

my name is kelvin coghlan, along with my wife wendy we farm sheep/beef and dairy grazing on 700 acres at mossburn. i have lived there my whole life having taken over the farm from my parents and we have raised 4 kids of our own. we have a 21 year old son who is in the construction industry and lack of confidence in the future of farming means i am not actively encouraging him toward agriculture.

i'll get right to the point, i want to address the elephant in the room and talk about long term sustainability in farming because i think fundamentally that's what this is all about.

as a sheep/beef farmer for 30 years i have seen our profitability slowly but surely eroding, the failure of meat/wool companies to be able to sell what i believe are great products comes down to a complete lack of leadership, but that's another story. we have been lucky as an industry that the mass expansion in dairy has driven up land values and increased our equity otherwise many more family sheep/beef farms would have been converted to dairy or squeezed out by banks long ago.

on our farm in the last ten years we have substantially lowered our stock numbers and we run the place very close to organically with only limited use of chemical, low fert application, no drenching of adult stock and no antibiotics or inoculation of stock. thus i believe we are sustainable environmentally.

we have resisted the urge to convert to dairy even tho it would have made sense from a financial point and are lucky to have off farm income. however if it is decided by E.S. to restrict the change in land use we would see an undermining of value of non converted land. thus we would be the ones who pay while converted land would conversely increase in value. this of course would make sheep farming even less viable. apart from this i would also see it as a fundamental erosion of our property owners' rights.

we have also done may to may heifer grazing off and on for the last ten years, this has helped keep us viable and the fact that many of my mates are dairy farmers has given me a good insight into that industry also.

of course over time in our wee town we have seen enormous change. what i see in going on in my community is the large scale corporatisation of farming. along with that we have had many sri lankan and Pilipino imports- these are wonderful hard working people and my wife who teaches many of their children loves them as they are appreciative of a quality education and the upside is we now have a great cricket team, but i ask myself why can we not get kiwis to do this work?

i know from a mate of mine who recently converted in canterbury that after many years farming he was still shocked at the sheer amount of nitrogen that he was told he needed to apply, along with this we have the importation of pke and supplementary feed and then there is the massive cost of irrigation on many of these farms. all this to me points to an industry that is unsustainable on many levels. having said that i do think that with the increased use of wintering sheds and limits on stocking rates and fert application that dairy can be sustainable and has a far brighter future, certainly than sheep/beef farming.

so i agree that we need to protect against what is essentially corporate greed on a massive scale. how do we do this? i realise it's very complicated but i would urge E.S. to resist applying greater restrictions and workload on those that are already farming sustainably and

thus further erode their viability but rather target those that are increasing stock rates and pouring on endless amounts of urea in an effort to keep banks and shareholders happy.

It is proposed that we will need a consent to farm and will need to put forward a yearly plan, This in a time when we as farmers are being hammered by bureaucracy in the form of things like health and safety and nait (don't get me started on nait).this will result in more time wasted sitting in an office. In an era of user pays will E.S be compensating me for my time and information? I think not. I am a farmer not an office worker,please allow me to prove that i am farming sustainably and then leave me alone,with the proviso that if in future i wish to increase my stock rate or start pouring on nitrogen that i will need to apply for consent.

We live in the age of multi media where perception is reality and politicians pander to Auckland, a time where a few people that run organisations like fish and game can use compulsory levies to fund legal battles that stymie community good projects for the benefit of a privileged few rich foreign fisherman. A time when sheep farming is dying along with the family farm. I stated earlier that I'm not encouraging my son to go farming which is of course very sad. This proposed plan has the ability to to help with the urban perception of farming in southland, but it also has the potential to be the final nail in the coffin of the southland family sheep and beef farm, that would be sadder still.

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