



# Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005- 2015

## Discussion Paper – 5-year Review

*June 2009.*





## 1. Introduction

Aimed at dealing with certain pests that threaten production and biodiversity, the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005-2015 (RPMS) was made operative on 1 July 2005. Environment Canterbury must review the RPMS half way through its operative 10-year period, by 30 June 2010. Following the review, the council may amend or revoke the RPMS or leave it unchanged.

The RPMS and its Objectives, Principal Measures and RPMS Rules were subject to a full public participation process prior to it becoming operative. The starting position for this review is a maintenance check, rather than a complete overhaul of the RPMS.

## 2. Review procedure

Environment Canterbury will use information from a variety of sources for framing this review:

- The annual Operational Plan Reports assess progress towards meeting the RPMS's objectives;
- Information about potential pests gathered by, or is available to, Environment Canterbury through surveillance programmes; and
- Feedback from the Pest Management Liaison Committees, affected and interested parties, iwi, industry organisations, territorial authorities and staff.

A regional council must publicly notify the proposed result of the review and the reasons for amending, revoking or leaving the RPMS unchanged. Should the review result in a proposal to amend the RPMS, the proposal must show:

- (i) that the benefits of a strategy outweigh the costs;
- (ii) that the benefits of regional intervention outweigh the costs of individual action;
- (iii) evidence that an organism is capable of causing a serious adverse effect; and
- (iv) how the proposal will be funded.

Whatever is notified as the proposed result of the review, any person is entitled to make a submission to it, in writing and may request to be heard in person.

Following the submissions process, the hearing panel will make a decision on the outcome of the review. Any decision of the hearing panel can be appealed in the Environment Court.

## 3. Documents available

The following reports provide a context for guiding decisions regarding possible pest review issues. The documents are available for downloading from Environment Canterbury's website [www.ecan.govt.nz/Pests](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Pests) or they may be purchased from Customer Services (**toll free** on 0800 EC INFO [0800 324 636] during business hours):

- 3.1 Review of Regional Pest Management Strategy (1998) – A Discussion Document (\$10)
- 3.2 Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) (\$10)

- 3.3 Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) – Operational Plan (\$10)
- 3.4 Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) – Operational Plan 2006-2007 (\$10)
- 3.5 Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) – Operational Plan 2007-2008 (\$10)
- 3.6 Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) – Operational Plan 2008/2009 (\$10)
- 3.7 Report on Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) Operational Plan – 2006/2007 (\$10)
- 3.8 Meeting the Requirements of the Biosecurity Act 1993: Economic evaluation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy – Environment Canterbury Report U03/49 (\$10)

In particular, Environment Canterbury will be guided by the yearly reports on the Operation Plan. These reports set out pest trend information that is helpful in indicating the effectiveness of the Objectives of the RPMS and the levels of expenditure on each of the activities used to implement the RPMS.

#### **4. The Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005-2015**

##### **4.1 Pests and control programmes**

The Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy lists 21 plants and three animals as pests throughout the region, along with 14 more plants and eight more animals as pests within targeted areas. Control action is required for all of them.

A further 46 plants are listed as pests subject only to a ban on their sale, propagation or distribution. Also included are nine plants and four animals classified as 'other organisms to be controlled' under action in targeted areas as part of the biodiversity pest programme.

The RPMS utilises different management programmes depending on the pest. The programmes are as follows.

##### **(a) total control programmes:**

These target nine pests that occur in low numbers or are limited to a few areas within the region. The objective is to eradicate these pests in the long term, although this may not be achievable in all cases over the 10-year duration of the RPMS. Environment Canterbury is largely responsible for managing the programmes, including control work.

##### **(b) progressive control programme:**

This programme targets only *Nassella tussock*, with the objective of progressively reducing populations over the 10-year duration of the RPMS. Land occupiers are generally responsible for carrying out control work and Environment Canterbury enforces that responsibility where necessary through inspection and monitoring work.

**(c) containment control programmes:**

These target eight pests that are well established and widely distributed across the region.

The objectives for rabbits, wallabies and possums seek to prevent populations exceeding specified levels (Level 3 on the Modified McLean Scale for rabbits, Level 3 on the Guilford Scale for wallabies within the Wallaby Containment Zone and 10% Residual Trap Catch for possums in the Banks Peninsula Possum Control Area.

The objectives for broom, gorse, nodding thistle, variegated thistle and ragwort is to prevent them establishing on land currently free of them.

Land occupiers are generally responsible for undertaking control, and Environment Canterbury enforces that responsibility where necessary through inspection and monitoring work. In the Banks Peninsula Pest District, rabbit control is still managed under a rating district with control undertaken by contractors on behalf of the land occupiers.

