



FEDERATED FARMERS

SUBMISSION ON:

Review of Personal Grievances (Part 9 of the Employment Relations Act 2000)

SUBMISSION

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SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ON: REVIEW OF PERSONAL GRIEVANCES (PART 9 OF THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT 2000)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Federated Farmers welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Department of Labour on the Review of Personal Grievances (Part 9 of the Employment Relations Act 2000).
- 1.2 Approximately 79,000 people are employed by around 63,500 enterprises in the agricultural sector¹. As the representative group for farmers, Federated Farmers takes a close interest in employment legislation and policy issues.
- 1.3 Federated Farmers is also committed to ensuring that its members have the best possible tools and advice available to enable their businesses to grow and prosper. An important part of this commitment is the provision of employment-related services to our members, including access to various document templates (including individual employment contracts) and advice on employment issues through reports (for example, on remuneration), seminars, and a call centre which receives around 400 employment related calls per month.
- 1.4 Federated Farmers agrees that employment law should be fair and flexible for all. However, the Federation is not convinced that the current law achieves an appropriate balance and based on member feedback we think there is a particular problem around personal grievances where the scales are tipped too much in favour of the employee. There may or may not be bias in the law but there is certainly a strong perception that there is bias and because this perception influences behaviour it becomes real.
- 1.5 This submission discusses the issues raised in the consultation paper and provides Federated Farmers' views on 'possible options for consideration'.

¹ *Statistics New Zealand Business Demography Statistics, 2009.*

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Federated Farmers recommends that:

- (a) Changes should be made to the law and to processes around personal grievances in order to reduce bias against employers and reduce the costs of addressing employment relationship problems;
- (b) Better information on problem resolution and dismissal processes should be made available;
- (c) In the first instance, information disclosure and education should be used to improve the quality and behaviour of employment advocates;
- (d) Section 103A of the Employment Relations Act should be amended to reduce the current emphasis of process over substance of claims;
- (e) There should be no moves to make it easier for all employees to make personal grievance claims;
- (f) If there are concerns about certain groups being able to access justice (e.g., migrants) this should be addressed by providing better information to those groups;
- (g) Changes should be made to processes and systems to improve the responsiveness and timeliness of services;
- (h) The 90 day trial period for small employers (fewer than 20 employees) should be extended from 90 days to 180 days and it should also be made available to medium-sized employers (20-49 employees);
- (i) The current three year limitation period for lodging a personal grievance claim in the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court should be reduced to one year;
- (j) The current 90 day limitation period for raising a personal grievance claim with an employer should be reduced to 30 days;
- (k) Reinstatement should be removed as a 'primary remedy';
- (l) There should be greater encouragement of non-monetary remedies; and
- (m) Options that would help resolve employment relationship problems at an early stage should be pursued.
- (n) Those involved in administering and enforcing the law should have better knowledge and understanding of farming.

3. OPERATION OF THE PERSONAL GRIEVANCE SYSTEM

Cost of Problem Resolution

- 3.1 Federated Farmers agrees that employment relationship problems are expensive to resolve and that these costs often result in employers preferring to pay employees to leave. We note that the median *direct* costs for all employers involved in employment relations problems is around \$5,000. Although the median direct cost is a little lower for small and medium-sized enterprises (around \$3,000 to \$4,000) the direct cost will be a much higher proportion of smaller businesses' turnover. Also, the additional *indirect* costs, such as those associated with stress and hassle, will be much higher for a small business owner-manager and his or her family.
- 3.2 Direct and indirect costs will also have a significant impact on productivity, especially for small businesses where the burden falls on the owner-manager. In some cases the costs and lost productivity will impact on a business' very viability.
- 3.3 The discussion paper suggests that costs could be reduced through a helpline and information provision and promotion of problem resolution and dismissal processes. Federated Farmers' view is that there is already plenty of information available to be accessed from the Department of Labour, from representatives of employers (including Federated Farmers) and from unions.
- 3.4 The Federation's primary concern is that costs will not be substantially reduced until changes are made to the law and processes around personal grievances to reduce the real or perceived bias against employers. However, we would support the dissemination of better information and we are willing to play our part by providing it to our members.
- 3.5 **Recommendation: Changes should be made to the law and to processes around personal grievances in order to reduce bias against employers and reduce the costs of addressing employment relationship problems.**

