

## Where are we with this year's Bovine Tb control?

Environment Canterbury manages the Bovine Tb vector control programme in Canterbury under the Animal Health Board's National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) for Bovine Tb. Vectors are the animals that spread the disease amongst cattle and deer herds. These are mostly possums but also include ferrets and wild cats.

Operation Name	Monitoring Results	
	Required RTC (%)	Actual RTC (%)
Kekerengu & Extension	2	1.11
Kowhai River Swyncombe	2	
Hapuku Buffer (incl Mt Fyffe)	2	0.13
Conway Riverbank	2	
Lowry Cheviot	2	
Ethelton	2	
Pahau	2	0.82
Rotherham	2	0.67
Rotherham Extn	2	0.00
Intake	2	0.00
Inland Road (new)	3	
Amuri Range	2	
Parnassus	2	
Lowry Range (new)	5	
Leader Valley (new)	5 & 3	
Motunau	3	
Mt Cass	2	0.21
Blythe Valley	2	
Scargill	2	0.00
Doctors Hills	2	
Waitohi River	2	0.29
Virginia Road	3	
Overton (new)	3	0.00
Cloudy Hill	3	
Hawarden Basin (New)	3	
Moore's (New)	3	0.33
Castle (New)	1 & 3	
Cavendish Hills (New)	5	
Amberley Coast	2	
Amberley Hills North	2 & 5	
Amberley Hills South	2	1.22
Ashley River North	2	
Waimak Ashley Woodend	2	
Ashley Buffer Aerial Mt Oxford	5	
Ashley Buffer ground	2	
Oxford/ Rangiora	2	
Okuku Gorge Aerial (new)	5	
Okuku Gorge ground (new)	5	
Belfast	2	
Manuka Creek	5	
Kurow Hakataramea Buffer	2	
Kurow Hakataramea Extension	2	
Waitaki Extension	2	1.10
North Otago Buffer -Otekaieke	2	
North Otago Buffer -Waitaki River	2	0.25
Ahuriri (new)	5	



Map indicates Bovine Tb Control Operations in Canterbury

Environment Canterbury will carry out around 52 control operations against Bovine Tb vectors in the region this financial year. Most of the operations (46) involve control of possums and ferrets, with follow-up monitoring to check how successful the operations were. So far four operations have been completed. Possum control work covers 479,052 ha in the northern part of the region and 213,774 ha in the southern part. Twenty five of the 46 operations are either finished or almost finished.

"The control work that is being carried out by contracting companies is of a very high standard. This is reflected in the performance monitoring results which are carried out on all possum control operations," Environment Canterbury Acting Bovine Tb and Contracts Manager, Kevin Gallagher says.

Ferret control begins in January 2003. An increase in government funding for Bovine Tb control will allow ferret control operations to be carried out in the majority of the areas under possum control.

Ferrets are used as indicators because they tend to catch Bovine Tb far more readily than possums. Six monitoring programmes will be carried out in the Oxford-Kaiapoi area, the Leeston area and the area around the south bank of the Waimakariri River.

Herds on movement control are decreasing within the Canterbury region from 72 at 30/6/01 to 62 at 30/8/02 (see table over page). Movement control is a key measure of the success of Bovine Tb control operations.

Banks Peninsula was recently declared Bovine Tb free.

**Vector Surveys Completed**

Catchment	Animals Caught	Numbers with Tb
Upper Hurunui River <i>(Glens of Tekoa, Island Hills)</i>	2 ferrets	No Tb
Upper Waiau River <i>(Poplars Station, Glen Hope Station, St James Station)</i>	482 possums 5 pigs	No Tb No Tb
Upper Wairau River <i>(Rainbow Station)</i>	8 ferrets	No Tb
Upper/mid Clarence/Acheron <i>(Molesworth Station, Hossack Station)</i>	206 ferrets	43 Tb
Lower Clarence <i>(Muzzle Station, Bluff Station, Clarence Reserve)</i>	99 ferrets 19 possums	14 Tb No Tb
Awatere <i>(Muller Station, Middlehurst)</i>	198 ferrets	32 Tb

**Some interesting figures**

More than 41,000 possums were captured or poisoned between July and December 2002. More than 1,700 ferrets were captured in the same period.

