

Farmers dispute cull claims

Farmers strongly dispute claims by Fish and Game that the Canada geese cull in the Wairarapa was a success.



"In spite of hunter efforts, only 40 percent of the required number of geese were removed. To achieve the compliance number of 2,000 birds under the Canada Goose Management Plan for Wairarapa, hunters needed to kill at least 1,683 geese, said Anders Crofoot president for Wairarapa Federated Farmers.

"As 1,000 geese still need to be culled, farmers were correct in predicting that this attempt would be ineffective.

"Federated Farmers has always said hunting culls are not the best method of maintaining numbers and has repeatedly advised Fish & Game that a helicopter cull at moulting time is the most effective way to knockdown the goose population to designated levels.

"Fish & Game have said that helicopter culls are expensive and dangerous but the fiasco that unfolded over the weekend put more than geese at risk. Federated Farmers has learnt in an ironic twist that Fish & Game had to hire a helicopter to rescue one

Call for leaders

Federated Farmers runs two leadership courses for up-and-coming farming leaders. The programme is important to the Federation's succession planning. Programmes are highly interactive, delivering information using practical methods and workshops to suit hands-on types. The two courses promote both leadership and team building.

of their jet boats that became stuck in the shallow lake.

"Farmers are incredibly frustrated the job isn't being done properly and an opportunity has been wasted. Not only are the numbers killed inadequate but the hunt has had the effect of dispersing geese to other areas and therefore the chance for an efficient cull in the future is dubious.

"Fish & Game are implying that there is opportunity for ongoing culls but the reality is they are not doing their job. There is one chance to cull which is during the moult before fledging birds take flight and this year the opportunity has been wasted," Mr Crofoot said.

The most recent count of Canada geese on Lake Wairarapa is 3,683 birds, well above the agreed level of 2,000 for the whole district.

Federated Farmers recommends Canada geese should be placed under the Wildlife Act's fifth schedule – giving it no protection and the possibility of being tagged a pest, allowing more effective culling techniques.

"Losing its protection would allow landowners, councils and others in the community to act more aggressively to bring this pest down to manageable levels," Mr Crofoot said.

For more information:
Anders Crofoot, 06 372 6465
Wairarapa - President

If you think that you can make a difference with some polished leadership skills give your President, Anders Crofoot a call, 06 372 6465, to discuss attending a course.

Getting your feet wet 21-22 May or 26-27 November 2008

Advanced Leadership Skills 28-29 May or 3-4 December 2008.

Update on Combined Wairarapa District Plan

Our last newsletter included a diagram of the plan making process and we advised you that the statutory process is nearing an end. At this point there are two stages left:

1. The decisions document (including reasons) is released;
2. Submitters can lodge an appeal.

We have been advised that the decision document is likely to be released on the 29th February. Submitters and the general public will be notified and from that date submitters have 30 working days to read the document and make a decision whether they wish to lodge an appeal or not. It is important to note that an appeal can only be lodged against a decision which relates to points raised in either your original or further submission.

Please keep an eye out for the notification of this document as the 30 working day time frame is bound by legislation and it is important to be involved in this final part of the process.

Do not hesitate to contact Hilary Gubb either by phone 07 8580815 or email hgubb@fedfarm.org.nz should you have any questions.

Employment Seminars

Join our employment law experts from the Federated Farmers support team in a two hour informative Q & A style seminar, register by calling

0800 327 646

Price is members \$50 per person and non members \$150 per person.

Tuesday 11th March 2008
1:30-3:30pm

Masterton Cosmopolitan Club Inc
398 Queen Street, Masterton

Wednesday 12th March 2008
10:00am-12:00noon

Palmerston North RSA
200 Broadway Ave, Palmerston North

Wairarapa Federated Farmers
publishes regular newsletters to keep our members informed

Provincial President: Anders Crofoot, 06 372 6465
Dairy Farmers of NZ: John Coveney, 06 307 7825
Meat & Fibre: Alan Stuart, 06 372 5747
Grains: Tim Smith, 06 306 9532

For comments on this newsletter or if you wish to join Federated Farmers please contact

Wairarapa

FEBRUARY 2008

Look to alternative feed

It has been great weather for a holiday at the beach and it's probably better to do that than dwell on the lack of rain and poor lamb prices which are both beyond our control.

