

Kapuka Dairies – Land and water submission hearing 27th September 2017

Kapuka Dairies is a 704 hectare property consisting of a 420ha milking platform, 200 hectares of wetlands with the remainder - made up of pine blocks and scrub areas – Kapuka began its first milking season in 2011.

Mark having a personal interest in Kapuka Dairies as per the attached mission statement – myself – felt we needed to control and run the business ourselves to ensure its economic future and viability - we took over operations in August 2012.

We sought an addition to consent to milk 1100 cows on the Miller Road/Waituna property in 2014. This was a very intensive, stressful and not to mention extremely costly exercise – involving consultants, an environmental lawyer and a commissioner. Through the processes of completing this consent – we became very aware about the sensitivity of this area and the need to present the best case possible in order to achieve our end goal – our consent was granted as we put forward a sound case of “best management practices” that also included our suggestion to mitigate wintering on farm by removing cows by the 10th of June – and no more than 45 animals on farm after that date. This costs the farm \$350,000.00 per year for young and mixed age animal grazing and has to be budgeted during the season.

This is where our journey really began – the invaluable knowledge that we gained and the beginning for myself - our joint relationship with Environment Southland – specifically - the land sustainability team - Katrina McEwan and Gary Morgan – who have been invaluable in their advice and assistance and of course the fact that they are very familiar with the area and more importantly from our perspective – our farm, our plan – our goals. Katrina suggesting and liaising with Mark on the installation of a green water yard wash

system at our dairy shed – cutting our white-water usage and of course being able to recycle, and the installation of a solids separator. Putting together a riparian planting plan for the farm – 500 meters to be completed every year, the initial fencing of waterways on farm – which Environment Southland made a financial contribution towards, the farm completed a sustainable milk plan, liaising with Mark on the construction of a sediment pond from an old gravel pit – Mark's suggestion was to add an entry point and an exit to aid waterflow – this can be viewed in the Kapuka overview booklet. Recent studies carried out by Living waters on this constructed wetland and moffat creek north east of our dairy shed – showed a very healthy population of short finned eels, Inunga etc. Katrina has organised plantings of this area via Living Waters – also the construction which is adjacent to the wetland – a limerock filtration system for P – which can be viewed in the handout. Thankyou to Gary for his wisdom and practicality and for advising Mark that manuka can make a great shelter belt for a paddock - working with your environment rather other expensive alternatives.

Since that day – it has been a hard and fast path of learning and up-skilling – best farming practices - soil classifications, soil structures – how this effects our farm practices, healthy water ways, riparian planting and getting to know the attributes and limitation of the farm – all important practices for better, smarter farming. Being open to change and innovation – helping to improve both land and environment benefiting everyone sustainably.

Communication is the key and good relationships – My concerns are with blanket rules and labels such as Peat Land – Non-compliant etc. With the recent down turn in dairy – and with regard to our own consent – at the time – no provision was made for unforeseen situations. One particular scenario occurred where due to the drought in Canterbury – livestock was transported to Southland for grazing – Due to the downturn I kept our young stock on farm for an

extra extended period of time to reduce our grazing costs – However our grazier had budgeted that our young stock would be earning him set monies from x period of time thus he took on grazing from Canterbury to cover his shortfall – Leaving us with no grazier. After exhausting all avenues – I made the call to contact Environment Southland regarding our dilemma as we had to make some sort of contingency plan if we were able to winter our young stock. No markets were available to sell the stock and far too small to send to the works. The reply was that someone would get back to me in the interim – my reply – I needed an answer immediately - the reply came back – that I would have to seek an addition to consent and it was suggested that I get a consultant – this answer came via the receptionist. To me that was a generic reply - Waituna area – sensitive - No consideration was made for us personally or the circumstances. With no prior compliance issues and the fact that we have shown good farm environmental management skills - knowledgeable people to consult with – none of that made a difference. What avenues do you pursue in unforeseen circumstances like this and how without directly dealing with a third party person who should not have been put in that situation due to the fact that to us – this was a extremely urgent and sensitive situation. Why is our budget not taken into consideration when every business/ government department in NZ has a budget to adhere to and when asked the question why certain areas have not been addressed – No allowance has been made or the budget in that particular field has been spent – end of story. What happens when unforeseen/extra costs are incurred within our infrastructure – we are forced to with stand it regardless of budget.

