Submission on proposed Southland Water and Land Plan

Annette Horrell, Farmer.

246 Limestone Plains Road
Thornbury, RD3
Otautau 9683
rhorrell@slinsshot.co.nz  Ph 03 2246112

I am nearing the end of my farming life and like most farmers want to leave our land in a better condition than when we came to it and this is what we have tried to do. However on reading the Southland Land and Water Plan I shudder to think how my sons can possibly continue to farm viably in the future if this plan is followed in its entirety. So much regulation and compliance will be needed, it is farming by license only and one can only imagine what the consents will cost, they are bad enough now.

You only need to study a few balance sheets for the past financial year to see that not many farmers be they dairy, sheep, beef or grain have broken even let alone made a profit. We are farming for the life style and a living- not only for us but our nation.

Water quality-

- This is a national issue, and not just for farmers and associated industry but town dwellers also.
- We are made to feel that poor water quality is the fault of farmers; therefore we should put it right.
- Forcing expensive change on the farming industry will cost and that may mean for many that the business is no longer viable and jobs will be lost and farms sold. Change needs to be gradual and affordable.

Cultivation

- Setback distances on farms with waterways running through them may mean that there will be considerable loss of income and these areas will soon become a weedy mess.
- Who deals with the resulting weeds and pests that will soon sprout up- gorse and broom in particular and a perfect breeding ground for rabbits.
- Spraying near these areas is discouraged and are hard to access when fenced off.
- Many years of hard work by past generations will all have been for nothing if pasture improved by drainage, fertiliser and cultivation is allowed to revert.
- More investigation needs to be done before the set back rule is implemented as many farmers will be at serious risk of loss of income and lack of choices for farming options.

**Farming-intensive winter grazing**

- Southland is wet in winter (and cold), feed needs to be conserved, that is why winter crops are grown. What will become of farmers who cannot meet the requirements of rule 23 after May 2018? This leaves no room for development and expansion, we are continually being told we must farm smarter and this often means more intensively if we want to farm for profit and who doesn’t.

**The farm management plan** - all allowable activities seem to hinge on the production of this document. Quite possibly this will be a problem for some, not everyone can sit down and produce a plan even with templates. The Farm Safety Management Plan is an example of this. Many will find it too hard and panic. A consultant can be employed but this is just more expense. Environment South needs to provide a free service to any farmer requiring it to complete a plan that is compliant.

We pay enough in rates and I am sure increases will be coming to cover all that will be needed to implement “The Plan.”

I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission