehu
Meat & Fibre Vice Chair**

LOCAL VOICE

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

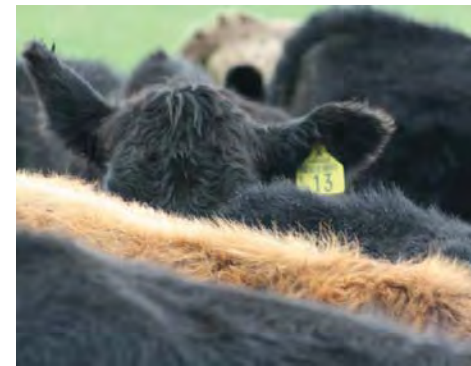


APRIL 2009

RUAPEHU

The difference 12 months make

The hills are green again, the stock are fat (and worth a reasonable amount of money) and we can catch up on some of the maintenance tasks while the weather is kind before winter. Farming has been shielded from the current global economic turmoil; or perhaps we just had our global economic turmoil a year earlier and the rest of the country is now catching up.



I am proud to represent Ruapehu Federated Farmers at a national level. We garner great respect in the echelons of farming politics for our solid farming practices, our hard country and our frank and honest opinions. We have had our fair share of farming leaders; currently Ian Corney is Chair of NAIT (National Animal Identification and Tracing). I try and live up to the expected high standards and, while it is sometimes difficult to juggle varying farmer opinions, I try and represent the majority fairly.

I would actually prefer to push a mob of stubborn cows and calves off a windy ridge and into the yards for weaning, than try and change the attitudes of some of our 'well meaning' bureaucrats in their air conditioned offices. At our last AGM, Greg Carlyon, Horizons District Council group manager for Regional Planning and Regulatory, was welcomed to describe any benefits the One Plan may have on our farming practices. After a year of butting heads with Horizons staff, I am pleased to report that there won't be any at this year's AGM. Our patience for their interferences in everyday farming activity is wearing thin, and I believe that there has been a cataclysmic shift in the way ratepayers are prepared to let their hard earned money be spent on ethereal concepts. While we have managed to stall the push from Horizons, I am hoping that

they will run out of the financial, emotional and political support that has allowed them to get this far. I am now convinced they are thinking twice about interfering in our neck of the woods due to the vocal and well conceived opinions of many of our local farmers when push came to shove. I offer a sincere vote of thanks to Taumarunui Farmers Group and all the farmers that spoke and/or travelled to the One Plan Hearings to date. 'Ohakune' will go down in history as a ground breaking statement from affected farmers aimed at ridiculous council impositions.

Unfortunately, Taupo farmers were not so lucky with their timing and Environment Waikato has forced them to accept that farming is now a consented activity in the Lake Taupo Catchment. This will cause a huge headache for farmers who opt to stay and farm under the restrictions and also for Environment Waikato which needs to try and fund the ongoing support they have now committed to. I am not relying on luck and timing however, and I vow to continue to push back at unreasonable council imposed restrictions.

Horizons Regional Council have indicated it will reduce its annual contribution for vector control (called regional share) in the 2009/2010 financial year and will provide no further funding in the future. This will impact directly on vector control spend by the Animal Health Board (AHB) in the Ruapehu region, particularly in the Hauhungaroa's.

Farmers should be seriously concerned about this, because it seems to me, that this vector funding is one of the only real benefits farmers get from their rates. Traditionally, regional councils fund 10 percent of the spend in a district out of the regional rates. The Government funds 50 percent and farmer levies fund the rest. The Government contribution is directly linked to the overall spend, so a 10 percent reduction by council will have a serious flow on effect. Please phone Roger Beck on 894 5184 for more information.

Submissions close on 8 May. Don't forget to have your say

**Lyn Neeson -
Ruapehu President**



One Plan hearing dates

Hearings for the controversial 'One Plan' will begin in June this year. A hearing is an opportunity to present a case face to face with those who will ultimately make the final decisions on the content of 'One Plan'. Topics to be heard at the June hearing are: administration and finance, air, natural hazards, infrastructure energy and waste (including management of production soils) as well as landscapes and natural character.

Council officers will meet during the first half of June and as of Monday, 29 June, submitters will get their chance to speak.

The hearings for the above topics will run through until mid August.

Dates reserved for submitters:

June:
Monday 29th

July:
Wednesday 1st
Thursday 2nd
Wednesday 8th
Thursday 9th
Friday 10th
Monday 13th
Thursday 16th
Friday 17th
Monday 20th
Monday 27th
Tuesday 28th
Wednesday 29th

August:
Monday 3rd
Tuesday 4th
Wednesday 5th
Monday 10th
Thursday 13th



Wool industry confusion

Wool - is anyone else out there confounded and confused?

Every farming paper I pick up is filled with commentary about the state of the wool industry.

In every article I read, there are companies all involved in our wool industry with names such as WEL, Disco, WIN, WAG, WRONZ, WSI, WGH, Tectra and Canesis - just to name a few! Who can blame me for being a bit confused?

What's worse - some, if not all (who can tell?), have been formed (or failed), with our money!



Who owns what, who does what and what return we get for our money is totally unfathomable to me.

However, this is what we all know.

Wool is a fantastic product. It's clean and green, natural, safe, sustainable, fire

retardant, warm, stain resistant and able to be blended with other fibres and manufactured to make awesome products.

The fact that we all know how good wool is as a product adds to the intense frustration we feel at our ever-worsening returns.

This time last year, we were all confounded with the woes of the sheep-meat industry. The answer to our sheep meat problems, we were told, was entering sound relationships with our meat companies to give them security of product so they could build sound relationships with the end user. They could then market and carry out promotion with confidence and pass the financial benefits onto the supplier.

If this model is the answer for meat then why should wool be any different?

The obvious big difference is, while the world wants our meat, it doesn't seem to want our wool (or doesn't know it wants our wool).

So what are the solutions?

We can stay with the current model and if you are a Dorper breeder, get ready for the surge in demand for your rams!

We can go back to the wool board model with farmers paying for promotion and marketing of wool.

We can look to the companies who are dealing with the end user in the marketplace. These companies will have secure contracts with their suppliers and buyers, will carry out marketing and promotion and all will be rewarded.



The wool industry debate is heating up and over the next few weeks/months we are going to be bombarded with information about how our money should/could/will be spent on wool promotion (or not), new companies, new initiatives and solutions to our woes.

The first of these meetings will take place in Taumarunui on 3 April as part of the Wool Partners International road show.

I strongly encourage our Ruapehu Meat & Fibre members to attend these upcoming road shows and consultation meetings.

This year, with the Commodity Levies Referendum, we have the ability to shape the wool industry going forward.

Let's ask the hard questions so we can move on.

Kirsten Bryant - Ruapehu Meat & Fibre Chair



Meat & Wool New Zealand show value for money

"Meat & Wool New Zealand (MWNZ) needs to convince farmers that increasing its levy is both justified and warranted," says Bruce Wills, Federated Farmers meat and fibre spokesperson.

"The consultation document released by MWNZ on proposed levy increases represents the first phase of a detailed consultation process with farmers. Federated Farmers believes the most important issue to address during this process is the quality of the spend, rather than the quantity.

"Although the scale of these levy increases may have surprised some, it cannot be denied that farmers and the meat and wool industry are in desperate need of investment beyond the farm gate. It is here that we have the most potential to improve meat and fibre returns.

"Federated Farmers is mindful of MWNZ's large expenditure on market development. This is an area where we believe meat processing companies are ultimately best placed to invest.

As exporters deal directly with customers on a daily basis, it is these organisations that should be undertaking market development work. Not the levy funded organisation as it has difficulty assessing the value of its investment.



"Innovation and uptake is another large spend for MWNZ. Money spent on science and innovation is vitally important for the future of meat and wool farmers. But here, MWNZ has a real challenge to ensure that new science is readily and easily available to levy payers.

"Too many farmers are telling me they are unaware of what MWNZ does in this area. As a result, they do not believe they are benefiting from their levy spend. I look forward to these concerns being answered during levy consultations.

