

RECAP

Last year Meat & Fibre delegates passed a resolution supporting, in principle, the electronic identification and traceability of cattle. No detailed information was available at that time, but it appeared a reasonable and worthwhile idea based on biosecurity and market assurance issues.



In July 2008 the Meat & Fibre executive received the National Animal Identification and Tracing's Biosecurity Discussion Document giving the first detail of the proposal and were asked for submissions by 1 August 2008.

A number of issues are of concern:

1. The financial analysis doesn't stack up. Costs outweigh the benefits. Some of the assumptions regarding on farm benefits are wildly optimistic.
2. The scope of the NAIT document has grown enormously and now suggests inclusion of sheep. There are also onerous on-farm compliance requirements.
3. There is reference to the NAIT database being used for other purposes including the emission trading scheme.

This is a very different proposal to what was outlined 12 months ago. Farmers would be burdened with yet more cost and compliance for little proven benefit. The NAIT concept has taken on a life of its own and farmers are

again faced with more rules, regulations and costs with no apparent commercial gain.

ACTION TAKEN

Meetings and discussions were held with the NAIT Governance Group and their funding organisations (Meat & Wool New Zealand, Dairy NZ, DINZ, MIA, and DCANZ) to seek further information and clarification. Most of these groups share Federated Farmers concerns and many are also talking with NAIT. At this stage Federated Farmers awaits clarification on issues raised with NAIT before forming its final view. The close off for the Federated Farmers submission has been delayed until this information has been supplied.

MEAT & FIBRE'S POSITION

There are some positives around electronic identification and traceability. However, Federated Farmers remains unconvinced over the commercial drivers and overall

benefits and see little reason to support the NAIT proposal in its current form. Federated Farmers is also concerned about use of collected data for other purposes. The Federation is not convinced that enough consideration has been given to a more cost effective alignment within existing capabilities and structures like the Animal Health Board. Members can be assured that Federated Farmers will continue to pursue the above issues to ensure that the interests of Meat & Fibre producers are protected.

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you wish to have your say about the issue, the easiest way is to use the Feds blog. You can also find it in the "Our Work/Have Your Say/Is NAIT on right track?" part of the Federated Farmers website www.fedfarm.org.nz

*Extract from The Rambull
The newsletter from Federated Farmers
Meat & Fibre Section*

This special interest rate is only available on Business Interest Accounts opened by Federated Farmers' members. Terms and conditions apply. Interest is calculated daily, and paid on the last business day of each month (less resident withholding tax). Transactions and service fees apply. The interest rate shown is current at 28 February 2008 and is subject to change at Westpac's discretion. You can get a copy of Westpac's general terms and conditions, a copy of the current disclosure statement for Westpac New Zealand Limited and a copy of the investment statement for any securities for which an investment statement is required from any Westpac branch in New Zealand free of charge. Westpac New Zealand Limited.

Southland 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 please contact



SOUTHLAND



SOUTHLAND

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008

Working hard on your behalf

The right to farm is what Federated Farmers ultimately is fighting for on your behalf every day, but much of the Federation's work is behind the scenes. That is why it is important to tell you some of the areas Federated Farmers is currently representing you on in this newsletter and of course we have our contact numbers at the end of this newsletter so you can contact us, as member feedback is essential to represent you well.

ANNUAL GRASS GROWTH

That ageless Southland saying comes to mind, after the horrid weather we experienced mid August, "Southland's weather may get you down, but will not let you down". Southland may have its moments, but luckily most of the extreme weather has occurred elsewhere in the country. Even the summer drought broke, eventually; however, it really tested farming skills. I have heard some people scoff that Southland does not know what a drought is and while it was not as extreme as in other parts of New Zealand Southland was still affected.

I have included in this newsletter the annual pasture growth graph for Woodland's research farm (page 7). It proves what most farmers already knew that pasture growth was well below average. At Woodlands the pasture growth for the year was 30 percent below average. At a recent climate change workshop I attended on your behalf, MAF asked how farmers would cope with climate change? The graph proves we just get on with it!

THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental issues are the biggest issues farmers face. It doesn't matter how hard farmers work on their farms, if in the end they lose the right to farm. That is why Federated Farmers is so important to each and every one of us. Federated Farmers has the ability to submit on draft legislation and draw on everyone's knowledge to futureproof the ability of New Zealand farmers to display the Kiwi ingenuity they are famous for.



At a recent Environment Southland workshop the idea of a wintering plan came up in discussions, which is another example of the growing bureaucracy and control the Federation is fighting on farmers' behalf. Of course when we pointed out that in a bad year the original 'Plan A' could be by the end of the winter 'be Plan Z', because of that small 'X' factor - the weather, common sense prevailed. I must also say it was good to see rural councillors pointing out the practical problems as well. Farmers believe that land is a precious resource and are passionate about

looking after it and following sound science to preserve it. However, there are a few farmers (very few) who do let us all down. Pressure must be put on them to meet the appropriate standards and not let them get away with any excuses. These are the examples which drive the negative perceptions about farming. Irrespective of the type of farming we must not let these few farmers drive the emotion we read in our newspapers that puts our livelihoods at risk. For instance, recently Environment Southland was quoted in the Southland Times as wanting to up the anti about repeat offenders breaching their dairy consents. On doing further research there are 717 dairy effluent consents in Southland of which only three are continually letting the side down, which is not acceptable. This contradicts the headlines saying there are widespread numbers of non-compliance repeat offenders.

I attend a lot of meetings on a wide range of subjects often with other executive members. Being your president is a constant challenge, but one I enjoy. I represent you with pride and passion because I know that Federated Farmers does make a difference and we do add value to your business of farming.

I hope calving and lambing are going well for you and that the sun shines on your patch of paradise.

**David Rose - Southland
President**



Changes in the Invercargill office

You may have noticed that our Invercargill office is no longer open all day. With the closure of Dorchester Finance's office at the end of May our part time office manager of eight years Terry Wright has moved on. Terry, although no longer the friendly face in the office, continues working for us part-time behind the scenes as our building manager and financial controller.

Our new office support person is Helen Lang who works for the Asthma Society and occupies our foyer office. She is available for meeting room booking enquires from 11am-12noon and 1pm-3pm.

Our building is fully tenanted at present and the meeting rooms are fully utilised. Members are free to come to our building, located at 70 Forth Street, and make yourself a cup of tea or coffee, use the restrooms, read the local papers (available in the members lounge) or get some photo copying done.

There is also free parking available, and it's only a short stroll down an alley to Tay Street located opposite H&J Smith Ltd.

David Rose - Southland President

FRIDAY FLASH

Are you receiving Federated Farmers of New Zealand's weekly electronic newsletter?

It features the latest news, events and notices for members.

Register today by emailing "subscribe to the Friday Flash" to mail@fedfarm.org.nz, login to our website, www.fedfarm.org.nz, or phone 0800 327 646 to receive by fax.

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Prices on the rise

We have now reached the end of winter, but we are sure to receive reminders that spring is not quite here yet!



The Wool Company has been established and most in the industry now realises that we must work on substantially improving the price; doubling would only add a small increase to the price of carpet, but crossbred producers would start to consider wool again as an option.

Lamb, beef and venison prices have all moved up on the back of improved prices in our markets; with the dollar also moving in our favour. This coming season we are looking at greatly improved prices, as stock numbers for all red meat continues to fall worldwide (e.g. Australian sheep numbers are projected to drop a further five million on previous forecasts over the next three years. Due to higher grain prices and poor lamb and wool prices).

The food industry is where everybody wants to be in the future. Farmers need to secure their future through good industry structures and strategies so we can optimise the benefits of more sustainable prices for our products.

We brought Keith Woodford down for two meetings, held on 29th July, which were both very informative. His expertise as an independent commentator on the agricultural business sector was constructive and the discussions after his presentation invaluable.

Martin Hall - Southland Meat & Fibre Chairman



Surprised by clean roads

This year will certainly be remembered as one of high prices. It was a pity that Mother Nature decided not to do her bit, but that is the nature of farming. The predicted shortage of winter feed does not seem to have eventuated, I've heard of paddocks of crop without a home. The mild winter is helping out here.