**The threat of the 'Purple Peril'**

Alert fishermen can play an important role in helping stamp out a potentially serious weed from our waterways.

The Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Environment Canterbury and the Christchurch City Council are working together to try to eradicate purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) from Canterbury. The plant thrives in damp places, particularly river or lake margins, and can clog drains and irrigation ditches. It also crowds out native plants, and changes habitat for wetland birds, fish and insects.

In Canterbury, there are already patches along the Avon and Halswell rivers, in Cockayne Reserve and Travis Swamp, as well as in Tutaepatu Lagoon and a drain near Leeston. The plant also features in several home gardens.

The plant can grow to three metres high with up to 50 stems per plant (usually square in cross-section). It flowers from December to February with showy spikes of purple flowers at the end of the stems. The leaves and stems die off in winter, to re-sprout in spring.

Gardeners can help control the spread of purple loosestrife by removing it from their properties and disposing of it carefully. Nurseries must stop selling *Lythrum salicaria* and any varieties or cultivars.

To determine how far purple loosestrife has spread, the 'Purple Peril' team is interested in hearing from anyone who notices the plant beyond the places identified already.

Please contact Helen Braithwaite, Department of Conservation on (03) 371 3751 or purpleperil@doc.govt.nz  
Or visit the website: [www.ccc.govt.nz/guides/purpleloosestrife](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/guides/purpleloosestrife)

**Purple loosestrife can produce over two million seeds per plant per year and most seeds last at least three years. Seeds are dispersed by water, but may also be spread by wind and birds and on machinery.**

**Because it has so many seeds, once established, purple loosestrife can quickly form a dense stand that excludes most other vegetation.**



**Bovine Tb Infected Herds**

Cattle	Infected Herds at 31/8/02	
	Cattle	Deer
Kaikoura	7	0
Conway-Waiiau	6	3
Waiau-Hurunui	3	1
Hurunui-Waipara	20	11
Waipara-Ashley	3	1
Banks Peninsula	0	0
Springfield	0	0
Tai Tapu	0	0
Mackenzie Basin	2	0
Upper Waitaki	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>17</b>

**Bumper year for Broom seed beetles**

2002 has been a prolific year for broom seed beetles. Biosecurity officers collecting beetles for release at new sites have reported the beetles are pouring out of broom bushes at many previous release sites. The beetles have also self-spread to many new areas.

First introduced to Canterbury in 1996 in the Lewis Pass area, broom seed beetle new release sites for 2002 include areas from around the Conway Hills in North Canterbury down through to the Waitaki River in South Canterbury.

Broom seed beetles aid in broom control by reducing viable seed production.

To find broom seed beetles, look for adult beetles (black, 2-4mm long) feeding on pollen in broom flowers in spring. Later in the year, if you open intact ripe pods, you may see new adults and the hollowed out seeds inside.

# Review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy (1998)

Environment Canterbury's Regional Pest Management Strategy (1998) expires on 30 June 2003. A review of the Strategy commenced earlier this year and it was anticipated that a Proposal Regional Pest Management Strategy would be notified for submissions towards the end of the year. It is now unlikely to occur this year and will now be notified around March 2003.

A number of questions about possible changes to the RPMS (1998) were put up for discussion at 21 public meetings held throughout the region. Further meetings on specific issues such as roadside plant pest management were also held. Comments from the meetings and written comments by interested individuals and organisations have provided useful feedback.