- 3.6 **Recommendation: Better information on problem resolution and dismissal processes should be made available.**

Varying Quality of Employment Advocates

- 3.7 Federated Farmers members have employment advice available to them through a call centre, with the advice provided by Employers Assistance Ltd. The initial call is free to members but if the matter requires ongoing assistance the member is referred to a practicing barrister or solicitor (and subject to the usual fees).
- 3.8 Concerns have been expressed to us by members about the competencies and practices of so-called "no win, no fee" employee advocates, including overly aggressive and adversarial approaches that put undue pressure on employers and impose additional costs on them.
- 3.9 Federated Farmers would support moves to improve the quality and behaviour of employment advocates, particularly those in the "no win, no fee" category. In keeping with the Federation's view that regulation should be imposed only once other options have been tried and failed, we would prefer in the first instance information disclosure and education. Regulatory fixes, such as requiring advocates to be part of a formally recognised professional organisation with professional standards and/or code of ethics, should be a last resort.
- 3.10 **Recommendation: In the first instance, information disclosure and education should be used to improve the quality and behaviour of employment advocates.**

Balance and Fairness in the Personal Grievance System

- 3.11 Federated Farmers has received feedback from members concerned that the current personal grievance system is biased against them as employers. In particular, the evolution of the test of justification has in our view resulted in an over-emphasis on process rather than the substance of a case. Some examples of comments received (in

the farmers' own words) are attached as an appendix to this submission.

- 3.12 As the discussion document states, there may or may not be bias in the law but there is certainly a strong perception that there is bias and because this perception influences behaviour it becomes real. Many farmer employers appear to hold the perception that there is bias against them and this is influencing their behaviour, causing undue stress and is even making some reluctant to employ.
- 3.13 Federated Farmers believes that this bias must be addressed by reducing the emphasis of process over substance through a change to the current law of 'test of justification' (section 103A of the Act) to ensure that small irregularities in process are given less emphasis than the actual substance of the claim.
- 3.14 **Recommendation: Section 103A of the Employment Relations Act should be amended to reduce the current emphasis of process over substance of claims.**

Ensuring Access to Justice

- 3.15 Federated Farmers considers that there is no problem with 'access to justice' for employees in general. There appears to be plenty of information and affordable advice for an employee wishing to take a personal grievance claim against an employer. Some groups may have problems accessing justice (such as migrants) but this should be addressed by, for example, providing better information to those groups rather than by wholesale moves to make it easier for all employees to make claims.
- 3.16 **Recommendation: There should be no moves to make it easier for all employees to make personal grievance claims.**
- 3.17 **Recommendation: If there are concerns about certain groups being able to access justice (e.g., migrants) this should be addressed by providing better information to those groups.**

Negative Impact of the Responsiveness and Timeliness of Services

- 3.18 Long process delays increase costs and prolong uncertainty for all concerned so Federated Farmers believes it very important to resolve claims in a timely manner. It is concerning that in 2009 it took 228 days between the filing of an application with the Employment Relations Authority and a determination being issued. Although this includes periods of mediation and investigation meetings, 7-8 months does seem a long time to wait to resolve a claim. And this is *before* any cases are lodged at the Employment Court, which can take a year or more to work through the system.
- 3.19 The Federation's view is that delays will not be substantially reduced until changes are made to the law around personal grievances that shift the balance between employer and employee onto a more even keel. However, we would also support proposals to improve the administrative processes for determining claims, greater use of technology, better information provision, etc.
- 3.20 **Recommendation: Changes should be made to processes and systems to improve the responsiveness and timeliness of services.**

Employment Relationship Problems Impacting Disproportionately on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

- 3.21 Federated Farmers agrees that problems with employment relationships impact disproportionately on small businesses. Because they do not have the luxury of having dedicated human resources capacity at their disposals, small businesses have fewer formal processes and procedures and have to be pragmatic. As the document observes, they will also have less experience in responding to relationship problems and less information and awareness of issues and resources available to them.