Environment Canterbury assists with the transfer of biological control agents for broom, gorse, nodding thistle, variegated thistle and ragwort.

**(d) biodiversity pest programmes:**

These target pest plants and animals that pose significant threats to biodiversity values in targeted high-value environmental areas (HVEA) where landowners are willing to allow control to take place. The programmes also enable a number of plants or animals described as 'other organisms to be controlled' to be incorporated into work programmes. Environment Canterbury undertakes control work in the HVEA's in partnership with landowners and occupiers.

**(e) Community Initiative Programmes (CIP):**

Provision is made in the RPMS for land owners, occupiers and community groups to apply area-specific approaches to dealing with pests. For example, the Banks Peninsula Pest Management Liaison Committee initiated a possum control programme for its Pest District. Environment Canterbury may facilitate the process of establishing a CIP, the pests to be included, the level and sources of funding and the pest control activities that will be undertaken.

**(f) restricted pest programme:**

This programme targets 46 plant pests listed as restricted pests in the RPMS with the sole purpose of ensuring land occupiers do not propagate, distribute or sell them.

Various measures are used to carry out the programmes:

- Environment Canterbury may undertake control operations itself, or by contract, on behalf of land occupiers where it is cost effective to do so. However, in most situations landowners or occupiers are generally responsible for carrying out control work.
- Property inspections are carried out by Environment Canterbury to determine the presence and numbers of pests, to monitor population trends and to check on compliance with the rules of the RPMS.
- Environment Canterbury supports investigation, development and application of new control and monitoring tools including biological control, and supports

investigations into the pest itself, to provide information on probable areas of high risk, and factors influencing control effectiveness. Current investigations include the ecology of Nassella tussock, the effectiveness of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) and supporting Landcare Research's biological control research for pest plants.

- Environment Canterbury provides general pest information, education and advice, and encourages community involvement. Up to four public meetings and/or field days are provided on request, and at least two pest displays are mounted at Agricultural and Pastoral shows.

A summary of the measures used for each pest is provided in the following table.

**Table 1: Programme measures**

	<b>ECan Control Operations</b>	<b>Owner/ occupier control</b>	<b>Inspections</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Advice/ education</b>	<b>Investigations</b>	<b>RPMS Rules</b>
<b>Total control</b>							
Rook	√			√			√
African feather grass	√		√		√		
African love grass	√		√		√		
Baccharis	√		√		√		
Bur daisy	√		√		√		
Coltsfoot	√		√		√		
Entire marshwort	√		√		√		
Saffron Thistle	√		√		√		
White-edged nightshade	√		√		√		
<b>Progressive control</b>							
Nassella tussock		√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>Containment control</b>					√		
Rabbit	Banks Peninsula only	√	√	√	√	√	√
Possum	CIP			√			
Bennett's wallaby	HVEA	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gorse	Bio-control	√	√	√	√	√	√
Broom	Bio-control	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ragwort	Bio-control	√		√		√	√
Variiegated thistle	Bio-control	√		√			
Nodding thistle	Bio-control	√		√		√	√
<b>Restricted Pests</b>			√				

**Table 1 continued**

	<b>ECan Control Operations</b>	<b>Owner/ occupier control</b>	<b>Inspections</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Advice/ education</b>	<b>Investigations</b>	<b>RPMS Rules</b>
<b>Biodiversity</b>							
Feral cat	HVEA's			√		√	
Feral goat	HVEA's			√		√	
Ferret	HVEA's			√		√	
Weasel	HVEA's			√		√	
Stoat	HVEA's			√		√	
German wasp	HVEA's			√		√	
European wasp	HVEA's			√		√	
Possum	HVEA's			√		√	
Banana passionfruit	HVEA's		√	√	√	√	
Bell heather	√		√		√		
Boneseed	√		√		√	√	
Darwin's barberry	HVEA's		√		√	√	
Egeria	√		√		√		
Hieracium	HVEA's					√	
Lagarosiphon	HVEA's		√		√		
Old Man's Beard	HVEA's	√	√	√	√	√	√
Phragmites	√		√		√		
Lodgepole pine	HVEA's				√		
Wild thyme	HVEA's				√		
<b>Other organisms to be controlled</b>							
Magpies	HVEA's				√		
Feral Deer	HVEA's			√	√	√	
Feral Pigs	HVEA's			√	√	√	
Ash	HVEA's						
Holly	HVEA's		√		√		
Red-flowering current	HVEA's		√		√		
Sycamore	HVEA's		√		√		
Mountain Pine	HVEA's		√		√		
Corsican Pine	HVEA's		√		√		
Scots Pine	HVEA's		√		√		
Larch	HVEA's		√		√		
Douglas Fir	HVEA's		√		√		

Note: All pests are subject to a rule banning their sale, propagation and distribution.

