



Report **06.2**
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Committee **Ara Tahi**
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Off farm disposal facilities for animal carcasses

1. Purposes

- (i) To inform Ara Tahi about an initiative being undertaken by Greater Wellington and Biosecurity New Zealand to identify areas where off-farm disposal of animal carcasses could occur during a biosecurity emergency.
- (ii) To seek guidance on how best to get iwi input into this process.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) is currently developing contingency plans for the disposal of carcasses which would arise in the event of a biosecurity emergency such as an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. A fundamental part of this exercise is identifying and mapping broad areas where disposal sites could be located.

This task is being completed using an exclusion process, i.e., identifying and mapping areas that are not likely to be suitable for off-farm disposal facilities. Unsuitable areas or sites include such things as: areas where contaminants could affect drinking water sources, areas close to residential development, or on unstable ground. Areas of cultural significance to iwi are also areas to be avoided. The disposal areas will also need to be relatively close to farming areas.

There are three general techniques for disposing of animal carcasses by burial:

- Pit/trench burial;
- Landfill disposal;

- Mass burial.

Pit/trench burial will generally be used for a single herd or farm and be located within the farm property. Landfill disposal will utilise existing, consented, landfills to dispose of carcasses with other refuse. Mass burial will involve the development of facilities with one or more large burial pits or trenches over an extensive area for the disposal of very large numbers of carcasses. These would involve some form of engineered containment and/or leachate collection systems. To ensure the disposal facilities are built to a standard that optimises protection, BNZ has prepared *Construction Specifications for Carcass Burial Facilities*. These have been reviewed and agreed to by regional councils throughout the country.

Burial exclusion mapping pilot projects have been completed with Environment Waikato and Horizons Regional Council.

4. What's involved?

Preparing the burial exclusion maps will largely be a GIS exercise and will be conducted by Greater Wellington's GIS staff. The exclusion criteria used in the pilot projects were:

- Land use
- Geology / soils
- Surface hydrology
- Hydrogeology
- Site stability
- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Culturally significant areas
- Topography; and
- Regional/district values.

A first cut of the burial exclusion map has been prepared and is attached to this report for Ara Tahi's information.

5. Iwi input

We need to include areas of significance to iwi in the exclusion mapping exercise and seek feedback from Ara Tahi about the most effective way of gathering this information.

GIS layers of areas of significance to iwi have been developed for the western region from information contained in district plans and using New Zealand Archaeological Association data. These could provide an initial basis for identifying areas needing to be excluded.

Ara Tahi should note that Biosecurity NZ has indicated that if a mass burial facility is ever needed there would be direct consultation with the affected iwi at the time. However, in a biosecurity emergency time would be of the essence to contain the biosecurity threat.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receive** the report;
2. **Note** the contents; and
3. **Advise** staff how information from iwi should be gathered for inclusion in the preparation of the burial exclusion mapping exercise.

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Attachment 1: Biosecurity New Zealand suitable sites map