- 3.22 As discussed in paragraph 3.1 above the direct costs of dealing with employment relations problems are much higher for small businesses as a percentage of their turnover and the additional indirect costs are particularly onerous for small business owner-managers and their families.
- 3.23 The Federation notes the research suggesting that employment relationship problems for small businesses arise more during the early stages of employment than is the case for larger businesses. There is nothing sinister in this finding. Problems at an early stage will usually be a reflection of a relationship not working out due to poor performance or other behavioural issues. Because of the greater intimacy of employment relationships in small businesses, these problems can be evident more quickly than in large businesses.
- 3.24 For small businesses it is particularly important for new employees to quickly make a positive contribution to the business and to forge effective relationships whereas these processes can often be allowed to take longer in a larger business. Put simply, small businesses cannot afford to 'carry' non-performers or put up with bad relationships for extended periods.
- 3.25 Federated Farmers therefore strongly supports the 90 day trial period for small employers (with fewer than 20 employees) where personal grievances cannot be made for unjustifiable dismissal, for example due to poor performance or relationship problems. If anything we think the trial period should be longer, perhaps 180 days, and we note that some overseas jurisdictions have even longer 'trial periods' (e.g., the UK and Ireland have 12 month periods).
- 3.26 The Federation would also support other options to make life easier for small and medium-sized enterprises, such as streamlined processes, on-line problem solving tools, more information and advice targeted at small and medium-sized businesses, extending the trial period provisions to medium-sized enterprises (20-49 employees), etc. However, as discussed earlier in this submission what is really needed is more substantive reform to reduce the real or perceived bias against employers.
- 3.27 **Recommendation: The 90 day trial period for small employers (fewer than 20 employees) should be extended from 90 days to 180 days and it should also be made available to medium-sized employers (20-49 employees).**
- Eligibility – Raising a Personal Grievance**
- 3.28 Federated Farmers believes that the eligibility for raising a personal grievance should be tightened. As discussed above, the Federation supports the 90 day trial period for small employers (fewer than 20 employees) where a personal grievance claim cannot be made for unjustifiable dismissal. We think if anything that the trial period should be increased to 180 days and made available to medium-sized employers (20-49 employees).
- 3.29 We note that senior employees and managers are able to take out a personal grievance claim. These typically highly-paid people are usually experienced and aware of their (and their employer's) rights and obligations and it should be possible for relationship problems involving senior employees and/or managers to be resolved without external parties being involved.
- 3.30 We think it unfair on employers that a personal grievance claim can be lodged with the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court up to three years after a problem has been raised with an employer. As the consultation notes this is a 'considerably long period' and 'can prolong the relationship problem unnecessarily with the employer'. We think this period should be reduced, say to one year.
- 3.31 Also, we think the 90 day limitation period for raising a personal grievance with an employer could also be reduced, say to 30 days. This would still give ample time for an employee to

think about whether and how to approach his or her employer about a specific issue.

- 3.32 **Recommendation: The 90 day trial period for small employers (fewer than 20 employees) should be extended from 90 days to 180 days and it should also be made available to medium-sized employers (20-49 employees).**
- 3.33 **Recommendation: The current three year limitation period for lodging a personal grievance claim in the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court should be reduced to one year.**
- 3.34 **Recommendation: The current 90 day limitation period for raising a personal grievance claim with an employer should be reduced to 30 days.**

Effectiveness of Remedies

- 3.35 The reality is that once a personal grievance case is lodged with the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court the damage to an employment relationship will be such that it will be very difficult to repair it. The fact is that few applicants pursue reinstatement and the Authority has ordered reinstatement in only 7-14 cases per year in recent years. Federated Farmers is therefore doubtful that reinstatement is effective as a primary remedy.
- 3.36 On the other hand it seems that claimants are more interested in pursuing monetary compensation. Around half of the claims determined each year result in

compensation; with claims averaging around \$5,000 (although around 7% are over \$10,000). Interestingly, around 25% of compensation awards are reduced due to *conduct of the applicant*, showing that even a significant amount of successful claims involve wrong on the part of the employee. The concern of many employers is that personal grievances are becoming a 'gray train' for disgruntled employees. Again, this reinforces the bias felt by employers against them.