During the week ending 18th July, I was involved in a meeting with the Gore District Council about their proposed new by-laws concerning the droving of stock. They were trying to restrict stock (both cows and sheep) to mobs of 500. The outcome was that they are going to revisit this and a sub-committee of farmers, including myself, has been set up to advise them on the appropriate changes.

The effluent spill on roads issue has gone quiet, but it has not gone away. The Southland Federated Farmer's stance is we can minimise it, but not eliminate it and Environment Southland (ES) has given no assurances that effluent stations, which are so badly needed, will be built in the near future.

I took a drive on Queen's Birthday Monday and was surprised at how clean the roads were, considering how much stock was being moved over that period. Even corners with reverse camber were clean. I congratulate all of you who were shifting stock over that period for your attention to stock preparation. Certain members of ES do not appreciate that stock will still dung even after being well prepared. In fact if they don't they are usually dead. The Federation will have further meetings with Environment Southland over



this issue before the end of the year to get the issue resolved.

We have also been involved in water quality issues that arose from the public meeting that was called by ES in the Workingman's Club earlier in the year. Some of the ideas that are coming forward will challenge our traditional methods, such as brassica wintering. There maybe some merit in what is said, but I feel we have to take a much wider view of things that will include economic consequences. There are many people out there who wish to limit our ability to produce food, that there is such a demand for, and their ideas are based on assumptions with no good science behind them.

We are in a golden age at the moment, but our income and New Zealand's will be compromised by vocal zealots who don't realise their own pockets will eventually be effected. I have had discussions with a farmer in Manawatu where Horizons are trying to implement their One Plan, where farmers production will be limited so nutrient leaching will be reduced. The method of doing this will be by the Overseer Program. As far as I know no physical testing will be done to confirm what the program predicts. This farmer has calculated that his gross income will be reduced by \$110,000 and his nett will be reduced by \$60,000.

Other regional councils around the country are holding up this plan as the standard. I had a meeting today with Bill English and I have asked him and the National Party to consider changing the RMA so that economic considerations be given a higher priority than they have now. An interesting comment by him made me think that not everyone in Wellington considers us as environmental vandals. Made reference that science does not always back our critics claims.

Rod Pemberton - Southland Dairy Chairman



Did you know that you can help your Province by nominating Federated Farmers as your agent? By doing this FMG will not only send you your standard insurance rebate, but they will also give their support to your local province.

You can do this by simply phoning FMG on 0800 366 466 and advising the call centre to amend your details.

Steve Beale, FMG Regional Sales Manager Southland/Otago, presents David Rose with a rebate cheque.

Thanks for your support

Ballance Farm Environment Awards



CONGRATULATIONS to Earl and Vicki Dillon of Gore for being the winners of the prestigious 2008 Ballance Farm Environment Awards for the Southland region. They also won the Ballance Nutrient Management Award, the Gallagher Innovation Award and the Hill Laboratories Harvest Award. A large number of farmers and rural professionals attended the field-day on their award winning property.

The overall objective of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards programme is to promote sustainable land management on New Zealand farms believing that role models and education are effective tools to improving farming practices.

