

Federated Farmer's 'One Event'

National Conference (One Event) was held in Auckland from 30 June to 2 July. The Meat & Fibre and Dairy industry group meetings were held the first day and on the second day, industry group chairs and provincial presidents came together to hear some very interesting speakers:

Minister of Agriculture, the Hon David Carter covered the usual ground on the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). He felt the big issues were the start date for grandfathering and how fast the grandfathering was rolled back. There will also be a broadband announcement in two months.

The Hon Rodney Hide's big issues centre on local government and its transparency, accountability and financial management. Reporting should be in an understandable and comparable format. When questioned he said, "if you want to start a revolution let me know and I will show up".

Jacqueline Rowarth, of Massey University, spoke about New Zealand markets.

Doug Steel, of Westpac, spoke about the poor state of the economy.

The Hon Jim Anderton suggested that up to \$12 billion has been sent out of the country by overseas owned New Zealand banks since 2000. A 1 percent drop in interest rates would take \$450 million off the average debt, which equates to the value of the wool clip.

Jamie Fitzgerald spoke about his trans-Atlantic row and being the first Kiwi to walk to the South Pole.

Paul Reynolds, of Telecom, says they are looking for partnerships in building infrastructure.



John Key addresses the 'One Event'.

Beverly Forrester, of Black Hills, North Canterbury, exports coloured wool to the UK and has Black Hills shops in Christchurch and overseas.

Accountant Pita Alexander gave his usual excellent series of short lessons learned.

Federated Farmers chief executive Conor English put forward the idea that Federated Farmers "manage your off-farm risk".

That night there was an awards dinner where a number of people who had achieved during the year were recognised. The Elworthys Tora Walk was one. Two new Federation awards were given out, with the Agribusiness Person of the Year going to John Penno, of Synlait and the Agricultural Personality of the Year going to Jacqueline Rowarth, of Massey University. The awards dinner went very well and was a good feature.

On the final day Prime Minister John Key addressed everyone after breakfast. Don Nicolson also put forward the concept that "farmers are being treated as publicly controlled utilities", which had come from the US.

Anders Crofoot - Wairarapa President

Permit scheme will improve productivity

The Land Transport rule (Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Amendment), which is currently out for consultation, proposes increasing the current maximum weight limit of 44 tonne to allow vehicles of up to 50 tonne (or 53 in some cases) on approved permits.



Permitting heavier vehicles will boost productivity in agriculture and the rest of the economy. The Road Transport Forum is predicting that freight rates, as a result, may drop by up to 12 percent.

The beauty of this proposal is that with

fewer truck trips needed to transport the same amount, fewer trucks will be on road, which will improve road safety and reduce fuel use and emissions.

In addition, as part of the rule change, Federated Farmers would like agricultural vehicles (such as tractors and combine harvesters) to be exempt from rules that restrict them from travelling on the roads during weekends and public holidays.

At the moment, tractors and other pieces of agricultural machinery have to obtain a permit to operate on-road during the Christmas/New Year period, which sits right in the middle of harvest - one of the busiest times of the year for farmers.

Pretty much every agricultural vehicle that applies for a permit can get one - rendering the permit system a complete waste of time. A blanket exemption for agricultural vehicles would achieve the same result, but without the hassle and compliance costs.

William McGimpsey - Federated Farmers of NZ Policy Advisor

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Federated Farmers FARMDAY 2010

is set down for
SUNDAY, 28 MARCH

Please mark this date in your diaries as we would appreciate members support.

LOCAL VOICE

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER



JULY/AUGUST 2009

WAIRARAPA

President's round-up

Combined District Plan – field visit gets us some significant gains.

On 22 June there was a site visit to Castlepoint Station concerning the earthworks rule, with interested parties including Gisborne Wairoa Regional Council (GWRC), Manawatu District Council (MDC), South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) and the Department of Conservation (DoC) all in attendance. Hilary Walker, Brigid Buckley, Mike Butterick and Dan Riddiford represented the Federation.

A discussion was held concerning the issues, followed by a tour around the station looking at the sorts of things that would need a consent, on almost a daily basis, if the draft rule went ahead. By the end of the day there was general agreement that the sorts of things that are done in the normal course of farming were not intended to be captured by the rule.

On 23 June we had mediation on the rule. We are still waiting for the final wording on a revised rule, but everyone has agreed on the principles, which I circulated to the membership for comment. So, as it stands, the rule will have been changed from:

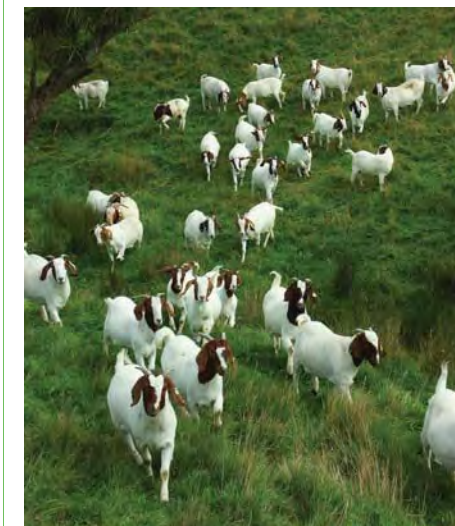
- Requiring a consent for moving more than 50 cubic metres per title, per year in any of the following four areas: the Foreshore Protection Area, the Coastal Environment Management Area (CEMA), within 25 metres of a Significant Waterbody and within five metres of any Waterbody. To:
- Requiring a consent for earthworks in three areas: the Foreshore Protection Area, with trigger of over a half metre cut/fill, the Coastal Environment Management Area, with trigger of over a three metre cut for a distance of 200 metres on properties of 20ha or more and 1.5x100 for properties under 20ha and within 25 metres of a Significant Waterbody. The maintenance of drains, fences, dams, tracks and approaches to culverts will be permitted.

In the CEMA, one will trigger the GWRC Soil Plan limits of a 1.5 metre cut before the WCDP, so in practical terms the rule is not an issue.

Information about Significant Waterbodies has now been formally presented, as it had not been earlier. We will not be challenging

those, as the main reason we objected was to make sure there was some sort of formal process, which there now is.

An agreement on goats appears to have been reached. It is closer to DoC's view than we originally suggested, but Ian Pirani (who is the expert) is satisfied, so we won't be pursuing it further.



There is still some work being done on the definition of intensive farming, but that seems to be coming to a satisfactory outcome.

Discussion is ongoing over the house ration rule (one dwelling per title on the coast), but we aren't likely to pursue that through the Environment Court.

The Wairarapa Land Protection Forum met on 19 June. Brigid Buckley, our new policy advisor, came up for the meeting to start introducing herself to people. The Streams Alive program, run by GWRC (information on website), pays for plants and two years of weed control so might be of interest to people.

I had an agenda item added to discuss how biodiversity "losses" are expressed in the Wairarapa by GWRC and others. The issue in my mind is that much of the area where we have lost the native cover is the productive land, which we now make our living from. It is not realistic to beat people over the head for making a living.

I suggested that if one starts with the statement that over 90 percent of indigenous vegetation is gone when referring to

productive farmland, the landowners will turn off immediately. There was some discussion that often the information circulated was intended for district councils, not the general public. I pointed out that district councils are not experts and tend just to repeat what they have been told. There was general agreement that the issue could be handled better in the future and there should be ways to get the importance across without being overly dramatic.

Drought Committee – there is a drought recovery workshop to be held in late August. Closer to the time we will circulate dates.

Anders Crofoot - Wairarapa President



Calving trouble

A very wet and cold June has created a grim start to calving for many, with low covers and sodden ground.



The Wairarapa Sharemilkers' day went well. Around 10 attended, but a few didn't show due to the fine weather on the day providing a good opportunity for outdoor work. There were excellent presentations from Nicky Allomes, David Sinton, Peter Hammond, Lawrence Field, Leo Hendrikse and myself. This has hopefully led to a sharemilkers' group being formed in the Wairarapa with Lawrence and Leo organising.

There was an excellent turnout for the 'Tight Management for Tight Times' evening. I also went to a follow up seminar to further analyse our business, which was very informative.

Karen Fitzgerald - Wairarapa Sharemilkers' Section

Tough start to winter

I believe this is one of the worst starts to winter we have had for many years, or my memory is getting very short. Feed is very low but, thankfully, there are ample supplements available.



Lamb prices are looking very good for spring and maybe into next season as well with a friendly dollar. The same goes for beef.

The markets for lamb look very sound, owing to a rebuilding phase in breeding stock, if past trends are anything to go by.

The National Conference was a one day affair this year and with a couple of speakers and a bit of general business, there was not much time for industry material.