There appears to be general agreement that the RPMS (1998) does not need any major surgery. Some changes are necessary because of events arising after the RPMS (1998) was made operative, other possible changes are because of the progress made with control or with operational problems. Staff have identified possible changes including:

- The inclusion of an objective and methods to maximise the opportunities that RHD provides for rabbit control;
- Treating African feather grass as a total control plant;
- Provisions for local communities to develop eradication programmes for broom, gorse, nodding thistle and ragwort;
- Introducing a 20 metre boundary clearance distance for gorse and broom within the Banks Peninsula area;
- Deleting the surveillance plant group from the strategy but making provision for a more specific surveillance programme outside of the strategy;
- Creating a biodiversity section to cater for old man's beard, banana passionfruit and Darwin's barberry and to allow for the amalgamation of the RPMS (Biodiversity Pests) within the reviewed RPMS (1998);
- Providing for the shift of the responsibility for roadsides to the roading authorities;
- Provision for a dispute resolution procedure.

Further investigations are still underway regarding wallabies, a possible earlier date for completing nassella control in parts of North Canterbury and funding options.

Contact senior resource management planner, Ray Maw ph (03) 365 3828 ext 7187.

## Important to report Rook sightings

The rook (*Corvus frugileas*) is a native of Great Britain and continental Europe. Rooks were liberated between 1862 and 1873 in Auckland, Hawkes Bay and Canterbury, apparently to control pasture invertebrate pests. Until 1919, they were a protected species.

Bird numbers increased rapidly and spread from liberation points. By 1956, 16 rookeries between Sunnyside and West Melton, near Christchurch, each contained between 7,000 - 10,000 birds. Organised rook control began in Canterbury around 1946.

Rooks are glossy, black and similar in shape to the magpie. Rooks in Canterbury normally lay one clutch of eggs per year, although they may replace lost clutches or early broods. They usually lay 2 - 4 eggs and raise 1 - 2 chicks per year. The term rookery is given to the place where these birds nest and roost. Rookeries are usually in the crown of tall trees like pines and eucalypts.

The birds' diet consists of invertebrates, cereal crops, peas, lentils, walnuts and sometimes carrion. Droughts can increase the damage to crops and pasture caused by rooks, as the invertebrates, which form a large part of their diet, are not so readily available.

Environment Canterbury has been very successful with its rook control campaign, reducing known bird numbers to just 22 for the region. For the third year in a row, no rooks have been counted on Banks Peninsula. This is a significant reduction from the 25 breeding rookeries numbering almost 3,000 birds that were present in 1992.

To totally eradicate the birds from Canterbury we need the assistance of land occupiers to report any sightings (even if they prove to be false) to Environment Canterbury.

Sightings should be reported to Graham Sullivan ph (03) 688 9069.



## Greedy new moth guzzling gorse

Gorse may be in for a hard time with the latest biological control agent brought in to attack it.

The gorse colonial hard shoot moth (*Pempelia genistella*) is originally from Portugal and can only survive on gorse, so it poses no threat to native or other desirable plants. Its caterpillars damage gorse plants by feasting on the foliage in autumn, and on buds, shoots and flowers in spring.

Landcare Research biocontrol expert Lynley Hayes says the moth has been found in good numbers at

one of the first release sites at Redcliffs in Christchurch.

"When we introduce biological control agents there are no guarantees that they will survive in the wild, so the moth's success in Christchurch is an important milestone for us," Ms Hayes says.

This newest agent joins three other foliage feeders and two seed feeders that were also brought to New Zealand to assist in the battle against gorse. All are now established and most are still spreading, but it is likely take some years to achieve good coverage.

"We hope that eventually our combined biological control attack on gorse will reduce its vigour, and eventually lead to its decline."

Environment Canterbury has been a major supporter of biological control since its inception, through funding of research and distribution of agents as part of a national regional council collective.

For more information, please contact: Landcare Research, ph (03) 325 6700, Lynley Hayes (ext 3808) or Hugh Gourlay (ext 3748).