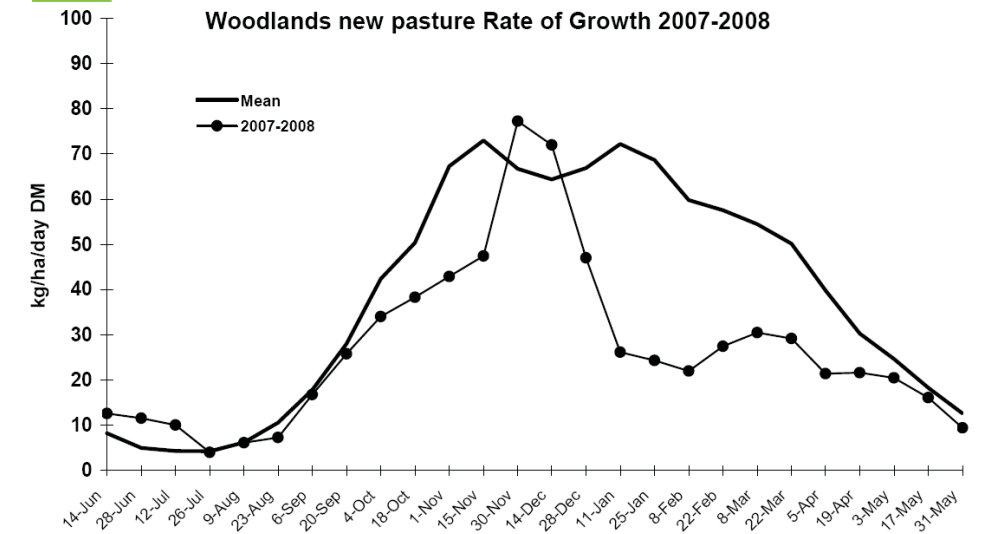
This objective is achieved by:

- The judging process, aims to keep the awards mutually enjoyable and informative.
- A commitment to practical solutions, which benefits people as well as the land.
- Support for diversity – there's never one right answer, it's about what works.
- The Award's deed requires the use of objective criteria to determine sustainable management where practical.

Entries for the 2009 Awards programme close on 15 December 2008. You can obtain entry information by visiting the official website for the Awards programme at www.bfea.org.nz or by contacting the Southland Regional Co-ordinator, Annabel Radford, on 03 248 7246.



Woodlands new pasture rate of growth



The Woodlands new pasture rate of growth graph above gives us real evidence to the extent of the summer drought in Southland. At Woodlands 14050kg/DM ha is normally grown, however, this last year only 9825kg/DM ha was grown. That is a massive 30 percent less. It is no wonder that farmers struggled to feed stock, let alone make winter supplements. Thanks to AgResearch for allowing us to use the data and to Ballance who sponsor the collection of the data. Woodlands data has been collected for the last 30 years.

Nuffield travels with Ali



At the beginning of July, half way through my Nuffield global focus tour, I realised that I was starting to think about agriculture and politics

and farmer networks in a much bigger way than just New Zealand. Travel has broadened my perspective. It occurred to me that this is exactly what the Nuffield Scholarship tour was meant to do, encourage me to think bigger and bolder and have confidence in myself.

When I first saw the Nuffield tour programme I felt overwhelmed at the pace and schedule that was being set for us. It turned out not only to be a logistical feat, worthy of being called 'The Amazing Race', it was also a physical endurance challenge. To spend 42 days travelling with 10 other people literally around the world to discover farming on four continents seemed an ambitious and slightly foolhardy task. How could we possibly make any sense of it? Yet that is exactly what we did. We shared meals with New Zealand, Irish, French, American and Chinese farmers, kicked dirt in their fields and debated issues. We saw produce markets, met with bankers and town planners. We met up with cooperate farmers, peasant farmers, farmers who lived on subsidies and farmers who had to sink or swim on their own initiative.

Farmers in each of these countries took the

time to explain their philosophy about farming and what they dreamed of. It has been a humbling and totally motivating experience for me.

I have now set off on my Nuffield solo travels searching for some ways to resolve the urban-rural disconnection. The pace will slow down and I will get to spend more time with people and to develop my thinking. So far everyone I have met has affirmed my study topic and shown an interest in being involved in it. I think that it is true that farmers around the world are feeling the same pressures from negative urban perceptions.

Over the next three months I will participate in a leadership course in America, work for two weeks with leading rural advocacy groups in the UK, meet with some French farmer activists and, I hope, co-lead a workshop with German and Austrian environmentalists and farmers. In between times I plan to visit past Nuffield scholars and learn more about farming and farm politics. There is a lot to do and take in. I aim to work hard and use this opportunity to really extend myself.

If you are interested in putting yourself forward for a Nuffield scholarship drop me an email: aundorflay@fedfarm.org.nz, I'd be more than happy to answer any of your questions or help you out with an application.