Remits

TB: This went through un-debated and well supported. I tried to amend it by adding to control ... eradication ... "as soon as possible". But this amendment was lost.

Industry rationalisation: There was much debate here, which was predictable as not all think that 'Big Is Best' and a lot of well run co-ops have in the past 20 years evolved into better run publicly listed companies. I believe SSF is heading that way now. This remit lapsed to a discussion topic for want of direction.

Conference Speakers

Stuart Weston, of AFFCO, gave an excellent talk on lamb. He spoke at length on the chain of linkages and the importance of inter-industry communication for a successful result.

AFFCO is a food supply company so it can mix and match supply to suit a market. The basis for vertical integration to the market is to capture a lot of the "fat" in the chain. He was emphatic that this was an illusionary notion as the cutters, the meal preparers, the retail outlets, the retailers and wholesalers including supermarkets (to which only a minor proportion of the trade actually goes) all live on extremely small margins and rely heavily on turnover. This answer says a lot about price stability and undercutting etc. However, it is still a supply sensitive product and because it is so highly regarded by consumers, it has become a lot less price sensitive than it might have otherwise been. This also means that lamb will fare okay during a recession such as now.

Stuart Chapman, of Elders, believes wool has a great future - once they get these contract specs together and all the rest of it. Elders has partnered with CCA, the biggest floor covering retailer in the United States. The US makes and uses half of the world's carpet. A new brand, 'JUST SHORN', will market highly sustainable and functional carpets that can be traced back to a New Zealand course wool fibre. For more information visit www.justshorn.co.nz

The logistics of a good price rise for course wool were: 4.5% > retail price = double farm gate price. He said that wasn't too much to expect. We all live in eternal hope.

Mike Petersen, of Meat and Wool NZ, spoke on the upcoming levy vote and the need for all farmers to have their say - dairy guys included.

Seminar

I am currently organising a seminar with AGMARDT as part of their national series (which we were left out of), on "Adapting Farming Systems to Potential Climate Change" - which will be advertised soon.

Alan Stuart - Wairarapa Meat & Fibre Chair

TB issues

The single biggest problem in eliminating TB will be infection in the remnant vector areas. These areas of bush and scrub are very large and will absorb a lot of dollars trying to eliminate this source of TB.



Pigs are part of the source and will be extremely difficult to eliminate. They are easily the most intelligent of vectors, becoming bait-shy as adults. However, it is thought that TB transference from pigs to possums, deer or cattle would only occur in rare situations, e.g. possums get so hungry that they resort to eating a dead pig. Hopefully, if possum numbers are heavily reduced, then those left won't get that hungry, thereby breaking the cycle.

Pig TB is being monitored by testing heads brought in by hunters, for which they are paid a bounty. This serves as an excellent indicator for TB in resident possums.

Alex Webster - Wairarapa Dairy RAHAC Representative

Wairarapa AGM follow-up

Federated Farmers FARMDAY

One of the big events this year was Federated Farmers FARMDAY held on 1 March 2009. I saw a program on the Country Channel about the public open farm days that LEAF runs in the UK and thought that it sounded like something Federated Farmers could do. With the support of the Wairarapa Executive we put forward a remit to National Council, which was very well received.



There aren't many organisations that, after just a few minutes discussion, could pull off a day in 24 provinces involving 26 farms (granted, after several months of hard work). Taratahi was a great place to host the Wairarapa FARMDAY and they have agreed to do it again next year. Thank you to all the members who pitched in to help make it a great success. It is a good way to give the urban community some exposure to farming since they don't have the connections they once did.

Mediations

Meetings with groups to resolve differences of opinion on the Combined District Plan consumed a great deal of time and energy. These are now in the final stages. Several items may, unfortunately, end up in the Environment Court.

The contentious items that have yet to be resolved are: a definition of 'significant waterbodies' and 'earthworks' which, despite being able to improve the volume triggers, are still impractical rules of very questionable value.

Once things are fully resolved, Hilary Walker (nee Gubb), will write a summary of the issues we submitted on and how things ended up. It has been a drawn out process, but the Federation's input has significantly improved the plan. Unfortunately that will be the last thing Hilary does for us. She has done a great job and we will be sad to lose her.

