

28 APRIL 2017

Dear Sir / Madam


Re: Clean Water Consultation 2017

Please find enclosed a submission from the New Zealand Pork Industry Board (NZPork) on the proposed on the Clean Water Consultation documents.

We have reviewed the documents for their impact on pig farming.

NZPork appreciates the opportunity to comment, and we would be pleased to elaborate further on our submission. Please contact me in the first instance via the details below.

Yours sincerely



Jeska McHugh

Environmental Advisor

Phone: 021 453 752, email: jeska.mchugh@pork.co.nz

Introduction

The New Zealand Pork Industry Board (NZPork) is a statutory board funded by producer levies. It actively promotes “100% New Zealand Pork” to support a sustainable and profitable future for New Zealand grown pork. The Board’s statutory function is to act in the interests of pig farmers to help attain the best possible net on-going returns while farming sustainably into the future.

Nationally there are about 100 registered commercial pork producers, comprising a relatively small but significantly integrated sector of the New Zealand Agricultural economy.

New Zealand pork producers are facing a number of economic, social and environmental challenges in order to remain viable. The contribution of imported pork to New Zealand’s total pork consumption has increased significantly in recent years, placing further competition and production demands on producers who have responded by developing increasingly efficient systems. Currently, nearly all pork produced in New Zealand is consumed locally and makes up approximately 42% of the domestic market supply.

Pig Farmers in New Zealand are leaders in Environmental Management and have a firm grasp of environmental issues, especially water quality and quantity pressures. They demonstrate a high level of innovation and environmental stewardship, particularly in regard to manure and nutrient management which has important implications for water quality. The New Zealand pork industry has committed significant time and resource to Sustainable Farming Fund projects centered on nutrient management and environmental initiatives. However, profit margins for the industry remain tight and dialogue with farmers indicates that ongoing compliance costs and uncertainty into the future are key issues.

Swimming Targets

What are your thoughts on the proposed swimming targets, for example, on the timeframes and categories?

We understand that the Government is proposing to set a target that 90% of New Zealand's rivers and lakes are swimmable by 2040 with an interim goal of 80% of these rivers and lakes to be swimmable by 2030.

This is an ambitious target and NZPork supports an approach that recognises that requiring every place to be swimmable all of the time is unachievable and would lack credibility. As noted in the freshwater reform documents, water quality varies dramatically with the weather and even the cleanest waterways exceed safe levels of contaminants during flood events – highlighted by the extreme events of 2017. A package that focuses on the frequency that the water quality in our rivers and lakes meets swimming standard rather than absolutes is supported.

While NZPork expresses support for the target, uncertainty around the costs to achieve this, challenge the viability of the freshwater reforms. The reform package states that Government will be asking regional councils to tell it by 2018 how the target can be achieved, including the likely costs and the impacts on their communities. It is doing this as the cost to meet the target for swimmable lakes and rivers will depend on the measures put in place locally to meet them.

NZPork supports a collaborate approach whereby the community decide which rivers and lakes are most important to them for swimming, what improvements are needed, and how quickly they will be made. However, in the absence of fully understanding the economic impact of achieving this target a deficiency in information exists. NZPork has concerns that a 2018 deadline for regional councils to gather this information is not achievable and that the 2030 goal and 2040 target are too ambitious.

NZPork is a supporter of the Government's Freshwater Improvement Fund that commits \$100 million over 10 years to improve the management of New Zealand's lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater and wetlands. However, funding must better align with the targeted timeframe for swimmable rivers. If the 2030 goal and 2040 target remain, funding must be extended beyond a 10-year period.

Funding must be available to mitigate potential economic costs on rural production systems. The reforms will likely require significant changes in farming systems across New Zealand. This could mean reducing the type, location and/or scale of farming systems in some catchments, and removing farming from others. The reforms must be clear on how what assistance and compensations will be available for farmers in these circumstances.

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

What do you think about the proposed amendments to the Freshwater NPS?

National Significance of freshwater and Te Mana o te Wai

NZPork recognises the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki with regard to freshwater management and we are supportive of ongoing collaboration with iwi.

