

Tb vector control programme for Canterbury

Report from Environment Canterbury's bovine Tb vector management team

Tendering underway

Environment Canterbury is undergoing the large task of tendering contracts for Tb vector control throughout Canterbury. Presently 98 possum and ferret control operations are open for tenders and more will be tendered throughout the year. A registration of interest was advertised throughout the South Island and a

large number of contractors responded. Almost all contractors met the minimum standards required. Eleven tenderers are now pricing the operations and six monitoring companies have been chosen as preferred suppliers to the Canterbury region. Tenders closed on 23rd June.

Hunter Hills autopsies

Progress in the Hunter Hills, of South Canterbury, which is the final operation to get underway for the current year 2003-04, has been good despite tight deadlines and the operation being brought forward a year. 1800 possums will be autopsied from this large job which covers more than 56,000 ha. This is the largest number of possums to ever be autopsied from one operational area in Canterbury. Collecting, freezing, and transporting 1800 possums has proved to be a large task for Tb Management Officer Matt Hickson. As well as co-ordinating with operator Leith Contractors, Matt had to hire a large freezer truck and trailer for transport and storage, to aid in transporting frozen possums off the block to AgriQuality's Invermay research centre for autopsy. More than 1000 frozen possums have so far made the journey - none of whom were willing passengers.

New control programmes

Three major new operations are planned in the year 04/05. Contracts will be let for large initial operations to control possums at Lees Valley (Ashley Pest District), Glens of Tekoa and Island Hills stations (Amuri Pest District) and Inland Road West (Amuri Pest District). This will involve both ground and aerial control methods. In the next financial year Environment Canterbury will let contracts for 74 bovine Tb control operations on behalf of the Animal Health Board. Most of these are follow-up operations. For the first time in many years there will be no Animal Health Board-funded work for Banks Peninsula, which has been declared Tb-free.



Tb Management Officer Phil Spencer (left) and bovine Tb and Contracts Manager Kevin Gallagher (right) with the tender documents.

Pest management people at Environment Canterbury

Pest Portfolio Chairman: Cr Robert Johnston, phone (03) 312-4166, fax (03) 312-3085. Robert is also a member of the Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee and a director of Target Pest Enterprises.

Portfolio Manager, Biosecurity / Pest Management: Rob Phillips is responsible for co-ordinating overall portfolio activities including advising Council and ensuring the achievement of outputs and outcomes.

Planning and policy formulation: Christchurch-based Senior Resource Management Planner Ray Maw is responsible for policy advice on biosecurity issues.

Bovine Tb: Kevin Gallagher is the Bovine Tb and Contracts Manager. He is responsible for managing the Tb vector control programme as part of the national pest management strategy within Canterbury. He is based at the Christchurch office, (03) 353-9009 extn 7320.

Biosecurity Manager: Responsible for implementing the regional pest management strategy. The new Biosecurity Manager is Graham Sullivan. Phone (03) 688-9069 extn 8835.

The biosecurity section is organised into three teams:
The Northern Area Team Leader is Laurence Smith in Amberley. Amberley Biosecurity Officers are Terry Charles, Lance Smith, Peter Morgan and Jan Crooks, (03) 314-8014.
 Cheviot Biosecurity Officers are Noel Crump and Tom Kirkwood, (03) 319-8614.

The Kaikoura Biosecurity Officer is Peter Adams (duties combined with river engineering), (03) 319-5781.

The Central Area Team Leader is Rob McCaw in Christchurch.

Christchurch Biosecurity Officers are Jenny Williams, Stephen Brown and John Thacker, (03) 365-3828.

The Darfield Biosecurity Officer is Errol Barnes, (03) 318-8155.

The Little River Biosecurity Officer is Jock Bulman, (03) 325-1103.

The Southern Area Team Leader in Timaru is Brent Glentworth. Timaru Biosecurity Officers are Phil Crotty Terry Broughton, (03) 688-9069.

Target Pest Enterprises Ltd is an Environment Canterbury owned company that provides pest control services throughout the Canterbury region. Paul Ash is its General Manager, (03) 353-9001 (Christchurch).

Pay us an e-visit

Copies of this and past issues of this newsletter are available on Environment Canterbury's website at www.ecan.govt.nz. If you would like to see more information on this site about animal and plant pest management, please phone Portfolio Manager, Biosecurity/Pest Management, Rob Phillips on (03) 353-9009 ext 7069.

www.ecan.govt.nz

E04/35

July 2004

Pest News

A newsletter about pest management in Canterbury

New Regional Pest Management Strategy

Finalising a new regional pest management strategy took a further step forward when Environment Canterbury councillors endorsed the recommendations of its Hearing Committee that considered the 360 submissions made on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy (2003).