Biodiversity Strategy

We have been involved in shaping the new Biodiversity Strategy. Central government is requiring local government to get more active. Over the past year, Wairarapa

Federated Farmers has worked from the model of the successful scrub clearance group (representatives from district councils, regional council, DoC, Forest & Bird and ourselves) to draft a strategy.

When we started, the group thought we would end up with a list of significant areas and rules around them. However, in looking at what was best for the land, we realised that the 'significant natural areas' actually provided no protection for the land and they really irritated landowners.

So it was agreed that it made much more sense to undertake a survey of the Wairarapa and determine the areas of significant biodiversity and then work with the landowners on educating them as to why it is valuable.

We feel this will be much more productive since most farmers are excellent stewards of the land and do a great deal to protect it. However, having a bureaucrat tell you what you can and can't do on your land will, at best, lead to minimal compliance. If the educational approach is not working after several years, then a regulatory approach will be considered. For the educational approach to work, it will require funding which needs to be approved in the LTCCP.

Canada Geese

These pests never disappear. A report has finally gone to the Minister of Conservation recommending Canada Geese be put on Schedule 5 in the Wairarapa, meaning they will be treated as a pest. We hope that the minister will heed DoC's recommendations.

Communication

Getting the farming story out there into the public arena is important. This comes on a number of levels. We don't do a good enough job of telling the membership what is being done by the Federation on their behalf on both the local and national level. I plan to rectify this by getting out more regular communication via both monthly email and bimonthly mailed newsletters.

Putting the shoe on the other foot, we all need to get better at dealing with the media, especially television. Dealing with the TV media does not come naturally, but it is critical in these video driven times. In February the Riddells were jacked up by Campbell Live. It is difficult to cope when you are ambushed by the media as you go about your own business, but a person storming out of frame makes fantastic footage for sensational "journalism".

TV1 was keen to provide some coverage about the drought situation in the Wairarapa. Castlepoint is two and a half hours from Wellington, so I can't easily do that sort of

interview. It took me a great deal of time and several refusals before I was able to arrange for Roger Barton to front the camera.

We farmers are a small percentage of the population these days and the majority of the urban population is influenced by what they see on TV. We need to be able to effectively present our case when given the chance. It doesn't have to be fancy, just being a real person comes across very well. The Federation runs media training courses from time to time and they are well worth attending.

Anders Crofoot - Wairarapa President

Favourable climate

The Wairarapa has a favourable climate for growing arable crops. With world demand for food increasing, it seems logical to be in the business of providing tools like seed to aid increasing global production. Arable producers in the Wairarapa will play a role this season in producing vegetable seeds such as peas and brassica.



Last season saw good prices paid to growers for contracted crops. This income was available as capital to purchase livestock for the winter trade period. Generally livestock have grown well, even though the recent cold and wet has impacted on pasture covers and growth rates.

Winter wheat crops have come through the wet and cold in good condition, as have ryegrass seed crops. Soil moisture levels are set up for a good start to the spring season and the talk is to expect an El Nino weather pattern.

Growers are in waiting mode for 2009/10 contract prices for spring cereals to decide on commitment areas to be sown. The livestock component this spring may be higher than in the past two years.

I look forward to the rewards and challenges of the 2009/10 growing season.

Paul McGill - Wairarapa Grain & Seed Chair

New Policy advisor for the Wairarapa

Wairarapa province has a new policy advisor called Brigid Buckley, who recently joined Federated Farmers and will also be covering the Hawke's Bay province. Based in Wellington, Brigid will be taking over from Hilary Walker, who is now covering the Bay of Plenty province.

While Brigid will be focused primarily on local policy issues, she will also be involved in national policy issues such as water and climate change.

Brigid worked as a town planning consultant in Christchurch over the last two years whilst finishing her studies at Lincoln

University, where she completed a Bachelor of Environmental Management and a Post-graduate Diploma in Resource Studies.

Policy in the Wairarapa region

- The Wairarapa Combined District Plan is almost complete and all of Federated Farmers appeals have been resolved. The final decisions are due in a couple of weeks and while we cannot say too much yet, there have been some great WINS!
- Further submissions on the Greater Wellington Proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS) are due on 7 August at 4pm. Submissions on the proposed RPS can

be viewed at Greater Wellington's website: <http://www.gw.govt.nz/section1236.cfm?> The relevant forms and information about the RPS and how to make a further submission are also available from this link.

To contact Brigid Buckley: phone: 0800 327 646, or email: bbuckley@fedfarm.org.nz

