

Submitter No: 822

Syd + Elaine.

Submitter Name:
Tremaine Farming

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Water & Land Plan Hearing Discussion

Tremaine Farming

Morgan & Victoria Tremaine

Syd & Elaine Tremaine

Mandeville

Good Morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the Water & Land Plan. Tremaine Farming Partnership is made up of myself, my husband Morgan, along with Morgan's parents, Syd & Elaine Tremaine. We farm in Northern Southland near Mandeville. Syd & Elaine have been farming there for about 40 years and we all want to ensure our family can farm here for at least another 40 years.

Our partnership leases 470ha of land from a family trust (55ha of which is classed as being Old Mataura Physiographic Zone). We also lease an additional 250ha which are neighbouring or less than 5kms from the main farm.

We are predominately an arable cropping farm operation and have a crop rotation in place of wheat, barley, Oats, & Peas. We have a small number of sheep & cattle and take cows on for winter grazing. We are also baling & wrapping contractors.

There are several issues that are important to and impact our business and future viability. These are;

- *The classification of the Old Mataura Physiographic Zone
- *Winter Grazing
- *Farm Management Plans
- *Cultivation of Sloping Ground

This plan is extremely restrictive for any farmers who farm land that is zoned Old Mataura. In reality all zones have features that will have some undesirable environmental impacts when they are farmed. If the Old Mataura zone remains in the plan we will have much more limited options to alter our business without incurring cost in obtaining consents. It concerns us that in tough times (as a lot of us have recently experienced) we will be limited in how we can manage our cashflow if we are restricted by this plan as to what we are permitted, restricted, controlled or

prohibited to do based on what zone our land is in. We aim to have a business model that can adapt to market changes so if one aspect of our industry is at a low we can pick up the shortfall in another. For instance we have taken on more cows for winter grazing this year than in previous years as the recent dairy price fall had a significant impact on our business and we needed the income opportunities that winter grazing can provide. We need to have flexibility in our farming operation to change tact when necessary so we can continue to pay staff, feed our families and keep our farming business going for future generations. If winter grazing is only permitted to a certain maximum area based on land type zoning we will not have this flexibility. Instead we will have to incur a cost to attempt to obtain a resource consent - which are to be 'strongly discouraged' according to policy 9.

An acceptable solution would be to allow a certain number of hectares per landholding or a percentage per landholding regardless of land zone type. This would also reduce the likely number of consent applications the council would receive, therefore also saving time & money for both parties. Anywhere between the size of 30-50 hectares would likely be fair as that area has the potential to carry a decent number of stock. Any area larger than this would increase the likelihood of undesirable environmental effects due to increased stock numbers. 30-50 hectares would work on our property and allows for flexibility without being too restrictive.

Morgan & I are in the early stage of our farming careers and in the future I imagine we would look for opportunities to expand our business with further leases and or land purchases. Rule 23 (c) (i) which relies on 3 year averages for granting consent for intensive winter grazing would likely impede and hinder our ability to do this if the previous landowner/Lessee or Lessor had a different farming system to us. This average based consent criteria should be removed. In our own farming operation the last years of winter grazing has varied a lot due to the market.

Before the Physiographic zones are accepted into the Plan the properties which are classed as Old Mataura need to be inspected and correctly assessed. It would seem prudent to leave the Physiographic Zone Maps out of the Plan for now until further investigation & testing can be undertaken on those areas that are disputed. Even the section 42 report at 6.46 on page 132 mentions that some properties may have different characteristics to those specified in the Physiographic Zone maps. We agree with this as we don't believe our Old Mataura zoned land is free draining at all. It becomes very water logged and is in fact full of tiles and mole drains to try and remove the excess water. We already know that intensive winter grazing is not suitable for this land and that if we had stock on there for winter grazing we would

degrade our soil structure and quality and reduce the ability to get good crops of grass or cereals to grow on them for several years after.

In our opinion it would be a better idea and a much simpler solution if the Physiographic Zones were used to educate people and investigate where the actual areas of concern are. We propose that the 'high risk' zones that have been identified are managed more closely by way of Farm Management Plans and potentially by Council staff visiting the property to visually gauge how the zone is being managed and what the farmers management strategies will be to mitigate, reduce or avoid degradation to water quality. This would go a long way to educating those farmers who are yet to realise the benefits of proper environmental management of their farm land. It would likely be money better spent on this than having numerous resource consent applications to process and undertake monitoring & enforcement of the Plan and consents.

If the Old Matura Zone and the other Physiographic Zones Maps are not removed from the Plan then we seek a condition that when each and every resource consent application is being assessed that site specific information is taken into account. Such site specific information should be gathered by a professional who physically visits the location and farmers involved. This should ensure that each consent application is judged on its merits rather than starting from the position that a farmer cannot change their land use based on the zoning of their land.

It is our submission that farm management plans as proposed in Rule 20 & Appendix N should be implemented. It would be useful if the Council could provide a template or worked example of a farm management plan in order to keep it simple for us and reduce financial burdens for having these plans prepared and reviewed.

On our farm we are already using many best practice management tools on a regular basis as we make decisions around crop rotations, what fertiliser applications are required and when it is suitable for applying that fertiliser, soil testing, and utilising advisors and agronomists with specialised knowledge to ensure we are doing the best we can to minimise adverse effects on our land & water.

In regard to the cultivation of sloping ground our main concern are those paddocks which have slopes of varying degrees. It is going to be quite impractical in a lot of our paddocks to ensure only those slopes under 20 degrees are cultivated as there are parts here and there which are steeper than others but make sense to cultivate with the rest of the paddock. The plan should reflect this by allowing a percentage,

say 10% of the paddock to be over 20 degrees yet still all cultivated. I note the s42 report has recommended a similar proportion based allowance.

Lastly, most farmers, including us are in the business of farming because we care about the land and what we can grow & produce on it. We all want it to perform at its best. In order for it to perform at its best we need to manage our resources sustainably. For the most part we recognise this plan is seeking to preserve Southlands resources for the future however some parts such as the Physiographic zone classification of Old Mataura is a step too far at present.

Question -

I would like some clarification of leased land and whether it is a separate land holding per Lessor or does it depend on the location of the leased property and whether they are adjacent/adjoining? This will have an impact on what area we can have in Winter Grazing Crop.

What is the process when a landholding contains more than one zone? what one is dominant and what rules apply - is there a threshold or can you choose?