Before Christmas I fielded a call looking for sources of supplemental feed. From a ring around to the other North Island provinces, it appears that Gisborne is about the only area that has had a "normal" spring and had supplemental feed (hay and baleage) available. An idea, which came up from a Wairarapa contractor and worked well, was looking at alternative supplemental feeds such as pea vine. So looking at options beyond the usual forms of feed can be quite helpful. Looking further afield can also be helpful. The greatest cost of trucking is loading and unloading, once the truck is moving the incremental cost for distance isn't all that great.



MAF is very concerned about the dry situation through much of the country so for what it is worth, politicians and the media are pretty aware that all is not going smoothly down on the farm.

The first organisational meeting has been held to start working out how to define areas of biodiversity in the Wairarapa worthy of protection.

Having a biodiversity strategy is a new requirement by central government. The Wairarapa has lead the way for quite some time adapting to new forms of legislation. The Masterton District Council was one of the first councils to implement their District Plan when the old Town & Country Planning was abolished. The Combined District Plan is one of the first plans to combine several district councils' regulations. The councils are trying to come up with something that everyone can agree on and move forward with. There will be plenty of consultation with landowners so this shouldn't come as an unwelcome surprise, as some of the designations in the past have.

Farmers are getting dumped on for problems in the environment and we don't get credit for all the good work that is done every day. How much money, including the cost of your time, are you putting into fencing off and improving riparian areas? How many trees are you planting every year for erosion control? What about shelter belts you have planted, have you noticed more native birds around? How much carbon are you sequestering by using low till technology



when appropriate? How much time do you commit to community services? Put a dollar value on all that. What percentage of your gross farm income does it represent? It is probably quite significant. How much does an average urbanite contribute to maintaining the environment, both physical and social?

Anders Crofoot - Wairarapa
President



FMG

RURAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

Help support your local Federated Farmers province by nominating Federated Farmers as your agent. If you are a customer of FMG's and nominate Federated Farmers as your agent, you will get a 2.4% rebate on your premiums and FMG will pay your local province a 1.6% rebate.

If you are unsure who is your nominated agent please call FMG on:

0800 366466



How to report Canada Goose and Paradise Shelduck problems:

For Wairarapa, farmers with game bird problems telephone the office of the Wellington Fish and Game Region, phone: 06 359 0409. Phil Teal is the new area officer as Blake Abernathy has resigned.

Anders at the cooked goose barbecue, see page 3 for more pictures.

Store market a disaster

The holiday period has now passed and I hope you have had some worthwhile R&R with family and friends. It's now back to the coalface.

Lamb prices

The store market has been a disaster everywhere, fortunately the works have seen fit to maintain a slightly higher mid-term lamb schedule than last year's (though it's early yet), in spite of their low profits from last year. However, we regularly see reports of Australian farmers receiving considerably better prices. They do, however, service different markets to us, which may be the difference.



In spite of a better schedule, lamb returns are going to be grossly lower with lighter weights due to the effects of the drought and considerably lower lamb numbers. These lower returns are not going to pay the fertiliser and fuel bills.

Meat and Wool Econ Service Director, Rob Davison, says that the continuation of the current high exchange rate (US 77 to 79 cents) would make for the third worst year in fifty years of forecasting.

The season

The most topical subject is the dry. Our district is experiencing an unprecedented early rain deficit of approximately eighty percent on average over the last three months. Most forage crops planted in late November onwards have failed miserably and the last vestiges of lamb feed are disappearing fast. Cattle feed of any

significance just hasn't eventuated.

Feed supplies will have to be managed very carefully though late summer and into autumn. Let's hope this drought breaks soon.

