

Report to the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee
from Wayne O'Donnell, Manager, Biosecurity

Amendments to the 1999/2000 Bovine Tb Vector Control Programme

1. Purpose

To obtain approval for amendments to the current year's Bovine Tb vector control programme following the Animal Health Board Technical Review meeting.

2. Background

In early September, staff from the Council and AgriQuality completed a presentation to Animal Health Board representatives concerning a proposed vector control programme and budget for the 2000/01 financial year. The presentation was the culmination of a series of internal programme reviews undertaken by the disease and vector control managers for the Wellington Region.

Prior to developing a proposed future programme, it was necessary to consider disease and vector control monitoring results for the 1998/99 year. This retrospective review was critical to identify whether there was any need to amend the 1999/2000 programme in order to maintain focus on achieving the long term Tb objectives for the region. Changes to the current year's programme would then impact on options for the 2000/01 year.

3. 1999/2000 Review Inputs

- (a) The review identified that a number of changes to the programme could be made as a result of favourable Tb infection levels, low residual trap catch results and savings made from lower than expected contract prices. Areas where more intense work was required were identified and prioritised. Seven current operational areas were recommended for additional works.
- (b) Sufficient funds were available to enable consideration of a new initial operation, named Taueru - Maungaraki Extension. This area is

approximately 7,750 hectares and is bordered by three existing operational areas, Taueru - Maungaraki, Te Wharau, and Ponatahi - Longbush. Currently, all three areas suffer from re-invasion problems across a combined 23km boundary. Approval of the Extension would reduce the re-invasion boundary to 7km.

- (c) Council staff were requested by AgriQuality to budget for a Tb vector survey in the Kapiti coastal sand country between the Ohau and Otaki Rivers. If this survey identified any Tb infection, then it is likely that a control programme would be requested for the 2000/01 year. The costs of the proposed survey would be fully met by the AHB.
- (d) AgriQuality and Council staff requested that the AHB consider an Eradication Zone (EZ) for a 60,000ha area in northwest Wairarapa. If approved, the EZ would reduce Council's financial share from the current 50% to 25%, thus providing further options for re-investment in vector control in other parts of the region.

4. Technical Review Outcomes

At the Technical Review meeting, AHB representatives were requested to approve the amendments to the 1999/2000 programme prior to considering options for 2000/01.

It was pleasing to note that, apart from the EZ proposal, all amendments were approved. The AHB agreed that the EZ proposal was technically sound and complied with the National Bovine Tb Strategy, but they were unable to secure additional funds for the current year.

The new 1999/2000 programme provides for an additional 14,150 ha to be completed within the existing approved budget. The new total equates to 260,900 ha.

Council's policy permits staff to make amendments to the approved programme within existing operational areas. However, any new initial operations must be approved by Council prior to commencement. The recommendations below request that approval for the Taueru-Maungaraki Extension.

5. Proposed 2000/01 Vector Control Programme

Staff have sought approval for an expanded EZ area in north-west Wairarapa, totalling approximately 100,000 ha.

They also requested a new, initial operation titled 'Ruamahanga River', totalling approximately 5,800 ha. This operation would link the current Waingawa and Martinborough operations.

Subsequent discussions have focused on the option of including a 'Tora' operation, totalling approximately 39,000 ha, in southeast Wairarapa.

Both of these initial operations would be dependent on Council funds becoming available from approval of the expanded EZ proposal. There would also be a requirement for some additional general rate funding if the Tora operation was to proceed.

The WRC Initiative Programme in non-operational areas would continue in 2000/01, with activities underway in the Tora - Tukurumuri; Lake Ferry - Whatarangi Road; and Moeraki – Ngakonui localities.

At a recent meeting staff were orally advised that the AHB had approved all 2000/01 vector control operations submitted at the Technical Reviews. The AHB will be writing to all Vector Control Managers in the near future to confirm their decisions.

It is suggested that vector control options for 2000/01 and beyond be considered at the Long Term Financial Strategy Review Committee workshop scheduled for 5th November.

6. Communications

Should Council approve the Taueru - Maungaraki Extension operation for 1999/2000, then all landowners in the area will be formally advised in writing.

Consideration will be given to a media release outlining changes to the current programme, particularly the opportunity to increase the total operational hectares without the need for additional funding.

7. Recommendation

- (1) *That approval be given to the proposed changes to the 1999/2000 vector control programme, including the Taueru - Maungaraki Extension operation.*
- (2) *That options for further programme alterations for 2000/01 and beyond, be considered at the proposed Committee workshop on 5 November..*

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