

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

Regional Pest Management Strategies – Annual Reports 1998/99

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 1998/99 Operational Plans for implementation of the Regional Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategies.

2. Background

On 2 July 1996, Council adopted the Regional Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategies for implementation during the period 1996 – 2001. The strategies contain objectives specific to individual pests and outline the means by which Council will achieve those objectives.

Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act requires a management agency to prepare an operational plan for each RPMS which it has approved. Furthermore, the agency must prepare a report on the plan and its implementation not later than five months after the end of each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy to the Minister of Biosecurity.

3. Comment

Appendix 1 contains the Annual Reports for the 1998/99 Operational Plans. The reports outline performance against targets set in the Plans. They also contain brief comments on particular issues that arose during the year. The Committee will note that the reporting requirements are significantly greater than that provided for the Council's Annual Report. The Act does include an option to use the Annual Report as the reporting mechanism. However, it is considered more transparent to utilise a specific reporting process during the term of the first RPMS. Council may decide that a more condensed reporting method is appropriate in the future.

New recording and reporting systems have been developed and refined over the last three years to ensure that the data collected and analysed is accurate and relevant. These systems are important tools for the provision of information for the upcoming review process.

The 1998/99 year continued the trend towards an increasingly aware public on pest issues. Urban residents, in particular, are becoming more knowledgeable about the negative environmental effects of pest plants and animals. Support for the KNE programmes is rapidly increasing, with a number of environmental groups becoming active participants. Similarly, knowledge of the Wellington City Old Man's Beard/Wild Ginger/Cathedral Bells inspection programme has improved with many landowners anticipating inspections in advance. There is no doubt that increasing publicity campaigns via community newspapers, public displays, field days, and Council publications have greatly assisted this change.

4. Highlights

Highlights for 1998/99 included:

- ◆ very successful possum control programmes in most KNE;
- ◆ development of strong working relationships with a number of key environmental organisations;
- ◆ assisted with the development of the Pest Eradication Assistance Programme which focuses mainly on mustelid control;
- ◆ achieved a 22% reduction in the regions rook population;
- ◆ completed a thorough survey of all rabbit prone land to assess the impact of RHD;
- ◆ developed a number of self help publications for various pest animals and plants;
- ◆ developed the KNE brand;
- ◆ attended a significant number of public forums where information on pests was disseminated;
- ◆ completed the random survey of Regional Surveillance plants in major urban areas;
- ◆ introduced amendments to the Wellington City inspection programme to increase the rate of progress across the City;
- ◆ issued a reduced number of legal notices;
- ◆ commenced control trials on a number of pest plants to determine suitable methods.

Further details on the highlights are contained within the Reports.

5. Communications

Public notices will be utilised to inform the public that the Annual Reports are available for inspection.

Copies will be forwarded to appropriate Ministers for their review and comment. A copy will also be forwarded to each Local Authority.

Consideration will be given to using Council's newspaper to provide a summary of the key issues.

6. Recommendation

- (1) *That the Committee, as the delegated Management Agency, approve the Annual Reports on the implementation of the 1998/99 Operational Plans for the Regional Pest Management Strategies.*
- (2) *That a copy of the Reports be forwarded to the Minister of Biosecurity.*
- (3) *That the Reports be made available for public inspection.*

Report prepared by:

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