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Report 00.807

10 November 2000

File: Y/19/0/4

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

Regional Pest Management Strategies - Annual Reports 1999/2000

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 1999/2000 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 (RPMS) 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 no later than five months after the end of the each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the Minister of Biosecurity.

3. Comment

Appendix 1 contains the Annual Reports for the 1999/2000 Operational Plans. The reports outline performance against targets outlined in the Plans. The Committee will note that the reporting requirements are significantly greater than that required 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 separate reporting process, at least during the first term of the RPMS. Council may decide that a more condensed reporting method is appropriate in the future.

Recording and reporting systems have been continually reviewed and, where appropriate modified, over the past four 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 RPMS review process that has recently commenced.

4. Summary

The 1999/2000 year continued the focus on raising the public's awareness of pest management issues. Urban residents, in particular, are becoming more knowledgeable about the negative environmental impacts of pest plants and animals. There continues to be little negative reaction from ratepayers as staff implement the RPMS.

Conversely, there has been increasing support for the Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) programmes, the Wellington City pest plant control programme and investigations into the potential impacts of pests such as the magpie research project.

Demand for publications, advice and information continues to grow as landowners seek to understand more about the effects of pests and determine what options they may have to implement self help control programmes. There continues to be growth in the number of environmental non-government organisations who are becoming active participants in pest management. It is important that Council continues to foster relationships with these groups in the interest of promoting our biodiversity objectives.

5. Highlights

Highlights for 1999/2000 include:

- commencement of pest plant surveys in KNE areas;
- completion of the WRC pest animals eradication project in the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary;
- increased initial surveys in the Wellington City pest plant control programme following the introduction of random maintenance inspections;
- completion of possum control operations in 39 KNE areas;
- noticeable increase in the distribution and success of the Ragwort Flea Beetle biocontrol agent;
- commencement of Stage 1 of the magpie research programme to determine impacts on native bird species;
- completion of the second year's control programme for Manchurian Wild Rice in Waikanae;
- completion of a successful rook control programme, with a 30% population reduction being achieved.

Further details on the highlights are contained within the Reports.

6. Communications

Public notices will be utilised to inform the public that the Annual Report is available for inspection. Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers for their review and comment. A copy will also be forwarded to each Local Authority.

Consideration will be given to using Elements to provide a summary of the key issues.

7. Recommendation

- (1) *That the Committee, as the delegated Management Agency, approve the Annual Reports on the implementation of the 1999/2000 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:

Approved for submission by:



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Colin Wright
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Attachment: Appendix 1 – RPMS Annual Reports 1999/2000