- 3.37 Federated Farmers would therefore support moves towards greater use of non-monetary remedies, such as training and education courses for both employers and employees. Monetary remedies should remain an option only for the more serious cases where an employee has been *substantively wronged* – and certainly not where the issue was largely process-related. In those cases training and education is a better approach.
- 3.38 **Recommendation: Reinstatement should be removed as a 'primary remedy'.**
- 3.39 **Recommendation: There should be greater encouragement of non-monetary remedies.**

4. ASSISTANCE TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS AT AN EARLY STAGE

4.1 Federated Farmers agrees that it is better to resolve employment relationship problems at an early stage. We would be comfortable with options such as more flexible arrangements around time, place and style; mechanisms geared to the needs of short-term migrant workers; and health and safety issues. We also support more education and training and making more assistance and advice available to small businesses, for example. We note that employer organisations, such as Federated Farmers, can help with disseminating information and advice.

4.2 More generally, we also think it very important for those involved in administering and enforcing the law (advocates, officials, mediators, judges etc) to have a better knowledge and understanding of farming and how the nature of farm work influences employment relations. Farming is not like working in an office or in a factory – it

involves specific, often highly skilled tasks that must be undertaken efficiently and safely, with little margin for error. The very nature of farm work also requires flexibility in working arrangements. Feedback from our members indicates that there is a need for better knowledge and understanding from all those involved in the system. Talking about providing more and better information and education to employers and employees is fine (and supported) but it is a two-way street.

4.3 **Recommendation: Options that would help resolve employment relationship problems at an early stage should be pursued.**

4.4 **Recommendation: Those involved in administering and enforcing the law should have better knowledge and understanding of farming.**

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Employment law should be fair and flexible for all. However, Federated Farmers is not convinced that the current law achieves an appropriate balance. Based on member feedback we think there is a particular problem around personal grievances where the scales are tipped too much in favour of the employee.
- 5.2 Employment relationship problems are expensive to resolve. Direct and indirect costs can impact severely on small businesses in particular and they can be hugely stressful for owner-managers and their families, not to mention impact on the productivity (and in some cases viability) of the business.

- 5.3 Federated Farmers submits that substantive changes are needed to restore a reasonable balance between employers and employees. The changes suggested in our submission would in our view assist in restoring faith of employers in the system and reduce costs while still enabling employees that are wronged in substance to take out claims and be fairly remedied.

6. ABOUT FEDERATED FARMERS

- 6.1 Federated Farmers of New Zealand is a voluntary, member-based organisation that represents farming and other rural businesses. Federated Farmers has a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of New Zealand farmers.
- 6.2 The Federation aims to add value to its members' farming businesses. Our key strategic outcomes include the need for New Zealand to provide an economic and social environment within which:
- Our members may operate their business in a fair and flexible commercial environment;
 - Our members' families and their staff have access to services essential to the needs of the rural community; and
 - Our members adopt responsible management and environmental practices.

APPENDIX:

EXAMPLES OF HOW BIAS IN EXISTING LAW CAUSES PROBLEMS

Example 1

“It is becoming very hard to employ staff in remote areas; we don’t have a lot of applicants.

“I’m a normal heads down farmer, but recently had to put my foot down, make a stand, and take an employee to the Tenancy Tribunal due to the disgusting (and I mean disgusting) state he left the farm cottage in, but it was mainly the principle as he had let us down badly on the farm. He was employed on the station, but would frequently not turn up for work when we were assured he would. He lied, he stole, he threatened employment courts etc, left rent arrears. He was also on the dole as he worked for the station on a casual basis, the house a service tenancy.

“I have in the last couple of days heard from another employer who has had dealings with this man who is now in the same predicament as I was, and another he has heard of since leaving us.

“It is so difficult to remove a person like this from your employment. Usually a verbal warning is given in passing, especially if the employee is new e.g., “Please don’t let us down again” – it’s not written down and countersigned as we are supposed to do in hindsight. When it happens so often it always comes down to their word against yours. We are so busy running our businesses we don’t always follow the very strict Employment Relations Contract guideline laws, which override any employment contract we have, we are also not lawyers which you need to be to follow these things, it needs to be a lot simpler for all concerned.

“If someone doesn’t turn up for work without a special reason or unsuitable due to their attitude to work, I would like the option to dismiss them, perhaps with one verbal warning during the three month trial period - which should be 6 months, otherwise it always turns sour down the track especially after a first warning (let alone 3!) plus a written one! Once is enough. A lot of us are employers of one or two permanent or casual employees, not vast staff, so one bad employee is to the detriment of the business which we shouldn’t have to put up with.

