

Biosecurity Manager's Report Wayne O'Donnell

For period ending 28 July 2006

Pest Animals

1. KNE Operational Update – Predator Control

Maintenance operations culling possums and rats continue at 59 sites in the Western zone. Maintenance covering a wider range of predators continues at 16 sites in the Eastern zone. The more rural areas allow a larger range of control methods to be used as compared to high public use metropolitan reserves. The maintenance programmes have been successful in maintaining possums, rats and other pests at low levels in all of these areas over the past year using a mixture of anti-coagulant baits and kill traps. This work is ongoing.

First phase maintenance work will occur at Pikarere Farm (Titahi Bay), Flux covenant (Upper Hutt), and the Wainuiomata Mainland Island this coming year.

Six new sites will have predator control commencing this financial year. They are Woodburn Drive Bush in Tawa, Long Gully in Wellington, Ara Harakeke in Porirua, Korokoro Reserve on the Western Hutt Hills, Dry Creek in Belmont Regional Park and one, conditional on funding, at Hongoeka Bay.

There are also a number of QEII covenants that require assistance with pest animal control. The Department will be working with GW's Biodiversity Co-ordinator, Tim Porteous, to secure funding for these operations.

2. Rewanui

Staff are ready to set up the long-term integrated predator control programme at Rewanui located 23kms east of Masterton. Rewanui is a farm of 334 hectares which has significant stands of native bush and areas of production forestry. Rewanui is administered by the Montford Trimble Foundation who are working to enhance the native bush blocks and make them accessible to the public. Seventy control sites will be established during August to target a suite of predators ranging from mice and rats to mustelid species and feral cats. GW funding is being matched by the Foundation, predominantly through a Biodiversity Condition Fund.

3. Rabbit Control

Rabbit control is going to be undertaken at GW's Queen Elizabeth Park. There has been an ongoing problem for some time and new amenity plantings and sand erosion control are being compromised. Rabbits have already started to breed which is of concern this early in the year.

Staff are going to assist the occupier of a rabbit prone Peka Peka property to help fumigate and close some large warrens that developed when rabbit numbers increased for a short period during the previous very long dry summer. The destruction of burrows and warrens will reduce the breeding habitat and the potential for a rabbit population increase in this spring. This will be a cost recovery operation but will also include some allowance for staff training as there have been very limited opportunities over the past 8 years for staff to participate in a larger scale fumigation exercise.

4. Magpie Traps

The availability of magpie traps to occupiers continues to be popular with no sign of easing. Those that have had success often build their own based on the model supplied or purchase the commercially available two-berth Arcane trip-trap.

5. Bird Counts

Wellington City Council has completed another round of the annual bird monitor of their public reserves that have ongoing rat and possum control. All of the native bird species have continued their trend of increasing numbers with some of the smaller birds having a big increase. These results are extremely pleasing and once again prove the benefits of keeping possums and rats at low levels all year round.

6. Publicity

Two new pest animal information brochures will soon be available. The feral and unwanted cat brochure is in the print process and the feral ungulates (pigs, deer and goats) brochure is in final draft.

Four banners have also been produced based on the feral and unwanted cat brochure. These supplement other banners on pest animal and plant themes. These colourful banners convey the main message in a succinct manner and have proved to be a winner at getting the message across at schools and other public display opportunities.

7. Research – Adding to the Tools

Cholecalciferol 'Gel' bait for possum control is in the final stages of registration and will then be available for use. Development has been ongoing for the last 6-7 years and it may provide a very good tool for maintenance control. Cholecalciferol has been available in other non 'Gel' bait formulations for several years.

Staff are currently trialling two new products. The first is a rodent proof bait vehicle that has been designed for use in possum kill traps. Most kill traps are only effective if they are baited. If that bait gets taken by rats (which usually don't set the trap off) the trap is rendered useless until the bait is replaced. This new bait vehicle has grooves in it into which paste bait is wiped. The grooves are set at such a depth and distance that rats cannot get their teeth in to take the bait, yet the aroma and taste sensation remains for possums.

The second product is a glow tag that has a photo luminous coating that glows in the dark. Pest Animals staff have used fluorescent glow paste before with good results but have been looking for a longer lasting product. This glow tag is backed with aluminium to deter rodents from chewing it to bits. It is hoped that this will be a good addition to the traditional flour and icing sugar lure that has been used for many years.

Pest Plants

1. Contractors

In late June a contractors meeting was held to review performance over the 2005/06 year. Issues of concern were discussed and changes agreed to contract specifications for 2006/07. Good feedback was received from the contractors concerning the performance of the staff contract managers. Ideas put forward by the contractors were considered and incorporated where appropriate. All contractors that registered their interests last year have registered again for 2006/07 contracts.

2. Eradication species

2.1 Smilax

In recent months significant infestations of smilax have been located throughout the Wairarapa and in particular around Kahutara. It is hoped that the biocontrol rust currently sweeping the country will assist with natural management of infestations. The rust is known to exist in northern Wairarapa. A meeting has been held with DoC to discuss the issues surrounding the control of smilax in South Wairarapa. They have agreed to undertake control of all infestations in their reserves on an annual basis.