#### 4.2 Other organisms

Environment Canterbury undertakes a targeted surveillance programme to check for any incursions of potential pests likely to establish in the Canterbury region. This activity is undertaken independently of the RPMS and provides useful information to support their inclusion in the RPMS at some stage. An example of this is the recent discovery of Chilean Needle Grass in North Canterbury.

The Animal Health Board (AHB) administers a National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) for Bovine Tb, with the objective of controlling Bovine Tb in cattle and deer. That strategy specifies possums and other suspected carriers of Bovine Tb (e.g. ferrets) to be pest agents. Funding for Tb control is shared between the Crown (50%), farmers (40%), and Regional Councils (10%). A review of the NPMS has commenced and depending on its outcome, there may be implications at the regional level.

Many organisms such as common weeds are dealt with effectively by individuals or small groups of people. They do so because they impinge on such things as their

livelihoods or personal enjoyment. Regional intervention does not add value to individual action in those cases. The trigger for regional intervention is often where inaction by an individual could result in weeds or animals spreading to a neighbour's land.

## 5. Review issues already identified

A number of suggestions have already been put forward by various parties who work closely with implementing the RPMS. The suggestions fall into two categories; those things that need to change as part of this review, and those that require closer attention over the next four years to assist in the more extensive review in 2015 when the current RPMS expires.

### 5.1 Changes for this review

#### 5.1.1 New organisms

Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella nessianna*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) are both declared unwanted organisms and have small-scale management programmes (under section 100 of the Biosecurity Act 1993) that will expire prior to 2015. It is anticipated that ongoing control work will be required.

Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*) and Senegal tea (*Gymnocoronis spilanthoides*) are present in Canterbury, and are declared unwanted organisms. The need to control these organisms in high-value environmental areas has been identified. Puna grass (*Achnatherum caudatum*) is a tall, tussock-forming grass that is largely unpalatable to stock and present at one location in Canterbury. It poses a pastoral threat similar to *Nassella* tussock.

Whether these five organisms should be included as pests under the RPMS will be considered as part of the review.

#### 5.1.2 Implementation matters

##### Appeal procedures

Land owners and or occupiers are required to adhere to RPMS rules and breaches can result in enforcement action, such as a notice of direction being issued. Exemptions can be made at the discretion of enforcement officers. A matter frequently raised when enforcement action takes place is Environment Canterbury being seen as both judge and jury, with no independent review. A question specific to this matter is raised in section 6.3 below.

##### Boundaries of Pest Districts

Whether the boundaries of the Selwyn and Banks Peninsula Pest Districts are appropriate has been questioned in submissions on the Council's 2008/09 Annual Plan and 2009-2019 Long Term Community Consultation Plan. Requests to include the whole of Lyttelton harbour basin in the Banks Peninsula pest district and to establish a new pest district focused on the Christchurch and Port Hills area have been made. The merits of these will be examined as part of the review.

##### Text corrections

There are a small number of spelling, numbering and layout corrections that are necessary. Such changes can be made along side the review.

## 6. What suggestions do you have for this 5-year review ?

### 6.1 What new organisms should be included?

The nomination of new organisms should be accompanied with as much supporting information, where possible stating:

- What makes the organism cause a serious adverse and unintended effect in relation to the region on one or more of the following:
  - (i) Economic wellbeing; or
  - (ii) The viability of threatened species of organisms, the survival and distribution of indigenous plants or animals, or the sustainability of natural and developed ecosystems, ecological processes, and biological diversity; or
  - (iii) Soil resources or water quality; or
  - (iv) Human health or enjoyment of the recreational value of the natural environment; or
  - (v) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, waters, sites, waahi tapu, and taonga.
  
- Why regional intervention is necessary;
- The control techniques available to destroy or manage the organism;
- The regional, versus individual costs involved;
- Who is causing the problem; and
- Who benefits from the control?

### 6.2 What changes are necessary (the Objectives) and how they should be made (the Principal Measures and RPMS Rules)?

When making suggestions please give reasons why the change is necessary, bearing in mind that:

- The RPMS Objectives were set with a 10-year time horizon in mind;
- The affected parties who fund the principal measures provide yearly input into the degree to which they are used. This input is captured in the Operational Plan;

### 6.3 Are there changes to regulatory management that would improve fairness without compromising effectiveness?

It would be helpful to outline the gains and losses associated with fairness and effectiveness when suggesting changes.

### 6.4 Are changes needed to enhance the purpose and arrangements of Pest Management Liaison Committees?

The RPMS signals Environment Canterbury's intention to maintain and develop its widely accepted system of committees. What would be useful to boost the effectiveness and capacity of the committees to provide valuable advice?