Ali Nuffield-Lay, Federated Farmers of NZ Provincial Communications Coordinator

Landscape changes concern

District Councils are required in the RMA, for better or worse, to protect outstanding landscapes. This requirement has resulted in a lot of conflict between various groups around the country, partly because the identification of landscape values is so subjective. This requirement usually has a disproportionate effect on rural families, simply because they rely on these landscapes for their business and their stewardship of these landscapes has generally resulted in the values that are now enjoyed by the general public. The impact is felt more acutely in areas near lakes, sea and mountains, spots usually known for their attraction to tourists and developers.



The Southland District Council is currently considering changes to the way landscapes are protected around the Te Anau area. The Council stress that they are only consulting on potential changes and will be driven by community feedback as to how they progress any formal plan change.

Federated Farmers recently responded to a discussion document released by Council that put options forward for expanding

landscape protection in the district. The submission pointed out that "Lines on maps are always contentious for farmers, particularly where they attempt to 'protect' rural working landscapes, primarily for tourism purposes. While we acknowledge that the landscapes around Te Anau are spectacular, the rural hinterland around the basin is largely a working landscape and should be treated as so within a planning context. Any protection of such landscapes inevitably has effects on farming activities within those landscapes."

The submission opposed any expansion of a scenic resource area surrounding the township and pointed out the potential implications for farmers in the area focusing on the potential to impact on or add compliance costs to

- Intensification and or change in land use.
- Planting of amenity trees.
- Integration of farm forestry into the business.
- Land prices (through reduced land use options).
- Sustainable (one or two) lot subdivisions – either to provide for other family members entering the business, farm succession or to provide for retiring debt or to fund expansion or intensification.
- Replacement of existing dwellings.
- Replacing or erecting new farm buildings.
- Undertaking maintenance of, or development of new access tracks or fence-lines.

Federated Farmers will continue to work with members and the Council to ensure that landscape protection in the district does not come at the cost of those who live work and play in the area. If you want a copy of our submission email mharcombe@fedfarm.org.nz

**Matt Harcombe - Federated Farmers of NZ
Local Policy South Island Team Leader**

New & improved website

The new and improved Federated Farmers website is up and running and will soon be a one-stop shop for members. Shortly members will be able to purchase and pay for items through the website as well as find possible employees for their farms. Both functions farmers have asked for.

A working group, comprising provincial presidents and Strategic Communications staff, worked in the development of the new website with the purpose of providing members a more functional and easier to use website. Feedback collected from members and staff drove the changes for the website.

Communications Advisor, Kara Tait says that the new website was an ideal place to showcase the Federation's new branding while also providing a more professional image for Federated Farmers.

Among the many new features on the website are 'Have your Say' and 'Polls'.

To date, the 'Have your say' feature has been extremely popular with members having the chance to air their opinions on topics such as, debating control in the meat industry and whether or not NAIT is on the right track.

The online polls, viewed in the members section, allow members to vote on various topics such as what they see as the biggest issue facing farmers. It also shows the results and gives an indication on how other members feel.

The feedback from both staff and Federation members has been positive, with both parties excited about the future enhancements in the not too distant future. The new look website went live in July 2008.

Phase two, of the website development project, will allow members the ability to pay their membership fees, purchase contracts or agreements, as well as access rural job vacancies across the country. It is planned that phase two will roll out in the next six months.

Phase three will allow members to update their details online in a more streamlined manner. The release date for phase three is to be confirmed.

While there are a number of new features on the website, the website address is still the same. Visit www.fedfarm.org.nz for a look at the new and improved site.

What's been happening locally & nationally?

LOCAL ISSUES



Matt Harcombe

Matt Harcombe, Federated Farmers of NZ local policy South Island team leader, (based in Dunedin) has been in the province helping us on several occasions with submissions and dealing with helping members on various issues. For example, with submission guidance on the Kaiwera wind farm and the Southland District Council by-law in Te Anau highlighting landscape issues. The stock driving by-law, the Gore District Council rushed through (without consultation), is also something Matt has expert knowledge on and is supporting Andrew Morrison and the Eastern Southland members in getting a better outcome.