2.2 Climbing spindleberry

An aerial survey has been undertaken at Mt Bruce to determine the full extent of the infestation in this area. Due to the ruggedness of the terrain around the Ruamahanga River at Mt Bruce, an aerial survey was deemed to be the most cost effective option. Work will be undertaken on this site toward the end of the financial year as this is the best time to observe it is when the leaf is turning.

After considerable delay, staff are planning to undertake the work on the infestation on private land in South Wairarapa in early August.

2.3 Maderia vine

This species appears to be sought after by members of the Asian community, who are propagating it as a food source. This is of real concern as it adds a new dimension to the problems associated with this species. This situation has arisen in both Wellington and Kapiti. Staff are preparing a communications strategy to inform the Asian community of the environmental and legal risks associated with propagation of a banned plant.

2.4 Eradication species survey:

During the year inspections occurred on approximately 4000 properties throughout the region in search of eradication species. Most of the focus has been around known sites but a concerning trend was that 4% of these properties contained new infestations.

2.5 Tauherenikau-Biodiversity Fund Project Achievement

A very favourable report was given by DoC regarding this project. The funding is over a two year period. The summary statement follows: “The general comment was a very well conceived, planned and implemented project. The integrated management of this project shows the benefits of such an approach, so that pest plants are not controlled in isolation.” This feedback places GW in a positive position for the application of funding for other KNE sites from the Crown Biodiversity Fund.

Bovine Tb Update

1. Overview: 2005/06 Programme

1.1 The approved 2005/06 programme included:

- 420,860 ha possum control
- 56,114 ha of ferret and possum surveys
- 75,135 ha of pig surveys

Pig surveys were implemented over a wide area and samples were provided by BioWorks, preferred suppliers (hunters), and occupiers.

1.2 The following table summarises the areas let for the 2005/06 year. This table also includes 41,029 ha with a completion date of 30 August 2006, which was deferred at AHB’s request.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	98,088	0	10,319	108,407
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	119,243	0	22,812	142,055
Target Pest Control	59,619	0	0	59,619
Professional Guiding	66,084	0	17,624	83,708
J McCaslin	3,346	0	5,389	8,735
To Determine (South East Wai - Stage 3)	21,717	0	0	21,717
Carry Forward	9,881	0	0	9,881
Remove Control	42,882	0	0	42,882
Totals	420,860	0	56,144	477,004

- 1.3** The following table details areas of the 2005/06 programme which have been completed. These areas have been assessed by performance monitor or audit of feral survey. Completed areas are 77% of the contracted programme (finishing date of 30 June). However, contractors considered they had completed 95% of the programme with many strata waiting to be monitored or work still underway.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	55,927	0	10,319	66,246
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	58,757	0	22,812	81,569
Target Pest Control	50,805	0		50,805
Professional Guiding	54,289	0	17,624	71,913
J McCaslin	3,346	0	5,389	8,735
To Determine (South East Wai - Stage 3)	21,717	0		21,717
Deferred Work (BioWorks)	41,029	0		41,029
Carry Forward	9,881	0		9,881
Remove Control	42,882	0		42,882
Control and/or Monitor To be Completed	82,227	0		82,227
Totals	420,860	0	56,144	477,004

1.4 Allocation of programme

Possum control	223,124	46.8%
Ferret survey	56,144	11.8%
Removed control	42,882	9.0%
Deferred (BioWorks)	41,029	8.6%
Carried forward	9,881	2.0%
Not let (SEW 3)	21,717	4.6%
Completed – not monitored	42,320	8.8%
To be completed	39,925	8.4%
Total:	477,004	100.0%

1.5 Contractor performance (area completed %)

	Possum	Survey	Total
BioWorks	65	100	84
Target Pest Contracting	85	N/A	85
Professional Guiding Services	82	100	86
J G McCaslin	100	100	100

1.6 Monitoring pass rate

Contractor	Fail	Pass	Total	Pass Rate %
BioWorks	11	48	59	81
Professional Guiding Services	2	16	18	89
Target Pest Contracting	3	19	22	86
J G McCaslin	0	3	3	100

1.7 Trend monitoring

Completion of the trend monitoring programme was not achieved during the 2005/06 year. Twelve trend monitors were uncompleted. This is essentially due to 16 performance contracts failing and re-works/re-monitoring being required.

Trend monitors to complete include:

- Homewood-Riversdale MR 1
- Homewood Riversdale MR 2
- Homewood-Riversdale HMR 4
- Ponatahi-Longbush HR 1
- Ponatahi-Longbush HR 2
- South East Wairarapa – Stage 1 HR 2
- South East Wairarapa – Stage 1 HMR 1
- South East Wairarapa – Stage 1 HMR 5
- Te Wharau HMR 5
- Te Wharau HMR 6
- Te Wharau HR 10
- Woodside MR 1

2. Issues

2.1 South East Wairarapa – Stage 3 (33,180 ha)

Approximately 21,717 ha is still to be let, this includes the Aorangi Forest Park. The landowners in this area have all been contacted and their support for a programme has been obtained. Approvals have been obtained from the Medical Officer of Health, Department of Conservation, and a Resource Consent has been issued.

