



# Managing land use

## Collaboration to be part of talks

Carterton farmer Peter Gawith is looking forward to learning more from over “the other side of the fence” at the NZ Association of Resource Management (NZARM) annual conference he is attending this week.

Regional council, ministry, science and agricultural industry delegates from around country will be discussing the challenges of achieving best practice in land management through community engagement.

Gawith is attending the conference with his farmer’s cap on but is very keen to participate in discussions that will inform his work as Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee chairman.

“The key speakers and the discussions with other delegates from around New Zealand offer an invaluable opportunity to gather knowledge to inform the work that our whaitua committee has begun, toward integrated land and water management, in the Ruamahanga River catchment.”

The Greater Wellington Regional Council Land Management team is hosting the NZARM conference this year, choosing the theme of “Engagement, Collaboration, Action”. The theme is “timely” says NZARM president, Ross Abercrombie, with the current direction from central Government for regional councils to collaborate more actively with communities.

“Collaboration allows a lot more involvement into decision-making for farmers, for them to get involved with regional



**Learning opportunity:** Carterton farmer, and chairman of the Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee, Peter Gawith is keen to learn more about successful land management collaboration at the NZARM conference. Esther Dijkstra, committee deputy chairwoman, will present to delegates on “Community Engagement in the Mangatere Valley” on behalf of the Mangatere Restoration Society.

councils around limit setting and give their view about where they see the challenges. It affords a lot more voice than they’ve had in the past, through a less formalised process.

“Many would argue that collaboration is not new – especially within our ranks, but policy development has now been directed this way to ensure end users, industry, iwi and others are all around the table more actively in defining limits and setting policy options,” says Abercrombie.

As chairman of the Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee, Gawith is keen to learn more about successful land

management collaboration.

“People outside of farming view the environment we work in differently. Farmers put a lot of effort into improving the environment they work in. Many invest heavily in best practice solutions, such as fencing and riparian planting. It’s hard for them to still be identified as the cause of all our environmental problems.”

The 61st annual NZARM conference began yesterday at Te Papa, Wellington.

Delegates will take a number of field trips around Wairarapa today and tomorrow looking at successful land management partnerships in the region