

## Bovine Tb - Where to from here?

### Time is almost up for the current National Pest Management Strategy for Bovine Tb.

The present five-year strategy expires on June 30. The target of the new 12-year strategy, which should be approved by the government by the end of this calendar year, is less than 0.2% of herds infected with Tb at June 30,2011. For New Zealand this means 150 herds nationwide - down from 571 at February 2001. This means Canterbury needs to have 14 or less infected herds - down from 83 - to meet this objective.

Central government has agreed to provide an increase in vector control funding for the 2001/2002 year which will help the transition between the expiring and the new strategy.

The strategy was notified by the Ministry of Agriculture on April 22. Submissions close on June 22. When the new strategy is approved Environment Canterbury will review how it funds its regional share. Presently programmes in vector risk areas are funded from the pest districts while programmes in the buffer areas are funded from the clear area funding pool.

### Tb herds

Tb herd statistics in Canterbury as at March 8 show 83 infected herds, a decrease of 45 percent on the 1996 numbers, when there were 191 infected cattle and deer herds.

The latest results show infected cattle herds in ten areas - Kaikoura (5), Amuri (17), Waikari (26), Ashley (9), Ashburton (1), Mackenzie (1), Selwyn (1) Waitaki (1), Timaru (2) and Waimate (1).

The comparable figures for deer are: Kaikoura (3), Amuri (3), Waikari (11), Ashley (1) and Waitaki (1).

### Possum residual trap catches

This year residual trap catch requirements are more precise, with more monitor control lines. There are now 10 traps per line, instead of the usual 20.

The residual trap catch result is the number of animals trapped after control works, expressed as a percentage of the number of traps set, for example two possums caught from 100 traps equals a residual trap count of 2% (RTC 2).

RTC results since July 1 last year are as follows:

District	Operation	RTC target (%)	RTC actual (%)
Amuri	Amuri Range	3	0.50
Amuri	Ethelton	3	2.53
Amuri	Intake	1.5	0.94
Amuri	Pahau	3	0.33
Amuri	Parnassus	3	5.89
Amuri	Rotherham	3	0.65
Ashley	Amberley Hills North	3	0.08
Ashley	Amberley Hills South	3	0.81
Ashley	Sefton	3	1.13
Kaikoura	Conway Nth Bank	3	0.20
Selwyn	Springfield	1.5	0.04
Selwyn	13 Mile Bush	1.5	1.11
Waikari	Bythe Valley	5	6.17
Waikari	Doctors Hills	5	5.68
Waikari	Mt Cass	5	1.29
Waikari	Scargill/Extension	3	0.40
Waikari	Waitohi River	5	2.59
Waitaki	Maerewhenua	1.5	0.91
Waitaki	Waitaki River	1.5	5.24
Waitaki	Otekaieke	1.5	0.24

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## RHD Update

RHD had a significant impact on rabbit population levels last season. In the Mackenzie Basin annual spotlight counts show no statistically significant change in rabbit densities from the previous year. Rabbit levels remain low throughout the rabbit prone semi-arid area.

Elsewhere in the region results continue to be variable particularly in parts of North Canterbury. Residual rabbit levels are generally higher than those in the semi-arid areas and tend to show an upward trend.



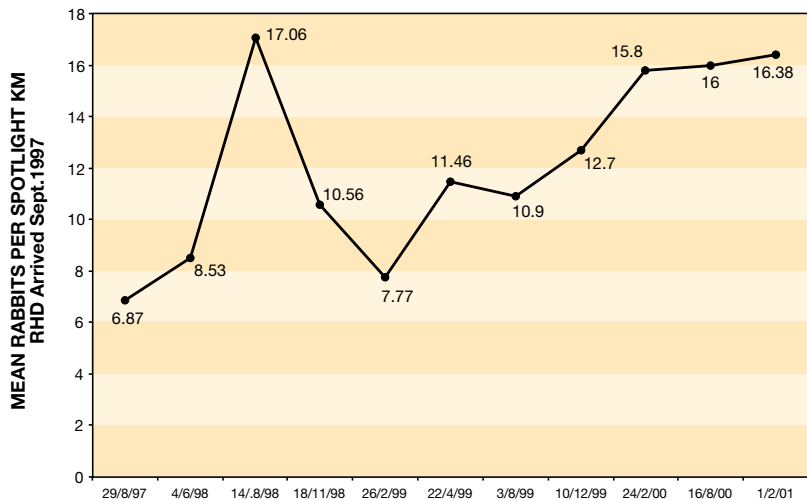
Analysis of rabbit blood samples continue to show that a high

percentage (50% - 90%) of rabbits in North Canterbury have high antibody levels and are considered to be immune. This suggests that rabbits in areas of high rabbit numbers where RHD does not appear to be having an impact will be immune. Conventional control in these areas is the most prudent. It will kill the immune rabbits and those born in the future may be susceptible to RHD in these areas.