Matt has also travelled down to help negotiate better outcomes on the water plan appeals, where his specialist knowledge is essential. There are several articles in this newsletter that Matt has written to keep members informed.

Matt is a member of the Federation's policy team of 23, each has their own specialist areas and they are all just a phone call away and happy to give advice, phone 0800 327 646. For Matt the five hour round trip to Invercargill is not ideal and he is not always available to travel when required. So we are endeavouring to fill the Invercargill policy advisor position, but it is not easy to fill the position in the current tight job market.

I am lucky to have a dedicated Southland executive team to lead this province. For example our Local Government spokesman, Doug Fraser, puts hours in to researching and writing our submissions. Other Executive members have their own responsibilities (see contact list on the back page) and are always supportive at the many meetings we attend. We are involved in several working groups with Environment Southland, helping put the rural voice forward as the discharge plan is developed and the new Regional Policy Statement. Our submissions to the Gore and Southland district councils, Environment Southland and Venture Southland are essential to make sure the rural point of view is heard. We work hard to have a working relationship with all councils, MAF, DOC, Department of Labour, Ministry for the Environment, Meat and Wool NZ, Public Health South, Rural Women and the newly formed Southland Rural Support Trust, plus many others. We do need new people to come forward to maintain our strong

team and we are looking at running a local leadership course later in the year. If you are interested in becoming more involved please get in contact with me.

NATIONAL ISSUES

Federated Farmers is about dealing with a huge range of issues that the average farmer does not have the knowledge, passion or time to do anything about. There have been almost 250 government strategy papers since 2000, combine this with a growth in bureaucrats from 26,000 to 36,000 and the growing knowledge gap between urban and rural community knowledge, and you can see why we are so busy representing you as the voice of farmers everywhere.

Our submissions often inject common sense into legislation before it ever comes out into the public arena. Our national team deal directly with the politicians and policy makers in Wellington on issues like ACC, access to land, adverse events, agri-chemicals, animal ID, animal welfare, antibiotic resistance, bees/varroa, biosecurity, border control, building industry, Business NZ, Climate Change, communications and conservation to name only a few. We have over 300 issues going at any one time and of course we prioritise our spending.

COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS

We are open to suggestions on any subject that is concerning you and we welcome your feedback. The easiest and cheapest way for us to communicate is by email. Fortunately, we can now communicate with the majority of our membership quickly by email. However, for those of you who don't have email, your calls via the 0800 327 646 are always welcome. We want to hear from you, wherever there is an issue, or whenever we may be able to offer advice or information.

The Friday Flash, weekly national email, is something that many members get. Refer to the advert in this newsletter on how to receive the Friday Flash.

Locally the Southland Executive needs your input and feedback, our contact details are listed on the last page of this newsletter.



Don Nicolson

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Don Nicolson who has done Southland proud in taking over as National President we also thank him for all the help and support he gives us and myself personally.

**David Rose - Southland
President**

Water plan continued focus

It's a long and often arduous process, negotiating appeals by various parties on a water plan and Southland has been no different. When an appeal (to the Environment Court) is made on a Regional Plan, other people who have submitted on those points, during the Council hearing process have a chance to join the appeal either as a directly affected party or as a group that has an interest in the appeal.

It is in this sort of situation where the role that Federated Farmers plays in RMA advocacy becomes critically important. Too often individually affected farmers will have no idea of an appeal taking place or, more importantly, its implications for them, even though they might have been submitters on a plan. Let's face it most farmers simply don't have the time or the inclination to scrutinise plan changes or lengthy appeals to discover the implications to their farming business.



Over the past few months Federated Farmers has been involved in negotiations on appeals on the Regional Water Plan. On a positive note many of the appeals have been or are close to being resolved, including managing the effects of spraying near and around waterways and clearing weed and sediment from waterways. Left outstanding is continued debate on a water quality standard, as a result of an appeal by Fish and Game, which has potential implications for continued stock access to water.

