

LANCE KERR – PRESENTATION TO THE HEARING PANEL; WAIKATO'S PC1

Good afternoon. My name is Lance Kerr. My wife Robyn and I live north west of Huntly on Rotongaro Road. We currently produce food from a 220ha dairy unit and an adjoining 570ha drystock block. Much of the land is suitable for cropping, and in the past has been used for commercial gardening of onions, potatoes, squash and lettuce. We would have liked the flexibility to go back to this in the future but PC1 has put paid to that option, which is disappointing given our proximity to NZ's largest domestic market.

It is also disappointing that commercial growing in general is now potentially unable to capitalise on that advantage by having its footprint artificially constrained.

It makes no sense to have a Cropping farmer next to a Dairy farmer next to a Beef farmer, all farming on similar soil types and being restricted to do so in the future because of their current farming activity.

Throughout our 37 years of farming we have focused on a mix of business and environmental sustainability. We share a passion for producing food, and a goal of family succession which has seen our youngest daughter and her husband become part of our farming team.

Our business supports 8 families. We originally employed our 50/50 sharemilker as a farm labourer 12 years ago. He has grown with us to his current position, they are now part of the family.

Our dairy unit shares a 3km boundary with Lake Rotongaro. To enhance the environment, we have fenced off wetlands and planted 45,000 native trees increasing the lake margin. Overall, we have retired approximately 18ha of productive land. In addition to this we have converted our lake front paddocks to heifer grazing, these steps have been taken not because we were forced too, but because we wanted too.

We have a feedpad which can be used to stand off cows in winter. Our effluent holding capacity is approximately 60 days with an effluent disposal area of 90ha which equates to 40% of the dairy unit.

We have already fenced off our waterways but we support Federated Farmers proposal to exclude stock from permanent waterways on the basis of stocking

intensity rather than slope. We do so because it is a simple and practical solution.

The Rotongaro Canal runs through the middle of our property. We note that the Plan asks for a 10-metre setback on either side of council-controlled waterways. If this becomes the rule, we will effectively lose 12ha of productive land. We think a more appropriate margin is a minimum of 1 metre as currently proposed for other drains with lowland contour.

Koi Carp and Canadian Geese are having a huge effect on the landscape and environment that we farm in, as stated we share an extensive frontage with Lake Rotongaro. As a child my wife witnessed first-hand being able to see eels swimming in the lake, this was some 50 years ago before Koi Carp were introduced by coarse fisherman and the Geese by the Acclimatization Society. I am unsure how we eradicate these pests but I feel it is worth noting that they do play a major role in the point loading of nutrients in the lake and surrounding farm land.

Nitrogen Reference Point

We oppose the use of a nitrogen reference point except in the context of what OVERSEER was designed for. I.e. as a management tool 'designed to compare the impact of system changes, rather than provide absolute numbers'.¹ If OVERSEER cannot accurately measure Nitrogen outputs, then it should not be used as a regulatory tool.

Federated Farmers Alternative Framework 1 (AF1)

We support Federated Farmers Alternative Framework 1 as being a far more practical Plan than PC1, and one that is a lot more likely to get buy-in from food producers. And at the end of the day, the success of any Plan will be down to how it is embraced by those that have to implement it.

Thank you.

¹ Overseer Chief Executive, Caroline Read