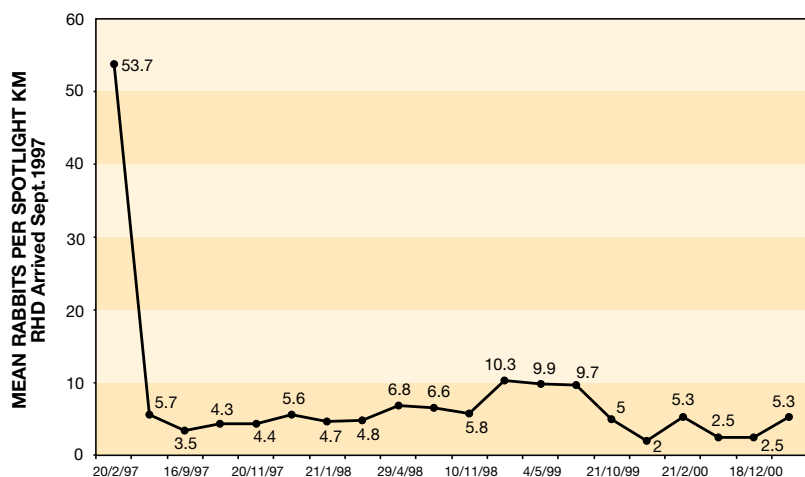
The incidence of immunity is increasing annually at some North Canterbury sites, but this has not been detected in the semi-arid areas where the antibody levels vary between 10% - 30% of the sample collected. Remember though that residual rabbit population levels here are very low so 10% - 30% represents a very small actual number.

Current research, in partnership with Landcare Research, is now specifically focusing on antibody levels, the causes and the medium/long term effects.

### RHD impact on rabbit densities on a North Canterbury monitor site



### RHD impact on rabbit densities on a Mackenzie monitor site



For more information please contact Timaru biosecurity team leader Graham Sullivan in Environment Canterbury's Timaru office on (03) 688 9069.

## Vector surveys completed

Results of three surveys on Banks Peninsula in autumn 2000 show no sign of possums carrying Bovine Tb.

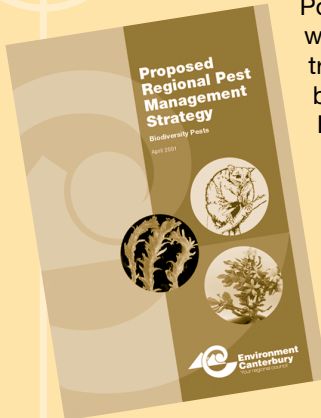
The surveys involved carrying out autopsies on 1300 possums from Little Akaloa, Bossu Road, and Little River, Prices Valley.

The Animal Health Board also funded ferret surveys. Most of the surveys have been completed and so far only a single ferret from the Mackenzie study area has had Tb. The surveys included the Upper Selwyn, Coleridge, Oxford-Kaiapoi, South Waimak-ariri, Halswell, Meyers Pass, Te Pirita and Mackenzie.

Here are the capture tallies so far:

Survey	Ferrets	Stoats	Possums	Other
Meyers Pass	36	-	1	1 magpie
Mackenzie	81	-	-	-
Te Pirita	16	2	-	-
Leeston	77	-	-	-
Sth Waimak	7	3	-	-
Coleridge	14	6	-	-
Upper Selwyn	6	-	-	-
Oxford-Kaiapoi	12	-	-	-

## New pest plan on target



Possums, ferrets and wilding lodgepole pine trees could all soon be black-listed by Environment Canterbury.

They are among a number of plants and animals included in a new Proposed Pest Management Strategy. This will be in addition to pests covered by the existing strategy.

Senior resource management planner, Ray Maw, says the strategy's emphasis is on controlling pests in targeted areas to reduce their effects on the environment, in co-operation and partnership with farmers, territorial local authorities and other agencies. The benefits of the strategy will lie largely with the regional community and funding will be by general rate. Other animal pests to be included are wasps, stoats, feral cats, feral deer, feral goats and pigs. Other plant pests on the new list include boneseed, wild thyme, egeria, phragmites and hieracium.