David Rose and others have invested time into this process on your behalf and have made a huge effort to understand the implications of the appeals and the detail of the water plan to ensure that negotiated outcomes are practical for farming in Southland. You can be assured, as negotiations continue, that Federated Farmers will seek nothing less.

**Matt Harcombe - Federated Farmers of NZ
Local Policy South Island Team Leader**

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Praise for farmers protecting waterways

Southland farmers have won praise from Environment Southland for changing their wintering practices to fence stock out of waterways.

Senior Land Sustainability Officer, Gary Morgan, said that there was widespread acceptance of the new rule which required stock to be kept at least three metres back from water courses during intensive winter grazing.

"We've been really pleased at the way many farmers have made the effort to keep their stock well back from waterways," Mr Morgan said. "Some have realised that the winter feed was planted too close to the stream or creek so they've put in temporary fencing to keep the stock at least three metres back."

Many farmers were break feeding their stock towards the watercourses rather than away from them, which allowed the crop to act as a buffer between the trampled mud and the water, and Mr Morgan said he hoped that next year all farmers would adopt that practice.

"There is a major loss of nutrients and increased silting from bare ground to waterways through winter grazing so it's important to maintain that buffer zone." Many farmers had also used temporary fencing to keep wintering stock at least three metres away from drains running through their paddocks.

The Council's three Land Sustainability Officers have also been contacted by many

farmers seeking advice about resolving particular issues on their properties, and were able to suggest flexible solutions for individual situations.

"We are very pleased with the way that most farmers have followed the new stock exclusion rule," Mr Morgan said. "There are a few who have been reluctant to comply and that is always disappointing, but most of the farmers we have contacted have been very willing to keep their stock away from watercourses because they understand what it's all about."

He and his staff would be reminding farmers to set their plough lines at least three metres back from watercourses in spring, when next year's feed crops were being planted. That would make compliance easier next winter.

Environment Southland has set up a trial to monitor a small catchment in Northern



Southland and measure the impact that intensive winter grazing is having on water quality. Samples are being taken at 10 sites before, during and after winter grazing.

The Council introduced the stock exclusion rule from 1st May after extensive consultation as part of moves to improve water quality throughout the region.

Contact:

Gary Morgan,
Senior Land Sustainability Officer
(03) 211 5115 for further comment.



Two examples of Southland properties where farmers have used temporary fencing to keep their stock at least three metres back from waterways. Ideally, the breaks would be set from the opposite end of the paddock, so the animals were grazing towards the water, as the crop would act as an additional buffer zone to filter out sediment and nutrients.

It can take just a phone call

When George and Marjorie Morrison rang Don Nicolson, President Federated Farmers of NZ, with the idea that Federated Farmers should look at the Canadian farmers' 'Farmers Feed Cities' campaign, I don't think he realised that we would have the opportunity



to visit their campaign manager in Toronto.

One of the great things about being a Nuffield scholar is the emphasis on spontaneity; being willing and able to follow a lead. Because I was visiting the Farm Bureau (the American version of Federated

Farmers of New Zealand in Washington), it was relatively easy and cheap to hop on a plane and fly up to Toronto.

I found Scott Allison, campaign manager for Farmers Feed Cities positive and enthusiastic. We had a great meeting where we talked over urban-rural politics and issues that we had in common. Scott said that their campaign was the Ontario farmers' response to the increasing lack of understanding that city people had about rural matters. The farmers wanted to remind their city neighbours that the food they ate was a healthy local product grown by people that they knew. They were also keen for city people to realise that the Canadian countryside was a working farm landscape, which was highly productive and profitable.

These arguments are the same that we use in Resource Management Act district and regional planning submissions when we want to remind councils that regulation

should not be set so high that it removes the right to farm. Farmers need to be able to work their land and grow food without having to constantly think about what consents they might need.

I was impressed with the Farmers Feed Cities campaign and I think it could work well here in New Zealand. I was also pleased that Federated Farmers is an organisation where a member feels welcome to ring a national president with a suggestion. We all have to take responsibility for making our organisation a more effective lobby group. George and Marjorie's story shows how even a phone call can make a difference.