The recommendations reflect that there is a general satisfaction with what the strategy sets out to achieve, bearing in mind that much of the 1998 strategy remains in place.

The decisions of the Hearing Committee will be provided to all submitters by 31 July 2004.

Submitters have fifteen working days to lodge an appeal on any decision made relating to their submission.

The new Strategy will most likely take effect from 1 July 2005.

The significant changes include:

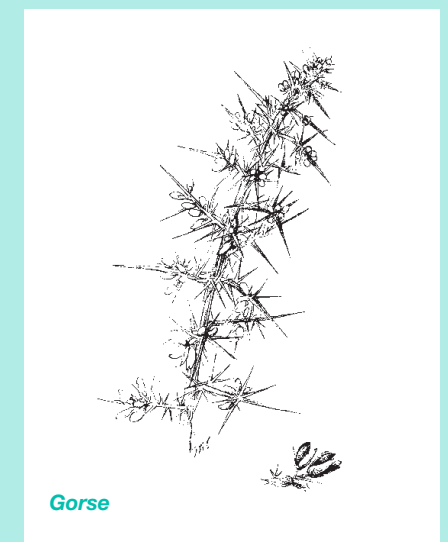
- A biodiversity pest programme including magpies, banana passionfruit, Darwin's barberry, bell heather, lagarosiphon, sycamore, red-flowering currant, ash and holly. This programme specifies targeted control in high-value environmental areas.
- Transferring old man's beard from the containment programme to the biodiversity pest programme with control in targeted areas.
- Adding possums to the containment control programme within targeted areas agreed to by landowners.
- Providing for groups of landowners to determine local programmes providing higher standard of pest control for their particular area. This provision is called a Community Initiative Programme.
- An indication that the responsibility for pest plant control on roadsides will become the responsibility of the roading authorities by 1 July 2010, or at some earlier agreed date.



Broom



Nodding Thistle



Gorse

Zero tolerance for phragmites



Phragmites australis

Wetland enemy *Phragmites australis* is high on Environment Canterbury's most wanted list.

If it gets a foothold in Canterbury, it is likely to compete with native plants like flax and raupo and adversely affect other species like the Canterbury mudfish, freshwater mussels, eels, freshwater crayfish, and invertebrate species like midges, snails and worms.

It usually grows as a dense, tall reed bed that can completely cover small water bodies. It spreads mainly through underground stems and is usually found beside still or slowly flowing water bodies.

Please contact Environment Canterbury if you see anything that looks like this plant but which you know is not raupo. Phone central regional biosecurity teamleader, Rob McCaw on (03) 365-3828 extn 7262.

Wild thyme targeted

Environment Canterbury biosecurity staff have been working to eradicate a 34 hectare infestation of wild thyme at Loburn in North Canterbury. Ground and helicopter spraying have been used to attack the invasive weed that has yet to gain a foothold in Canterbury.

With the initial eradication now complete at Loburn, monitoring will be carried out next year to assess if further follow up is required.

A second operation has been carried out in the Rangitata Gorge in South Canterbury, where spraying operations will be required for several more years to eradicate the plant.

Scheduled tree planting at the Rangitata Gorge site has been postponed to allow spraying of the wild thyme. Thyme can destroy habitats particularly in stony areas like braided river margins.



Wild thyme

Snippets from Pest Liaison Committee Meetings

Pest groups work

Pest control groups on the peninsula must work together. Banks Peninsula Pest Management Liaison Committee chairman Paul de Latour said that it is important the groups talk regularly. Mr de Latour said that his Committee was working well with other groups like the Department of Conservation, the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust and Environment Canterbury.

"The main thing is that we talk" he said. Other examples of co-operation are the work with feral goat control. Mr de Latour said this forum is important. It is a public meeting and it is pleasing to see so many organisations taking an interest. It is important all landholders tell the committee what they think.

Magpies

Land occupiers should control magpies on their own land says the Banks Peninsula Pest Management Liaison Committee. Committee chairman Paul de Latour said that landowners were best positioned to control magpies because they are most likely to see exactly where magpies are affecting native birds on their own properties.

He said that a Landcare Research study presented to the committee, suggested it was uneconomical for regional councils to protect native bird populations by controlling magpies. He said the research suggests that magpies rarely attacked other birds but they did compete for food reducing the reproduction rate of other birds. Research suggests that tuis and wood pigeons are most affected because magpies separate them from their food sources. Mr de Latour said that the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust has a long-term plan to reintroduce tuis to the Peninsula.

At present there is no requirement under the Regional Pest Management Strategy for occupiers to control magpies. The Banks Peninsula Pest Management Liaison Committee has made a submission to the strategy review requesting that magpies be included in the strategy. The committees request to include magpies in the strategy has been accepted by council.