"Meanwhile, we strongly encourage all farmers to participate in the upcoming consultation process to make sure MWNZ industry investment meets farmers' needs," concluded Mr Wills.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Federated Farmers Meat & Fibre spokesperson, Bruce Wills,
06 834 9704 or 027 234 1516

Know your rights when it comes to water use

Horizons Regional Council has been asking holders of Discharge Consents to apply for resource consents for water use, we believe are permitted under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The following is a brief summary and our interpretation of your rights under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) in relation to water use on farm:



RESTRICTIONS RELATING TO WATER USE

Restrictions relating to water are set out in Section 14 of the Act. Section 14(3) allows people to take, use, dam or divert water for an individual's reasonable domestic needs, and the reasonable needs of an individual's animals for drinking water, or for fire fighting purposes without the need to obtain a resource consent, as long as the taking or use does not, or is not likely to, have an adverse effect on the environment.

TYPES OF RESOURCE CONSENTS

Section 87 of the Act refers to the types of resource consents allowed. Section 87(d) states, in relation to water use, that, "the term resource consent means, a consent to do with something that would otherwise contravene Section 14.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Council cannot force people to obtain a resource consent for water takes for stock drinking water, unless they can prove there is an adverse environmental effect.

WATER FOR SHED WASH-DOWN

Water takes for shed wash-down is another matter. It is not covered explicitly by Section 14 the Act. So we must refer to the rules of the operative regional plan. The operative regional plan permits surface water takes provided there is not more than one abstraction point per certificate of title and the abstraction and use is not more than 15 cubic metres for surface water, and not more than 50 cubic metres for ground water per day.

The presumption is that if you have resource consent to discharge then you should be able to take water for the purpose of that discharge (such as shed wash-down). However, as far as the law is concerned, consents to take and consents to discharge are two separate things.

Fonterra considers dairy shed wash-down as an "essential take" - it is impossible to operate a dairy shed without water. It would be inappropriate to have a policy that would require milk to be wasted and hygiene compromised.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Council cannot force people to obtain a resource consent for a water take or use, unless that water take or use is restricted based on Section 14, or the volume of water taken or used is greater than the volume allowed in the operative plan, the Land and Water Regional Plan. That is, more than 15 cubic metres of surface water or 50 cubic metres of groundwater.

Your rights - the transition from the Operative Regional Plan to the Proposed Regional Plan (the One Plan)



CERTAIN EXISTING LAWFUL ACTIVITIES ALLOWED

As you may be aware, in the Manawatu-Wanganui region the operative regional plans are being reviewed and combined into one plan. That is, the proposed One Plan notified in May 2007. A number of rules in the proposed plan have been appealed during the submission process, which makes their future uncertain. Of concern to Federated Farmers is the fact that, in some cases, Council has asked people to seek resource consents for stock drinking water and shed wash-down based on the proposed One Plan. However, the law is such that once the plan has been notified, people MAY apply for and obtain a resource consent for an existing permitted use if they want to, but Council can't force you to until the plan becomes operative.

Section 20A Certain Existing Lawful Activities Allowed states, if a proposed plan being notified (such as the Proposed One Plan) requires a resource consent for an activity that was previously permitted without a resource consent, then that activity may continue until the rule becomes operative (the One Plan process has been exhausted). In summary, if that activity:

- was allowed without resource consent previously
- was lawfully established
- effects are the same or similar in character, intensity and scale to the effects that existed before the rule was notified, and has not been discontinued for a continuous period of more than six months then, it may continue until the proposed plan becomes operative.

NOTE The proposed One Plan is not operative and is not expected to be until 2010.



RECOMMENDATION

Federated Farmers offers its members 15 minutes of free legal advice. If you are uncertain whether you need a resource consent please don't hesitate to contact Federated Farmers of New Zealand on 0800 327 646.

Julie Ireland - Federated Farmers of NZ Policy Advisor



Ruapehu Federated Farmers publishes regular newsletters to keep our members informed.

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For comments on this newsletter or if you wish to join Federated Farmers phone 0800 327 646.