If you are interest in reading more on Farmers Feed Cities visit their website:

www.farmersfeedcities.com.

Ali Undorf-Lay - Federated Farmers of NZ
Provincial Communications Coordinator

The long and winding road

Those almost timeless words from Lennon and McCartney are a great description of the outcome from the submission process to the Southland District Council on their proposed changes to the way they collect and allocate funding to roading in the district.



The Council adopted, as part of this year's annual plan process, a new model for funding their roading expenditure, based on various estimates of each sectors impact on the roading network. The adopted model was unchanged from the one that was consulted on in the annual plan and it generally provides for a substantial reduction in the roading rate for the sheep, beef and deer sectors and an increase for the dairy sector. Amounts

will vary widely between properties, but this amounts to an average saving of around \$425 for a sheep and beef property.

Federated Farmers put a huge effort into presenting some constructive alternatives to the model put up by the Council, which included changing the relative weightings between industrial, residential and farming sectors as well as introducing a new differential on tourism to more fairly reflect their impact on roading.

While our submission might not have resulted in any significant change to the policy, it has provided a robust platform for future debate. As part of its decision on the annual plan, Council has resolved to work with ratepayers to revisit the model as part of its consultation on its Long Term Plan in the coming year. We will continue to work proactively with the Council and other groups to ensure that the model provides a robust way of apportioning the cost of roads to ratepayers.

Changes to funding policies never come easily, it is a long and winding road, the important thing is that Council has adopted a model, whether we agree with it or not, at least we have a platform for robust debate. While their were winners and losers amongst our members, the adoption of capital value as a rating tool in itself is a strongly positive move. All we need to achieve now is to get the balance right between each sector. The journey down that road has already begun.

Matt Harcombe - Federated Farmers of NZ
Local Policy South Island Team Leader

Greetings from Paddy-Ann Pemberton

At fifty something I am relishing my new role as Recruitment Agent for Federated Farmers of NZ here in the lower part of the South Island that encompasses all of Southland and Firdland plus Queenstown Lakes District across to Milton and south of there.

I am married to Rod (currently Chairman of Dairy Southland) and we have four children in their twenties. Gemma has her own planning business in Queenstown; Holly is a hairdresser and currently a stay at home mum with our first grand baby; Bede and Chris are studying at Lincoln. Jon is an equity partner running the dairy operation at Te Tipua where we will milk 800 cows this season. We also have a property up behind Millers Flat where we are wintering the cows. Rod and I split our time between the two blocks.

I am a recently retired school teacher and also have the role of Gore District Town Crier. I belong to Hokonui Lions, Rural Women and the Gore Country Music Club. Rod and I enjoy travelling and being involved with all that farming brings both on and off the farm, home and abroad.

I am looking forward to meeting and speaking with more rural people to help grow the membership of the Federation.

Paddy-Ann Pemberton - Recruitment Agent



The meat industry debate

Federated Farmers has tried to promote the debate on a way forward for over a year. I think farmers have had enough of the endless meetings and articles especially when we have been denied information on the option for a PPCS/Alliance merger (PWC Report) and further information on the 80 percent option.

At Professor Keith Woodford meetings recently farmers were saying that the status quo is not an option. One of his key points was we need to have a pure co-operative (100 percent farmer owned) to keep the rest of the companies honest. The debate on the Silver Fern Farms deal with PGG Wrightson raged around whether it was a step forward or a step backwards towards a procurement war. Although many agreed with committed supply and 12 month contracts farmers know from experience that procurement wars reward the least committed and will further destroy confidence in the sheep industry.

David Rose - Southland President



Call for leaders

Federated Farmers of NZ 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 and using practical methods and workshops to suit hands-on types. There are two courses which promote both leadership and team building.

If you think that you can make a difference with some polished leadership skills give your President, David Rose a call, 03 235 2619, to discuss attending a course.

2008 COURSE DATES:
Getting Your Feet Wet
26-27 November 2008

Advanced
Leadership Skills
3-4 December 2008