Exchange rate and prices

I have been arguing for the last three years that the Reserve Bank is being overly aggressive in its inflation control and has brought New Zealand exporters to their knees as a result. The Reserve Bank has taken on house price control, which is not their mandate and have disregarded an important aspect of their actual Reserve Bank Policy Targets Agreement, which is to avoid undue exchange rate fluctuations. Who is holding them on course here? No one it would seem.

No matter how high they set interest rates, this won't affect fuel prices, power, fertiliser or rates and if wages are subsequently kept low in New Zealand people will just keep shifting to Australia (where wages are better). In turn, this exodus will exacerbate our labour shortage and therefore create higher wage pressures.

It's time they took the brakes off and allowed the exchange rate to find its own lower level and we are paid accordingly. The resulting higher product prices will greatly outweigh higher imported prices for fuel, fertiliser and gear, as they always do.

I haven't forgotten how badly Don Brash over-killed inflation control in the early 90's and we suffered the same fate as we are now. It took the intervention of the Finance Minister to correct the situation. The effect on inflation then was nil, as it would be now I would suggest. How often do we have to repeat this disaster before we will learn.

Wool

I hope you have received your WIN Report and are making your views known, either verbally or in writing.

Ring Jan-Keir Smith, 0800 696 328.



Alan Stuart - Wairapapa Meat & Fibre Chairman

Greater Wellington Regional Council Reviews Regional Policy Statement

The Greater Wellington Regional Council is currently reviewing the Regional Policy Statement. This is a formal, statutory document that identifies the major resource management issues for the region, and sets out objectives, policies and methods for tackling these issues.

Draft provisions on the individual chapters are available for perusal now with a consolidated version being released early March. If anyone is interested in getting a bit of a head start on the reading then please let me know as your input would be greatly appreciated (and it is unlikely the flavour of the document will change substantially). A comments paper was given to the regional council last year however a formal submission will be developed in response to the notified March version. Member's opinions and comments will be sort closer to the time and will be vital in drafting this submission.

Please contact Hilary Gubb on 07 8580815 or email hgubb@fedfarm.org.nz if you want copy of any of these documents, or wish to discuss the issue further.



Recruit members and be paid

Earn commission, work in your local area.

You choose the hours, when and how you work.

Federated Farmers is looking for contractors to recruit new members.

For more information contact:
Di Wyllie 0800 327 646
dwylie@fedfarm.org.nz

The only good Canada Goose is a cooked Canada Goose



Wairarapa Province gets political- Lake Henley, 18th January 2008



Canada geese are a serious problem for many Wairarapa members. Population numbers have exploded well beyond the ability of recreational hunters to control. Fed up with the reluctance of Fish and Game to get serious and undertake a methodical helicopter cull, farmers in the province decided to take a stand.

Under the motto 'the only good Canada goose is a cooked one' the province hosted a barbecue for media (needless to say, no one wanted to take the leftovers home).

If you didn't find out about this action in time to attend, our apologies. We needed to be subtle about informing members as we wanted to avoid unexpected guests at the dinner table.

Our protest action was intended to put the goose back on the political agenda. We wanted to raise the plight of lakeside and hill country farmers and put pressure on Fish and Game. It was successful, fun and a great way to start the political year.



Murray Schofield (right), cook extraordinaire, we love your hat Murray but perhaps don't cook at our next barbecue! National President, Charlie Pedersen (left), discovers that Canada goose is bloody tough.



Sitting down to the feast, the province got some great publicity on the Canada goose problem and follow up media enquiries have all been very positive. We think that January 18th 2008 might just mark the beginning of the end for this pest.



Mr Canada Goose, Jim Weston, had plenty of chances to tell the media just how much of a pest these birds really are. Jim spoke about the fouling of pastures and stock water supplies as well as how the birds were deliberately released into the Wairarapa for recreational hunters.



Stewart Barton is one of the Lake Wairarapa lakeside farmers who has been working hard to convince Fish and Game to undertake a helicopter cull. Stewart is really disappointed that the agreed Canada Goose provincial wide threshold of 2,000 birds has already reached more than 3,700 on the Lake and the Fish and Game Council rejected the advice of its local field staff.

Quick action during the malt is the most effective way to control these wild pests.