Submissions closed on June 1. 105 formal submissions were received. Hearings are likely to be in August.

**A copy of the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy for environmental pests is available from Customer Services, phone (0800) EC INFO (0800 32 4636).**

## Bio-control bugs

A new agent has arrived in Canterbury this year, and it's licensed to kill. It is the Colonial hard shoot moth - the last of six biological control agents to be introduced to control gorse in the region. Another agent - the broom psyllid, was released at 20 spots throughout the region this year. This is one of three agents at work in Canterbury controlling broom. Lynley Hayes from Landcare Research said research is in the pipeline on biocontrol organisms for nassella tussock, boneseed and wilding pines.



## User-pays for South Canterbury?

No changes will be made to South Canterbury pest district funding arrangements, next financial year.

A survey, conducted by Environment Canterbury last year on behalf of the local pest liaison committee, aimed to determine the level of support for changing to a user pays system.

Last year's results showed 58 percent support for user pays, with 42 percent support for the present system. A total of 1440 (44 percent) voting papers were returned.

The pest management liaison committee decided this year to defer another review until next calendar year. That way any change could become effective from the financial year beginning July 1, 2002.

South Canterbury is one of two districts that has not adopted user-pays for rabbit control. The other is Banks Peninsula. In the user-pays districts, landowners employ contractors or carry out the work themselves.



## Rooks are down

Good news on the rook front. Biosecurity staff report a 25 percent fall in rook numbers this year, bringing the total number of birds in Canterbury down to 18.

This represents a massive 99.6 percent reduction in rook numbers since 1982. The population peaked at 5,559 birds in 1992.

The highlight this year was the destruction of the last known remaining rook in Banks Peninsula. The total eradication of rooks, totalling nearly 3,000 birds in 1992 with 25 breeding rookeries, is a significant milestone in the history of rook control in New Zealand.

Biosecurity team leader Graham Sullivan says that this year rooks built nests at the Ashburton rookery and the Plains rookery at Darfield. However, both were destroyed by gales in September.

"Further nests were subsequently rebuilt, but the rooks have since lost interest in these. It is now unlikely that breeding will occur this season. The three rooks at Kaikoura have not bred, so it would appear that there will have been no breeding at all in Canterbury this year," Mr Sullivan said.

Recently a farmer in the Waikari pest district reported rooks present on his property. A check confirmed the presence of 11 rooks. These birds have arrived from outside of Canterbury, possibly from Marlborough where the severe drought forced them to find greener pastures.

## Long service appreciated

Bruce Stokes recently retired as chairman of the Ashley Pest Management Liaison Committee. Environment Canterbury chairman Richard Johnson, and pest management portfolio chairman, Robert Johnston acknowledged and thanked Bruce for his more than 25 years service to pest management and local government. As well as chairman of the Ashley committee, Bruce was also chairman of the former Ashley Pest Destruction Board. The new committee chairman is Ian Ford.

## North Canterbury high country review

The inland high country area of North Canterbury and Marlborough was not included in the Animal Health Board's National Pest Management Strategy although some Tb infection exists in the area. As a result of run-holder concerns in this part of the region, information has been gathered about risk zones, as a first step towards developing an assistance programme for this area. A proposal has been put to the Animal Health Board to meet this concern.



## We're on the Web

Copies of this newsletter and past issues are available on Environment Canterbury's website at [www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz). The site has been attracting almost 2000 visits each week from people accessing the wide range of information from Environment Canterbury, including groundwater levels, river flows, plans, policies and reports. If you would like to see more information at this site about animal and plant pest management, please phone Rob Phillips on (03) 365 3828, extn 7069.



## Canterbury on Camera

Aerial photographs of the entire region – all 4.5 million hectares of it, are now available from Environment Canterbury. Photographs can be viewed for free and copies for all areas can be purchased through the Christchurch office. For further information please contact Environment Canterbury senior resource management planner, Craig Mason, phone (03) 365 3828, fax (03) 365 3194 or freephone customer services on 0800 EC INFO (0800 32 4636).

## 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:** Ian Lucas 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 assisted by Kevin Gallagher. Both are based at the Christchurch office, ph (03) 365 3828 extn 7167 (Ian) and 7320 (Kevin).

**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 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 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 and Phil Crotty, ph (03) 688 6408.

The Twizel biosecurity officer is Brent Glentworth, ph (03) 435 0700

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) or 688 1754 (Timaru).