## Pest management liaison committees

As this issue of Pest News is being prepared elections for each Pest Management Liaison Committee (PMLC) are being held.

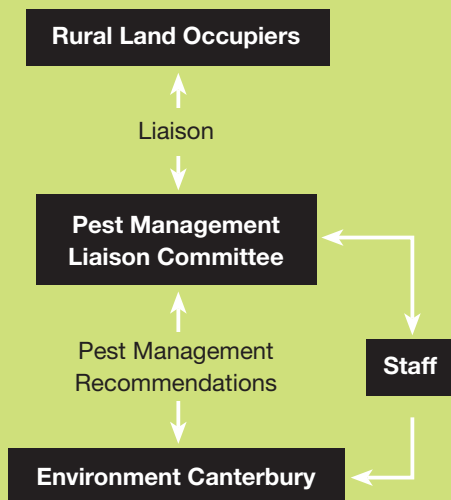
Pest Management Liaison Committees are important advisory groups for Environment Canterbury. They consist of up to eight elected rural ratepayer representatives and the constituency Councillors are also members. Extra people or agencies can be co-opted to represent a particular interests or to give better geographical distribution. The committee elects its own Chairperson.

Full terms of reference for these committees are available from Ron Paulin, Biosecurity Manager or from the local Team Leader (Laurence Smith, Amberley; Rob McCaw, Christchurch or Graham Sullivan, Timaru). The main functions are:

- Identifying pest issues.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the community's pest management concerns.
- Advising on the amount of pest management work to be done in each district.
- Approving provisional annual budgets for recommendation to Environment Canterbury.
- Providing information on pest management to other land occupiers in the areas they represent.
- Advising staff on publicity needs.
- Commenting to Environment Canterbury on pest management policy.

A representation of relationships is shown in the following diagram:

### Relationships between parties



**Note:** Having Pest Management Liaison Committees does not restrict individual residents and ratepayers' right of access to Environment Canterbury staff or councillors.

## Pest Management people at Environment Canterbury

**Pest Portfolio chairman:** Cr Robert Johnston, ph/fax (03) 312-3085.

**Portfolio manager, biosecurity / pest management:** Rob Phillips is responsible for coordinating overall portfolio activities including advising Council and assisting to ensure the achievements of outputs and outcomes.

**Planning and policy formulation:** Christchurch-based senior resource management planner Ray Maw is responsible for the biosecurity area.

**Bovine Tb:** Kevin Gallagher is the acting 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, ph (03) 365 3828 extn 7320.

**Biosecurity manager:** Ron Paulin is responsible for how the policies in the Regional Pest Management Strategy are implemented. He works from Timaru but has responsibility for the whole region. Phone (03) 688 9069 or (03) 365 3828 extn 8839.

### The Biosecurity Section is organised into three teams:

The Northern team leader is Laurence Smith in **Amberley**. Amberley biosecurity officers are Terry Charles, Lance Smith, Peter Morgan and Jan Crooks, ph (03) 314 8014.

**Cheviot** biosecurity officers are Noel Crump and Tom Kirkwood, ph (03) 319 8614.

The **Kaikoura** biosecurity officer is Peter Adams (duties combined with River Engineering), ph (03) 319 5781.

The Central team leader is Rob McCaw in Christchurch.

**Christchurch** biosecurity officers are Jenny Williams, Stephen Brown and John Thacker, ph (03) 365 3828.

The **Darfield** biosecurity officer is Errol Barnes, ph (03) 318 8155.

The **Little River** biosecurity officer is Jock Bulman, ph (03) 325 1103.

The Southern team leader is: Graham Sullivan in **Timaru**. Timaru biosecurity officers are Terry Broughton, Phil Crotty and Brent Glentworth, ph (03) 688 9069.

Target Pest Enterprises is an Environment Canterbury owned company contracted to control pests throughout the Canterbury region. Paul Ash is its general manager, ph 353 9001 (Christchurch).