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Report 02.689

1 November 2002

File: Y/19/0/4

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Wayne O'Donnell, Manager, Biosecurity

Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan 2002/03

1. Purpose

To seek Committee approval, as the delegated Regional Management Agency, to adopt the 2002/03 Operational Plan.

2. Background

The review of the 1996 - 2001 Regional Pest Management Strategies was finalised midway through 2000 with the production of the draft Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy 2001-2021 (RPMS 2001-2021). The Proposed RPMS 2001-2021 was approved by Council in November 2001 but subsequently appealed to the Environment Court by Safari Club International (SCI).

The Environment Court finally issued a consent order in July 2002. This Committee subsequently considered the amended Strategy and recommended that it be approved by Council. This last action was completed on 17 September 2002. The Strategy term was amended to cover the period 2002 to 2022.

The attached Operational Plan is the first under the new Strategy. However, the Plan continues a number of activities that were initiated under the former Strategy. The most significant change is the allocation of pests into management divisions based on their position on the 'infestation curve'. The curve is a conceptual representation of pests through time, from new arrivals (eradication) to widespread infestation (suppression).

3. Comment

The Council is required to prepare an annual Operational Plan under Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act. However, there is no specific statutory requirement

for an Operational Plan to be formally approved by the Council. It is considered appropriate to do so, however, as it recognises Council's ongoing support for the Plan and reinforces the desire to be transparent regarding expenditure and means of achievement.

The Biosecurity Act 1993 specifies a number of requirements for an Operational Plan.

The Committee, as the formally approved Management Agency, must:-

- review the Plan annually and, if deemed appropriate, amend them;
- provide a copy of each Plan to the responsible Minister;
- prepare an annual report on the Plans, including the effectiveness of their implementation, not later than five months after the end of each financial year; and
- make copies of each Plan and annual report available to the public.

The power to disallow a Plan, if it is deemed to be inconsistent with the Strategy, lies solely with the Council that approved the relevant Regional Pest Management Strategy.

4. The Operational Plan

The proposed Operational Plan is enclosed separately as Attachment 2.

Whilst the Act requires Plans to be developed, there is no advice on their purpose, form or content. It is presumed that their purpose is to assist the Management Agency to implement the Regional Strategy. Through the process of annual review and reporting, the Management Agency details how the Strategies are to be implemented and the achievement, or otherwise, of stated performance targets. Secondly, the process enables stakeholders the opportunity to annually examine a Strategy's cost effectiveness for its duration.

5. Recommendation

That the Committee approve the proposed Operational Plan 2002/03 (Attachment 2) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

Report prepared by:

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