

**Report 99.246**

17 May 1999

File: Y/4/1

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

## **Bovine Tb Vector Control – WRC Initiative Programme**

### **1. Purpose**

To update the Committee on progress with the Council's new Bovine Tb vector control initiative in non-operational areas.

### **2. Background**

Report 98.229 (May 1998) and Report 98.303 (June 1998) considered options to commence vector control in non-operational areas using Bovine Tb reserve funds. Whilst Council agreed to a four year trial, it was considered appropriate for the funding to follow the funding policy for Bovine Tb works, i.e. a combination of Animal Health Board funds, general rate and Bovine Tb rates. A total of \$400,000 was agreed for the trial.

This new programme recognised that Council was unlikely to expand its vector control operations into new operational areas unless additional funding was made available. The trial envisaged initial control being undertaken by Council with an increasing management role by landowners during the maintenance phases. After three years, all control would be undertaken by the landowner.

Properties selected will be restricted to those with a I1 or I2 Tb status. Selection will occur in consultation and agreement with AgriQuality staff. All landowners are expected to sign a three year contract.

Approval for AHB funding of the programme was not provided until February 1999. This has delayed commencement of works this financial year.

### **3. Area Selection**

There are two areas in the Wairarapa which appear to be suitable for the Initiative programme. Discussions with AgriQuality staff have occurred to identify individual properties and appropriate control boundaries.

The first area includes a number of properties in the Taueru – Maungaraki Extension, an area proposed by AHB for formal control in 1998/99, but which was subsequently declined by the Council due to funding shortfalls. This area continues to have a persistent low level infection rate. Possum densities are likely to be high.

The second area being considered is in the Tora district. A number of landowners have approached Council to investigate control options following recent Tb outbreaks in previously clear cattle herds. This group is willing to actively participate in the programme. A mixture of ground and aerial control will be required if control proceeds.

The combined area being investigated totals 7,500 hectares.

The current vector control operations will receive priority before resources can be diverted to the Initiative programme. However, staff anticipate having the planning and development phases complete before year end with operational activities due to commence shortly after.

#### **4. Organisational Structures**

As this trial is additional to current programmes, it was decided that a separate operational unit was necessary to focus on development and implementation. A team leader and operational group have recently been selected. The team leader tasks will include selection of appropriate properties, meeting with affected landowners, agreement documentation, and organising control activities.

#### **5. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and the information noted.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

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