### 6.5 Are there any other RPMS matters requiring review?

## **7. Matters likely to be examined for the review in 2015**

The next review in 2015 will coincide with the expiry of the RPMS unless circumstances arise that require an earlier review. The 2015 review will be a more wide-ranging examination of the objectives, principal measures and the overall effectiveness of the RPMS. In many cases the information required to make a thorough assessment is still being collected, so it is helpful to signal the potential areas of attention that are more applicable to the 2015 review alongside issues that should be the focus of the 2010 review.

Some future matters that are likely to be examined are listed below.

- 7.1 **Nassella tussock**  
Considerable progress is being made in understanding the ecology of *Nassella tussock* to optimise the timing of grubbing operations. In the near future, sufficient data will have been collected to computer-model different grubbing date scenarios against possible objectives. The economic impacts can be matched against what can be achieved and so enable the most robust schedule to be developed.
- 7.2 **Gorse and broom**  
Mapping the extent of gorse and broom accurately across the region using an improved technique is nearing completion. Once the data is fully available it will then be possible to examine whether to:
- (i) retain the current objective; or
  - (ii) focus on boundary control requirements only; or
  - (iii) target parts of the region with particular control programmes; or
  - (iv) target high-value environmental areas only; or
  - (v) consider any other possibilities.
- 7.3 **Rabbits**  
There is an upward trend in populations of rabbits with immunity to RHD. This highlights the importance of integrating conventional control techniques within an RHD environment and the need for attention to coordinated control programmes within a 'user-pays' model. There are also suggestions that greater government funding should be forthcoming. Assembling and analysing the options that are evolving for rabbit control is a crucial step in framing any future changes to the control regime. Such analysis requires more time than is available for the present review.
- 7.4 **Wallabies**  
The RPMS signalled that the establishment of an advisory committee to provide advice on further shaping wallaby management would take place soon after the RPMS become operative. Such a committee did not materialise through lack of consensus around the problem. However, continuing concerns are still being raised regarding the need for, and implementing of, a RPMS to contain wallaby numbers. As a result, a further attempt will be made to establish an advisory committee in order to investigate the effectiveness of the existing RPMS provisions and other options.
- 7.5 **Responsibility for plant pest control on roadsides**  
Roadside plant pests are the responsibility of adjoining landowners with the exception of the territorial areas of Hurunui, Waitaki and Christchurch City (prior to its amalgamation with Banks Peninsula District). The RPMS signalled that liaison with road controlling authorities would continue over the effectiveness of this policy.

#### 7.6 Community Initiative Programmes

The provision of a framework for considering smaller community-led pest control programmes is a new approach designed to bring flexible solutions to specific areas or problems. To date, uptake has been limited but it is considered too early to clearly identify the reasons for this. While the RPMS outlines a comprehensive process, it is flexible but also needs to ensure that individual rights are given due consideration. Promoting and resourcing these programmes is a priority in the meantime.

#### 7.7 Biodiversity protection

The Regional Pest Management Strategy was developed at a time when the protection of indigenous biodiversity values was under debate. Amendments to the Resource Management Act have since strengthened the Council's statutory responsibilities to maintain indigenous biodiversity. Environment Canterbury facilitated the development of, and is an implementation party to, a non-statutory Biodiversity Strategy for Canterbury. The pest and biodiversity strategies should be complementary, and given the Biodiversity Strategy has a review due in 2013, it is appropriate to determine how best to do this before 2013.

#### 7.8 Pest risks to the region

Annual expenditure on research is approximately \$100, 000. This is directed to Nassella tussock ecology, the effectiveness of RHD and developing new biological control tools. A further \$30,000 is spent on a surveillance programme aimed at locating any new pest organisms before they become established. An analysis of the research areas, the adequacy of the surveillance programme and the amounts spent on each will be undertaken prior to 2015.

### 8. Anticipated Timeline

Jun 2009	Release Discussion Paper. Prepare web page and communication strategy Commence key stakeholder consultation.
Jul 2009	Undertake key stakeholder consultation.
Aug 2009	Responses to the discussion paper close. Evaluate responses.
Sep 2009	Council workshop on proposed changes. Commence section 72 (BSA) evaluation - benefits outweigh costs (\$, regional versus individual) - demonstrate serious adverse effects Commence section 77 (BSA) analysis of funding rationale. Ongoing stakeholder consultation.
Dec 2009	S72 & s 77 requirements completed.
Mar 2010	Report to Council on Proposed Review Results
Jun 2010	Proposed Review Results notified and open for public submissions
Aug 2010	Formal submission period closes
Oct –Dec 2010	Hearings and Decisions released to submitters
Mar 2011	Environment Court appeals (if any)
1 July 2011	Review changes made operative.