

Submitter No: 40

Submitter Name: Baker, David

Hearing

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Hello my name is david baker and I'm speaking on behalf of my family that run Baker Farms. We have two properties one up the tomogalak road by cattle flat in Balfour which is sheep beef and deer on 4 different physiographic zones with the largest being bedrock hill country. The other farm is between riversdale and wendonside which is 260ha of this 230ha is in the old Mataura zone, where we finish cattle and lambs, run a one year ewe flock and winter graze hoggets and 1150 dairy cows.

I am all for a water and land plan and believe it will be good for the future of the province, our future generations and our markets as the world is looking for sustainable environmentally friendly food but I believe this plan has been rushed though in a hurry, farmers weren't listened too enough at the beginning hence the amount of submissions you received and there has not been enough data collected or scientific evidence done.

An example of this is the physiographic zones and I believe these zones should be left out of the water and land plan. A lot more data needs to be collected to back up how the scientists think the zones work. Our property and surrounding farms are not free draining therefore how can it be classified as the old Mataura physiographic zone. It has an incredibly hard tight pan running though it that slows and almost stops water. At a meeting in Balfour with a couple of the environment southland water scientist people came away with more questions than answer and the scientists themselves don't really know or understand how the groundwater and underlying Garvie aquifers work so if they are unsure, how do you expect farmers to have any trust in these so called physiographic zones. I understand you need rules for certainty but how can you make a rule if there is no certainty in the science.

When we purchased the wendonside property it was considered by environment southland as one of the best areas in southland to dairy farm and winter graze on as there were no creeks and cows didn't sink into the soil very far. According to this plan it is now one of the worst areas along with the peat wetland zone.

To say that dairy farming on this property and the old Mataura zone will be a non-complying activity is crazy and as a result it has dropped our land value significantly.

Seeing that water quality is being driven from central government maybe they should then be giving us compensation for loss of capital.

Every farm and farmer should be treated equal as long as there is no detriment to the environment. If the property was converted to dairy I would be doing less damage to the environment than I am now, with intensive winter grazing. There are also a lot more natural fertiliser and biological products that you can use, in our farming operation we have been using these for the past 12 years to help decrease the excessive use of acid and nitrogen based fertiliser, which I personally believe we are using too much of in this country and its not sustainable. The trouble with these alternative products they are more expensive and a lot more trial work is needed by independent soil scientist to make sure they work. We could also have a wintering barn and spread the effluent over the drier months which would also cut down the need for excess fertiliser. There are ways to dairy farm sustainably therefore it should be a discretionary activity.

Stock exclusion from water bodies

I support the exclusion of cattle and deer from waterways in the low land physiographic zones with a 3 m buffer but think that in the bedrock hill country it should be left up to the land sustainability officer to work with the farmer and do a farm focus plan to decide which if any sensitive waterways need to be fenced. I have done this with David Conner's and find him very practical and he understands how farms work. Deer are hard on waterways but they are also very hard to keep out as the expense outweighs the benefit on hill country. After working with David we put in another big pond with sediment traps so I now have 2 large ponds in all the creeks that lead out of the deer unit and there are also small ponds in every gully that are for stock water and act as sediment traps as well. A lot of these low land creeks leading out of the bedrock zone are less than 1m wide and will be fenced and planted as well.

I see in the 42 a report that sheep should be excluded from waterways in catchments where ecoli level fail to meet the national objective framework. This is crazy unless the ecoli can be tracked back to sheep, there are a lot of areas even out of native bush that have high ecoli levels where no sheep have been. My ponds and ^{the} creeks leading out ^I of ~~the ponds~~ this year from march to may would have been full of ecoli from all the ducks fowling it. How do we keep ducks out they cause more ecoli than sheep?

Also in that report between may and September sheep have to be excluded from break fencing pasture around water ways. This needs to be removed as there are plenty of times during those months where this can be achieved without degrading water quality. We need sheep in most waterways to control the weeds. Under an old environment southland river grant back in the early 80s my father retired the tomogalak river. Now it's a mess and was a massive mistake. The gorse and willows exploded choking the river stopping the gravel being moved downstream. The river now floods all the time running though my best paddocks as the river water level is now higher than these paddocks from gravel build up and they are getting wetter and wetter and I'm slowly losing areas to swamp. For the past 4 years I have been waiting to find out what the best method to fix it is but environment southland don't know and are trying to find a solution. I will have to pay to fix it ^{that} as well. So we need sheep in our waterways so this mistake doesn't happen to others.

Farming and Intensive winter grazing.

I don't think the 50 ha area is a fair way of doing it and most farmers I have talked to think it should be a total area percentage base 15 to 20%.

The vegetation strip of 5 m to 9 degrees is fine but 20 m over 9 degrees is crazy as it takes out far too much area of your paddock so you need to put another paddock of crop in. If you left a 5 m vegetative strip not cultivated and then when you grazed the paddock leave the bottom area until last would still work. Instead of a rule with slope which makes it very complicated to work out maybe a visit from your land sustainability officer to discuss how you're going to graze it would be fine. *and achieve the same outcome.*

At present there is a massive urban versus rural divide and it's getting worse. There are too many departments like fish n game, forest and bird, labour and the green party that are fuelling this divide. Under objective 16 in the region wide plan it states public access to and along rivers and lakes beds is maintained and enhanced. I can't see this happening if every time a fisherman or tramper sees an animal in a waterway and complains takes a photo and puts it in the newspaper. Farmers will have no option but to stop access. We are doing our bit to clean up the waterways and yes we can do more. But the urban people need to realise that below most towns the water quality is also poor and city councils need to do their bit as well.

Thankyou