“I also believe that the dole is a privilege, people like this should not be able to have the full entitlement if it is proved he doesn’t fulfil employment commitments. For the three of us that I know of who have employed this man is upsetting that he can continue in this way.

“Apparently (I found out) that an employee can willy nilly take farm vehicles off the property for his own use without employer knowledge and we still cannot dismiss him for this! Although we are liable for any accidents that may occur with unregistered farm trailers.

“I would also like to see that we are able to claim back amounts owed to us, we cannot do so without written approval - which can also be overruled by the employee if he doesn’t want to pay - (who gets written authority, especially at the end of employment). Amounts owing and not being able to claim back is horrible (gotta go to the small claims court!, who does this for small amounts?) The IRD are able to claim back their costs. Perhaps we can have a limit we can claim back for funds owed to us, at least something.

“We put up and shut up because our lawyers tell us to do so due to the ERA 2000 being so one sided which costs us a lot, so we are hesitant to employ anyone new.

“On behalf of us three employers and the frustrations we feel employing people like this (hoping to give them a chance and a start) I submit this. Please do something.

“One of my experiences which rankles: I gave an employee a personal cheque for \$450 to buy a couple of pigs for the farm - one for him and one for me - from a friend of the employee (dumb, but I felt I should trust him). He told me the friend didn’t have them ready on his return to the farm (I think he used the cheque for groceries). As time went on during that month I asked for the cheque back, but the friend was going to have them ready soon I was told. I didn’t realise it had been cashed (hadn’t got a statement or been online). ‘Don’t worry,’ I stupidly said, ‘I can take it off your pay cheque’. ‘OK’, he said. At the end of that month, things had turned to custard and he was off. I confidently deducted

my \$450 from wages owed. Next thing I know I am paying it back to him for wrongful deductions!!! My only recourse was the small claims court to get it back - at more cost than the cheque amount! An expensive lesson.

"I don't usually complain, I am a person who takes the least resistance and confrontation, but this is a real problem for small rural communities. Casual staff, unskilled people who are capable of drenching ewes, weed spraying and general jobs that you don't have time to get onto are all an issue. Employment laws make it too tough to deal with the wish to give someone a start but then realise you have a dud, so rather than go through all that emotional drama we make do. I'm sure it must filter through into other employment areas also."

Example 2

"We employ 10 staff on our farm. We have never gone to mediation with a staff member but have instead paid a lawyer to advise us step by step as incidences arise. His advice has avoided problems but has come at a cost. We have had to negotiate an exit for one employee who was performing well below the standard required. A lengthy and costly business but at least we avoided the court room.

"In many cases it appears the process is more important than the event. As employers we have to be so careful to follow a process that is in many cases impractical. It is such a formal process that must have all the t's crossed and i's dotted rather than been able to have a good stern talk to an employee about his short comings and ways to improve. Instead we have to watch our back and get clarification from a lawyer before we act. Handing out warnings is more detrimental to the employment relationship than being able to talk to them straight. Even the 90 day trial clause has not been fully tested through the courts so our lawyer is advising caution. We need to know what the law is, not how the courts are interpreting it.

"The law is stacked in the employees favour. They can step outside the boundaries but if we put one foot wrong, we are in trouble. Mediators favour the employee."

Example 3

"I give you this anecdote as an illustration of some areas that need addressing.

"A farmer had just taken delivery of a brand new wide span hay rake costing around \$25,000. He drives into the hay paddock and says to the employee, 'I will do the first round and you can finish the job'.

"The employee replies, 'Don't you trust me with your new machine?' The farmer says, 'Alright, but if you damage it you are out the gate. Understood?' A nod from the employee and off he goes

"A few moments later and over the rise come a series of rattles, clanks and bang. The farmer rushes over to find his new rake partly tangled in the fence, one rotor nearly vertical and the rotor drive smashed. The very unhappy farmer gives his employee his marching orders.

"Three hours later the employee returns with an agent of the Department of Labour who informs the irate farmer of his responsibilities under the Act. After half an hour of argument the farmer concedes, turns to the employee and says, 'Go up and help at the truck and pick up bales.'

"The employee considers the task, decides that it is hard work and refuses.

"The farmer turns to the Department of Labour agent and asks, 'Am I within my rights to expect him to do this job?' The agent says, 'Yes.' The farmer repeats the instruction. The employee again refuses and replies, 'I quit!' The farmer asks of the agent, 'Can he do it (quit) just like that?' The agent says, 'Yes.'

"Did I mention the one sidedness of the Act? I rest my case."

Example 4

"The current law is too much in favour of employees. I do think there is good information especially through Feds, Dept of Labour (I ring a Nelson staff member of DOL direct and have attended a seminar she presented) and Ag ITO training - I am currently doing the employment course, 4 parts.

“Somehow it seems that you have to make a few mistakes first before you get the way it should be done, so this is probably a criticism of the ‘process’ - it isn’t entirely reasonable, and smaller businesses have not got the HR resource and knowledge which is essentially exactly the same as required by much larger businesses.

“Should the Employment Relations Act be amended to reduce the current emphasis of process over substance of claims? Absolutely - when you read of cases such as recently a staff member selling drugs to another being awarded compensation by the employer for not following correct process for dismissal there is something very wrong with the law.

“I agree with reducing the periods for raising an issue with the employer and with taking a case to the ERA/ Employment Court. The employee will know in those times. Both these rules cause a lot of anxiety for employers which is unnecessary. Also if the employee is to act in good faith they should move the process along. It is more likely able to be sorted if the process does not drag on.”

Example 5

“We own a dairy farm and our employee was underperforming. We returned from holiday to find he’d made a mess of milking, including three-quarter cupping [this is when a cow is milked too soon and it can be very costly in terms of lost production]. This was the last straw for us and we terminated his employment with four weeks notice. He wasn’t happy but we’d given him verbal warnings (but no written warning).

“Over the next four weeks he worked for only three days. Most days he would call in to the farm manager ‘sick’ with a ‘headache’ and despite going to the doctor he never gave us any letter explaining his illness. This meant we had to get up at 5am to help the manager do the milking – this while we were also paying the ‘sick’ employee (double whammy). About half way through the four weeks we had a meeting with him, with his mother also present. We agreed that he’d return to work for the balance of the four weeks but he didn’t – he continued calling in sick.

“After he left he took a PG through Community Law, funded by legal aid. We had to engage a barrister

and we paid for that ourselves. He sought 12 weeks wages plus damages for ‘humiliation’. In the end we had to pay him an extra two weeks wages on top of the four weeks notice period when he didn’t work.

“This was hugely frustrating to us and very costly. But even so the lawyer thought that even if we had gone through all the hoops the employee would still have gone after us so still causing us stress and cost.”

Example 6

“We had a staff member who worked for us for two months. He had a great CV, good references and seemed a nice guy. However, just before we were due to start calving he decided that the job was too tough and resigned with two weeks notice. We were sorry to see him leave but accepted his decision.

“Then, next thing we knew, we got a call from a union representative (from the Meat Workers’ Union) wanting to talk to us about an ‘unfair dismissal’. We were shocked as there was never any indication of trouble. We had had a meeting with the staff member a couple of weeks earlier about farm safety and he claimed this was a ‘verbal warning’ but it certainly wasn’t – this is a talk we give to all staff as we consider safety to be hugely important.

“After mediation with the union rep we had to pay him out a month’s wages and he stayed in the worker’s cottage until he could find another job, which made it very hard for us to employ a replacement.

“It was a most frustrating experience for us especially because we keep good records and we do everything by the book as best we can. Yet we still got pinged.

“It was also frustrating that the mediator from the union knew nothing about dairy farming and what it involves (we had no say on the choice of mediator). Nor did the Dept of Labour people in their offices. There needs to be better knowledge of farming among those that administer and enforce the law.

“Subsequently, I learnt that our ex-staff member has lodged other PGs with other subsequent employers and also falsified his CV and had dishonest referees.

“Also, a family member up north sacked his employee after he was arrested for growing marijuana

in huge quantities – a hydroponics operation in the farm cottage! While the ex-employee was in jail he lodged a PG and to our disgust he was awarded \$6,000 for ‘unfair dismissal’. There is absolutely no justice in the current law and how it’s applied.

“We have always tried to employ New Zealanders but our experience and from what I’ve been told by other farmers too many of them are after the payout

and want to cheat their employer. So, we now prefer migrants as they are much more honest. They don’t want to rip us off.

“Please do something.”