A tentative date of 2 August 2006 onwards for the aerial treatment has been agreed upon with some farmers, with consideration to the onset of lambing and winter feed shortages. There are still issues to be resolved:

- Gaining final resolution of the Stonewall control methodology between all interested and affected parties.
- Ensuring the deer repellent complies with ERMA labelling requirements for 1080.

We are confident that both of these issues will be resolved in early August. Contract documents have been issued for the preparation of operating plans and pricing.

2.2 2006/07 Programme

The AHB have approved a control programme for the 2006/07 year with an approximate value of \$4.4M. The following areas are included:

- 263,853 ha possum control
- 57,952 ha surveys
- Performance and trend monitoring

2.3 Tendering

To date four contracts containing five stratum have been let:

- 11,770 hectares to Target Pest Contracting;
- 7,031 hectares to Professional Guiding Services

A second parcel of contracts for 16,918 ha has been tendered, with evaluation scheduled for early August.



Wayne O'Donnell
Manager, Biosecurity

Flood Protection (Wairarapa) - Acting Manager's Report Ian Gunn

For period ending 28 July 2006

1. Flood Protection

As outlined in Report 06.379 the focus in July has been on the flooding events.

Work has commenced towards gaining a global consent for river work in the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme. The consultants, Montgomery Watson Harza, have been engaged to develop the documentation.

Staff are reviewing the progress with the various schemes works programmes and will employ more resources where necessary to ensure that the work programmes do not significantly fall behind with the need to divert resources towards flood damage repairs.

The rivers Asset Management Plans are being reviewed jointly by the Flood Protection staff in Wellington and the Wairarapa. Staff from the two offices are also providing input to a study into the possible purchase of an Asset Management information system to better record data on the assets managed by Flood Protection.

Staff have provided input into the new structure for delivering the Flood Protection function of the Regional Council.



Ian Gunn

Land Management - Manager's Report Dave Cameron

For period ending 28 July 2006

1. Akura Conservation Centre

Akura Conservation Centre has been operational since 1st June and has experienced a strong period of selling. The bad weather through the early part of July had slowed sales to some degree, however this aspect has picked up in the latter part of July. A number of new clients have come on board as a result of the floods and slipping and this is putting pressure on poplar and willow supplies.

Tree stocks are also in good demand, through a range of external clients and internal programmes. Projects such as Streams Alive, Enaki and Papawai are drawing ecosourced trees from Akura.

All poles should be cut and ready for sale by mid-August. Land Management planting programmes are well on track to have these poles planted by the end of August. Soil conditions are very good at present and the various planting gangs are making good progress while conditions are favourable.

2. July Rainfall Events

Heavy rainfall was experienced across much of the Wairarapa hill country in the first week of July. Heaviest falls were experienced in the Hinakura area where 72 hour totals peaked at 490 mm. Elsewhere general rainfall of 200mm or greater was recorded.

Slip damage as a result of these very heavy falls is reasonably widespread, with extensive slipping occurring in a number of localised areas. Broadly these are Whangaehu, Bideford, Westmere, Maungaraki, Hinakura and Awhea. The damage would be as severe as that which occurred in August 2004, and on some properties as severe as the disastrous winter of 1977.

In addition to the effects to on-farm infrastructure such as tracks, fences and yards, there has been considerable damage to district council roads. This is particularly severe in the Awhea catchment where urgent repairs have been carried out to prevent total loss of access. Further work, in conjunction with the Awhea Catchment Scheme is planned over the next month.

3. Farm Environment Awards

The Sustainability Showcase for regional winners was held recently in Rotorua. For the regional winners this is a two day event where they attend workshops, make presentations, and attend the Showcase dinner. This is a very worthwhile gathering where common themes about the winners and their properties are gathered into educational publications and promotional material.

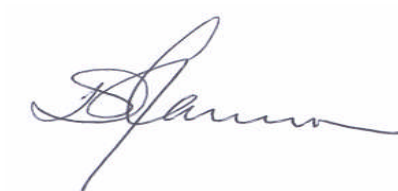
Locally, the Management Committee have been focussing on how to attract more entrants. This would seem to be mostly a matter of 'knocking on doors' and in this regard a designated person will undertake this role for 2007. Jamie Strang, our Judging Co-ordinator for the last five years has resigned, and an advertisement will be placed shortly to find a replacement. Jamie will assume the role of gathering entrants.

It has been six years since the Awards were introduced and it is probably an appropriate time to take stock and review them.

4. Papawai Stream Restoration Project

This project featured in the recent Local Government Conference tour and is a good example of an integrated catchment approach to stream restoration. The Papawai is a stream of high cultural significance, it is subject to a wide range of land uses within its catchment, and therefore has a number of issues for the community. Collectively the wider community have gathered to identify issues and prepare action plans to address these issues.

Central to this community effort has been the role of Greater Wellington staff. They have ensured that the process is community driven, have supported and coerced where necessary and have engaged other members of the community such as the Primary school to take an active role in planting days. This approach to catchment management has wide application throughout the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Cameron', written in a cursive style.

Dave Cameron