

MONO-CULTURE FARMING HAS DEGRADED our New Zealand Environment.

Farming in New Zealand today is nothing to what it was 30 years ago. The small family farms are few and far between, the mixed crop-livestock farms have become Mono-culture farms.

In the last 20 years there has been a massive shift of farms converting to dairying everywhere in Canterbury. The countless millions of dollars needed to convert is insane. So you see the mono-culture dairying is nothing but Agribusiness controlled by the Banks. Modern dairy farming is an illusion anyway as they need another farm to graze their cows through the winter months. Does this mean their cow numbers are too high to be sustainable on their own farm? We all know dairy cows are huge nitrate producers, add irrigation and no crop rotation and you have degradation of farm land and our environment.

Nitrates are now too high in our rivers to swim. Toxic algae that can kill your dog. Chemical sprayed paddocks are the norm, cutting down tree shelter for the pivot-irrigation and the use of synthetic fertilizers. All this has degraded our environment that we live in today, and it's all about short-term profit at the long term expense of our environment. At the end of the day it has happened because farmer's got greedy and they jumped on the band-wagon of more profit and of course without the Banks funding them they couldn't have done the conversion anyway.

In 1891, Sir John Mckenzie the then minister of agriculture, land and immigration passed a 'Land Act' that divided the then 89 land barons that farmed New Zealand into 1,694 family farms, home-steads, for mixed crop-livestock farming. He was a great man that had much foresight and those family farms have served New Zealand well for a hundred years without polluting our rivers. We have to give credit to the hard work of those families who built this country from farming the proper way: the mixed crop-livestock principles which my father practiced.

MONO-CULTURE FARMING has never worked and never will. The practice is doomed to fail. Everywhere in the world it has failed. Mono-culture grain growing has made deserts in so many countries. In just 25 years Mono-culture dairying has heavily polluted our rivers. Even sheep farmers have gone mono-culture and are not growing crops any more. **The high nitrates in our rivers is this countries biggest environmental problem, all due to Mono-culture farming practices. But all problems have an answer and this is why going back is actually going forward.** It is simple, it is called crop rotation. After grazing animals on a paddock for 8 years (dry land farming) the soil is then ploughed and a crop is planted, wheat barley oats potatoes etc. This crop mops up the nitrates from those years of accumulated animal manure. No fertilizer is needed to produce good crops. Crops are grown for two years only and then put back into pasture. Job done. The nitrates are used up and there's no nitrates left to leach into water ways. Crop rotation works and has worked for hundreds of years. Of course with dairy farms there is a lot of irrigation leaching, so the rotation of crops would have to be grown in a shorter cycle of four years. (Irrigated land.) It is vital for our children's future, it is urgent that New Zealand Mono-culture dairying, beef and sheep farming needs to change. All the dairy farmers need to do is move back to the crop rotation principles on their farms. Simple ! We could say ban dairying, we could say make a law to enforce the dairy farmers to apply the crop rotation principles, but we are not. But what we are saying and what we would like to see is that the Agricultural Universities like Lincoln Massy etc. to set up a dairy farm model applying the crop rotation principles for their own farms. In turn advocating and educating all farmers to adopt these principles. It may take time to clean the rivers, because nitrates are on the move from farms to river now and will continue even when the farms have stopped emitting.

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