Wallabies worry Ashburton farmers

Ashburton farmers are concerned that there may be wallabies in the Mt. Somers area. Chairman of the Ashburton Pest Management Liaison Committee Robin Bruce said that there have been reliable rumours but no confirmed sightings. He said they could be escaped pets.

"We are concerned that wallabies may be being released up here, from down in their feral range which is the area between the Rangitata and Waitaki rivers, perhaps by hunters. There are signs of wallaby in the Mt. Somers area but there has been no confirmation. Sightings should be followed-up with the least possible interval," he said.

Possum control

The cost of possum control is a concern for landholders on Banks Peninsula. Chairman of the committee Paul de Latour said a number of landholders who want to do their own possum control are finding the cost a major obstacle. He said the major cost is \$500 for a cyanide licence. Mr de Latour said it is good that Banks Peninsula has been declared free of bovine Tb.

However that means the end of funding from the Animal Health Board and therefore control will have to be funded from elsewhere. Mr de Latour said control will still be needed to protect biodiversity and to stop Tb carriers from getting back into the area and re-infecting herds. He said the committee is investigating developing a possum management plan for the peninsula.

Canada geese

The growing number of Canada geese is causing problems for many farmers this year according to some Ashburton landowners. Chairman of the Ashburton Pest Management Liaison Committee Robin Bruce is concerned that some landholders aren't aware that the Fish and Game Council is responsible for their control.

"Although they are a scheduled game bird they are causing trouble in some areas. Numbers are increasing in the Ashburton and Rakaia Gorges but substantial mobs are moving onto the

plains as well," he said. Canada geese are not a declared pest in Canterbury but Fish and Game is the authority for managing them. The geese are a nuisance because they are herbage grazers, which means they graze on pasture and other crops.

Mr Bruce said "A mob of Canada Geese can wipe off an area of green feed within hours or days and that's what's happening." He suggests that people with a Canada goose problem on their property contact Fish and Game's office, to ask them to help resolve the problem.

Firm call to retain regional animal pest control capacity

The RHD virus may have given land occupiers a holiday from the rabbit plague for a while but there is definitely a need to be prepared in case it loses its effect on rabbits. This is the firm message from the region's Pest Management Liaison Committees chairmen.

The chairmen agreed at their twice-yearly meeting in June, that it was important to retain animal pest control expertise in Canterbury. The present capabilities include depots, equipment and staff. A major concern was the potential loss of the expertise and local knowledge of key staff as well as the loss of vital equipment and storage facilities.

The chairmen agreed that pest control is an activity that should remain in the hands of experienced and well-equipped staff. Although rabbits were the main concern, the committee emphasised that pest control also included other pests. Environment Canterbury Councillors Richard Johnson (Environment Canterbury chairman) and Bill Penno, who have both announced that they will not seek re-election at the October local body elections, praised the chairmen for the work they and their committees had done over the past 15 years.

Chairman of Environment Canterbury's pest management portfolio Robert Johnston echoed their thanks. "The strong messages taken from this meeting are an example of how the liaison committee representatives play a key role in providing feedback to the Council, and this is highly valued," Cr Johnston said.

Community pest initiatives at Talbot Forest

Two trapping operations carried out in August and October 2003 in Talbot Forest, resulted in the destruction of 137 possums and 2 stoats. Animal pest numbers, however, rapidly recovered and a control operation that included neighbouring properties was required.

The Talbot Forest Working Group has taken advantage of Regional Pest Management Strategy community initiatives to carry out a pest control operation with the support from all neighbouring properties. The success of the programme will be known after a bird survey.

Pest management liaison committee representatives

Pest management liaison committees in the region advise and work with Environment Canterbury's pest management staff on local pest issues. Here is a list of the chairpersons of pest management liaison committees in the region.

Ashley	Ian Ford	(03) 312-9700
Waikari	Graeme Gibb	(03) 314-3872
Amuri (acting)	Hamish Roxburgh	(03) 315-6049
Hurunui Nassella	Errol Monk	(03) 314-4087
Kaikoura	Bob Todhunter	(03) 575-8681
Ashburton	Robin Bruce	(03) 307-0008
Selwyn	Roger Gilbert	(03) 324-3648
Banks Peninsula	Paul de Latour	(03) 304-8518
Kurow	Peter Reid	(03) 436-0216
South Canterbury	Ian Jefferis	(03) 689-5565

For more information on the functions of pest management liaison committees please contact Biosecurity Team Leader Rob McCaw (03) 353-9009 extn 7262 or Cr Robert Johnston, Pests and Biosecurity Portfolio Chairman (03) 312-4166 or fax (03) 312-3085.