We support of the change and movement of the statement on the National Significance of freshwater and Te Mana o te Wai and in particular the new text clarifying that Te Mana o te Wai incorporates the values of tangata whenua and the wider community in relation to each water body. As discussed further below, it is NZPork's opinion that an extractive use is a value of the people.

AAA1. Te Mana o te Wai

The intent of new Objective AAA1 is supported. However, there is some concern over the language used (to consider and recognise) and its appropriateness for an objective. The

language is open to interpretation and potential litigation that would further put strain and delays on the community and achieving the freshwater target.

A. Water Quality

Objective A2

Changes to Objective A2 are supported.

NZPork has been concerned that the broad requirement to maintain or improve water quality regionally could result in resources being expended to improve severely degraded waterways with little chance of rehabilitation, where less resource could be invested in gaining significant improvements to waterways which sit in higher bands. Although we agree that severely degraded waterways need to be improved, it is important that this is not at the expense of achievable improvements elsewhere in catchments or regions.

The changes proposed to Objective A2 to refer to maintaining or improving the overall quality of fresh water within a freshwater management unit rather than within a region is an improvement. Furthermore, the addition of a statement that economic well-being, including productive economic opportunities, within environmental limits is to be provided for as a second tier is also an improvement to the objective.

Policy A5

New Policy A5 is supported, particularly in regards to the easing of restrictions on the E. coli attribute state. Good Management Practice by NZPork producers seeks to avoid where possible contaminants entering waterbodies. A common sense and practical approach to limit setting must be applied to ensure farming systems operating under Good Management Practice are supported and the 'suitable for immersion' environmental outcome is achieved.

B. Water Quantity

Objective B1

Changes to Objective B1 to provide for economic well-being, including productive economic opportunities are supported.

Environmental improvement cannot be managed in isolation from social and economic development within communities and regions, indeed it is economic development that enables environmental improvement. The linkages between these wellbeings, articulated explicitly in the policy and processes contained in the NPS-FM, is supported.

C. Integrated Management

Policy C1

New Policy C1 is supported.

CA. National Objectives Framework

Policy CA2

e) Formulating freshwater objectives

NZPork supports new e)iiia. and an approach where the national policy statement requires freshwater quality within a region freshwater management unit to be maintained at its current level (where community values are currently supported) or improved (where community values are not currently supported). This national policy statement must allow some variability in terms of freshwater quality, including between freshwater management

units, as long as the overall freshwater quality is maintained within a freshwater management unit.

f) considering the following matters at all relevant points in the process described in Policy CA2(a)-(e)

NZPork supports new f)iaaab. that requires consideration of how to provide for economic well-being, including productive economic opportunities, within the context of environmental limits.

NZPork has some concerns with the introduction of text to f)i. that introduces a requirement to consider the community understandings of the health and well-being of the freshwater management unit. This is subjective terminology and various sectors of the community will have differing opinions on what health and well-being of the freshwater management unit is or should be. It is not clear what the new terminology adds to the matters of consideration set out in f).

Policy CA2

NZPork opposes a liberal exception regime as currently described. The NPS-FM allows for objectives to be set with very long timeframes and we believe that this, in conjunction with bottom lines set at an appropriate level and based on robust and defensible science, should mean that exceptions are not necessary.

NZPork is particularly concerned that a level playing field is not being created for water quality in rural and urban environments. Existing urban areas in New Zealand are often characterised by degraded waterbody systems the result of poorly designed and/or maintained stormwater and wastewater systems. Furthermore, urban development of greenfield land results in a degradation of water quality often with downstream effects that impact on rural water quality.

It is not reasonable to provide urban authorities with an exemption from maintaining and improving water quality to the standards expected of rural communities.

CB. Monitoring Plans

Objective CB1

Changes to require the values identified under Policy CA2(b) to also be monitored are supported.

Policy CB1

The comprehensive changes proposed to Policy CB1 provide more practical and clear monitoring requirements for regional councils.

NZPork supports a requirement for monitoring plans and a preference for biological monitoring. Monitoring method flexibility must remain at a local level (including the ability to use indicator measures appropriate to each catchment). It is important that robust data is available to inform decisions on setting objectives and limits.

Appendix 1: National Values and Uses for Fresh Water

NZPork agrees that ecosystem health should be a Compulsory National Value and recommends that this is measured biologically with regard to indigenous species.

NZPork endorses the Compulsory National Value of human health for recreation.

Through earlier submission on the freshwater reforms, NZPork stated that remaining values should not be compulsory – NZPork supports the intention that communities should decide in collaboration the values to be managed for locally. NZPork has concerns that the proposed changes have devalued some Additional Natural Values and appears to priorities others.

A new classification of “Extractive Uses’ is proposed listing:

- Water supply
- Animal drinking water
- Irrigation and food production
- Hydro-electric power generation
- Commercial and industrial use

These are values of people. As much so as those other values of people listed under Te Hauora o te Tangata:

- Fishing
- Mahinga Kai
- Transport and tauranga waka

The differentiation into an ‘Extractive Use’ creates uncertainty for users of water and implementation issues for the NPS-FM if these are not values to be considered in lower order plans, e.g. setting a ‘minimum acceptable state’ which is the minimum level, specified in Appendix 2 (attribute tables), at which a freshwater objective may be set in a regional plan in order to provide for the associated national value.

The changes to the NPS-FM should be amended to clearly identify that ‘Extractive Uses’ are a value of the people - Te Hauora o te Tangata.

Excluding stock from waterways

What are your thoughts on the proposed stock exclusion regulation, for example, the timeframes and stock types to be excluded?

We understand that the reforms propose excluding dairy cattle and pigs from most lakes, rivers and streams from 1 July 2017, with compulsory stock exclusion to follow on a staggered basis through to 2030, extending to include beef and deer and depending on land gradient. For the pork industry, this is as follows:

- 1 July 2017: On steeper land (> 15°), pigs must be excluded from waterways over 1 metre wide, lakes and wetlands.
- 1 July 2017: On rolling land (> 3-15°), pigs must be excluded from waterways over 1 metre wide, lakes and wetlands.
- 1 July 2017: On the plains (> 0-3°), pigs must be excluded from waterways over 1 metre wide, lakes and wetlands.
- 1 July 2020: On the plains (> 0-3°), pigs must be excluded from all waterways, lakes and wetlands.

NZ Pork notes that most commercial pork producers would not have their pigs on steep or rolling land. Our Good Management Practice guidelines state:

- Outdoor pig production is on flat land (need flat land for huts)- therefore minimising the risk of runoff.
- Exclude stock from natural waterways, drains, wetlands and water races that flow through the property. Install culverts or bridges at stock crossings.
- If runoff from a paddock can get into a flowing waterway/drain an effective planted riparian margin is required.
- If runoff from tracks can into a flowing waterway/drain, runoff management to prevent runoff from entering waterway. Place trough, drinkers and gateways away from flow paths. Prevent run off from wallows entering a waterway.

NZPork believes our industry can achieve 100% stock exclusion for commercial outdoor pork producers and an alternative option (developing a stock exclusion plan) is not applicable to our industry.

NZ Pork has no concerns with the ability to achieve the stock exclusion policy provided the right information and assistance is available for farmers. This should take the form of funding options to assist with fencing.

There must be a practical approach to fencing requirements to ensure assist farmers. The bottom line is stock exclusion. The most appropriate type and location of stock exclusion fencing must be determined 'on farm' by the farmer.

Other

Do you have any other comments on the contents of the Clean Water discussion document?

NZPork considers that the NZPS-FM must provide a consistent approach to freshwater management in rural and urban environments and that the proposed changes do not achieve this. Most notably this is expressed through the exclusions for infrastructure in CA3 (discussed previously) and in the approach of managing large river and lake waterbodies.

In regard to large rivers and lake, a definition is proposed that limits achieving specific objectives and policies for immersion to rivers of fourth order or above, and lakes larger than 1.5 kilometres. This effectively targets waterbodies in rural environments and creates a different standard to smaller and often more degraded urban waterbodies. NZPork requests that changes are made to the NPS-FM that set consistent, clear and robust standards for both urban and rural to ensure urban authorities play their part in maintaining and improving freshwater.

End of Feedback