It is from scenarios like this that I would like to amend that Peat/Wetland be reclassified from a non-complying activity to a permitted discretionary activity. If we have the skill set and the tools to prove that we have good management practices – The ability to

gain knowledge and introduce innovation to our business then why are we labelled under this banner. Our farm has two x feed pads to mitigate pugging paddocks, leaching to water ways and damage to pasture. Our fertiliser application is 80% liquid – plant available. We are changing our fertiliser practices- an example- helicopters to apply our fertiliser – all GPS'd - to reduce damage to pasture and improve accuracy and targets.

Water quality is just as important to us as it is to this plan. To be proud of healthy water ways, quality drinking water for our stock. Monitoring stations have been installed at the top end of the farm and at the bottom so water quality can be measured. Mark felt that it was necessary as implications were made from local council that when the farm was originally being converted the stock on this farm had in some way fouled the water. Due to the fact that there was no stock on the farm at this time – this was not possible. As I stated in my submission – I feel that water quality information would be informative and necessary for two reasons – One being above and the other would be that if there was an actual incident on farm that it could be mitigated/eliminated and corrective measures avenues taken. To date I still have had no information – even though I have requested it several times over. Interestingly enough when I viewed the water quality report for various sites in southland – I found most of the data was labelled as inconclusive/undetermined.

As Kapuka Dairies has a extensive network of old tile, boxed drains and artificial waterways – it is impractical to record all drainage systems – This land was developed pre 70's and Mark only digs up drainage where there is a water ponding issue. As I have suggested in my submission – going forward all new drainage should be mapped and pre-existing drainage when found.

A farm management plan is an integrated part of our business, especially after going through the consent process – which was basically treated as a new conversion due to the sensitivity of the

area. This has given us a sound basis going forward – a very extensive plan showing our competence in good management practices and our no wintering plan as mentioned above. Many of the practices in the plan – which include fencing of all waterways, riparian planting plans, fertiliser applications and nutrient budgets are a requirement and are supplied to our dairy company annually. I know personally how much time is involved in this process. With close to a thousand dairy herds in Southland – how is this going to be monitored so that timeframes are feasible and viable – what assurances are there that this is not going to have a major impact on our business.

With climatic changes on the horizon and this has been evident in Southland over the last two years - with a mild winter and spring – I would like to suggest flexibility be the key to whether animal waste can be applied between the 1st of May to the 30th September. Not only as I stated that with the technology available – soil moisture meters and temperature probes plus information off the Environment Southland website that we are capable of making an accurate and good management decision as to whether solid waste can be spread onto our land. It is of great concern to us that due to these restraints and our erratic weather pattern as of late before the 1st of May and the fact that the period from mid May to early August is our off season when repairs and maintenance are carried out on our lanes could not only create an animal health and welfare issue but due to time restraints and farm logistics during the season whether these can be carried out at all – thus having a substantial impact on our business.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that to us personally good communication and constructive advice, is the key – to have a healthy and productive working relationship with local people and bodies. To farm sustainably - There is a developing awareness via

the media, education in schools etc – an awareness of the environment and our environmental roles and obligations. Education and awareness are the key no matter what age you are. We are the proud custodians of our land – the land that we love – the land that we - and future generations to come – can farm sustainably, profitably enabling us to support our local community or communities - to provide employment opportunities – to aid in making southland a viable tourist destination by providing employment and a valued experience to overseas guests.

Thankyou for your time

Submitter No: 433

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Date Received: 27/9/17