

Summer – 2012

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# Protect



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# Protect

Summer 2012

Magazine of the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute

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# From the Editor

## A Global Weeds Compendium, a New Species Register and more

Welcome to the Summer 2012 edition of *Protect*.

I hope you will find in it a good balance of information as well as entertainment.

This issue profiles two members who have recently retired but remain very active in the field of biosecurity. As well there is a brief item on the significance of the changes to the Biosecurity Act, and articles about an ant sniffing dog, ferret breeding, whale salami and ostrich eggs.

There is also information on some useful reference materials such as the "New Species Register" and the "Global

Compendium of Weeds".

I hope you find something of interest for your holiday reading.

Thank you all for your contributions and support. I would also like to thank Col Pearson for his valuable assistance in the background with producing the magazine, and also Environment Canterbury for its help with printing and distribution.

Happy holidays to you and your families.

Best wishes  
**Chris Macann**  
Editor



The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute can be found on the web at [www.biosecurity.org.nz](http://www.biosecurity.org.nz)

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## NZBI News

# News from the Executive

## Kia ora and hello from the Executive.

**A**t the Executive meeting on October 10 we discussed the final details of getting a list of members posted on the members-only section of the website. It was decided that such a list would comprise those financial members whose subscription was up to date.

This led to a discussion surrounding our current process for invoicing members. The Executive considered alternative ways of billing for membership that would reduce the amount of paperwork involved in the current process. It was agreed that we look at other organisations with a similar membership base to the NZBI and investigate a more streamlined invoicing process.

### Biosecurity branding concern

To follow-on from the meeting with the Minister for Primary Industries, as reported in the last issue, the Minister made an open offer to the NZBI to visit any MPI facilities in the future to learn more about its work from behind the scenes. The Executive agreed that we would take the Minister up on his offer as this would be a great opportunity for a series of future articles in *Protect*.

### Submission process

We discussed the role the NZBI should take on biosecurity-related submissions where they align with the NZBI's aims and values, for instance support of biocontrol applications. It was agreed that we need to be careful to avoid endorsement of commercial products and ensure that such a submission would, for instance, add tools to the collective biosecurity toolbox. If so, then the NZBI should proactively add its support to such applications.

We are working on the issue of seconded members to the Executive, as discussed at the last AGM. We have now asked branches for feedback and discussion on a remit to change the constitution being proposed for voting at the next AGM.

### Awards

There was a general discussion around the study and professional development awards. It was agreed that the current application timeframes and the amounts awarded need to be looked at more closely so they better reflected current economic conditions. Additionally,

we need to ensure members are well informed of the application criteria and actively encouraged to apply.

We reviewed last year's recipients of the NZBI membership awards (for students and volunteers) and discussed increasing the free membership period to 15 months so it aligned with the financial year and NETS. Branches are encouraged to start thinking about their nominations for next year.

### Changes to the Biosecurity Act

John Sanson presented an update on the current changes to the Biosecurity Act. A significant change will be the ability for MPI to establish national "pathway plans". How these plans would be managed both nationally and regionally is now being worked through at MPI. Included in this issue is an overview of these changes prepared by John.

### Archives

I am pleased to report that the Archives Working Group has submitted an application to the NZ Lotteries Fund for an Oral History Project. The application process is a significant piece of work so a big thank you goes out to all of those who were involved in supplying the scrolls of paperwork that were required to back up our application.

The Executive will soon be looking at the job-size of the Archives Project Co-ordinator role and the contribution the Institute will make to the wider project which we are also hoping will be well supported by sponsors.

### NETS2013

Finally, the Executive was very pleased to see that the Canterbury/Westland Branch is progressing well with its plans for NETS2013 in Shantytown on the wild West Coast from 31 July 31 to August 2, 2013.



**From the entire Executive team, have a great and safe Christmas and New Year.**

**Pedro Jensen**  
President

[pedro.jensen@boprc.govt.nz](mailto:pedro.jensen@boprc.govt.nz)

**The Minister made an open offer to the NZBI to visit any MPI facilities in the future to learn more about its work**

## NZBI Archives update

## Project seeks funding to capture practitioners' oral history

The Archives Working Group has lodged an application with the Lotteries Commission requesting a grant of \$15,000 for the Institute's Oral History Project.

A large amount of paperwork was required to comply with what is a very rigorous application process.

The application promoted the Institute as being the appropriate organisation to capture and effectively store the history of biosecurity in New Zealand.

The project will capture the memories of New Zealand's oldest practitioners who were involved in the early development of the NZBI and its forerunner organisations.

The Working Group has compiled a long list of people to interview for the project. At this stage there will only be about six interviews followed by more in the next stage.

The application process is very rigorous but it sets up some processes for the future.

This project is just one part of establishing a permanent Institute Archive.

The NZBI has demonstrated its commitment to this project by pledging to fund the project co-ordinator position and to cover the travel costs involved in the oral history project.

In support the leadership of Forest and Bird and NZ

Federated Farmers have sent letters saying that they are keen to see this project proceed.

The Working Group is continuing to work through the lists of who has what and where, and to get as many names of old-timers as possible as well as senior people still working.

Please let the working group know if you would like to be on a "keep informed" list of the project's progress or you can suggest anyone who may be interested in receiving regular updates.

Please keep a lookout for historical material that may be useful and let the group know of what is held and where.

The Working Group members are: Pedro Jensen, Dave Galloway, Lynne Huggins, Ray Clarey and Chris Macann.

Retired Institute member Jack Henderson, who started out as a rabbitier chiefly in the King Country, was looking forward to being interviewed for the oral history project. Sadly he died in November, aged 84. An article on Jack's career appears in this issue.

**Chris Macann**

NZBI Archives Project Co-ordinator

## NETS2013 update

## Overseas speakers confirmed for NETS

The Canterbury-Westland branch is progressing well with plans for NETS2013 at Shantytown near Greymouth, July 31 - August 2.

We are happy to confirm that Johanne van der Merwe and Simon O'Connor from Chevron Industries have agreed to speak at the conference.

Simon and Johanne are involved with quarantine and biosecurity on Barrow and Thevelan islands off the north-west coast of Western Australia where the oil company has major production facilities.

The company reports that 378 native plants, 13 mammals, 43 reptiles, including native animals such as the large perentie lizard, and 119 types of birds thrive alongside its oil field operations on Barrow Island and that there have been no invasive animals established on the island.

We are also aiming to host Associate Professor Andy Suarez from the University of Illinois.

Andy's research interests include nearly all aspects of ant ecology and evolution. In a biosecurity context, he is occupied by themes such as consequences of ant invasions, patterns of spread and predicted range of the Argentine ant, and the role of factors such as opportunity in invasion success.

Updates on the conference timetable and the other possible and confirmed speakers are available on the website at: [www.biosecurity.org.nz/images/pdfs/NETS2013-Draft-Programme.pdf](http://www.biosecurity.org.nz/images/pdfs/NETS2013-Draft-Programme.pdf).

**Hugh Gourlay**

NETS2013 Organising Committee Chairman

## Obituary

# Experienced pest controller used his knowledge to fight bovine Tb

Jack Henderson, a former rabbitier who hailed from the central King Country, died on October 31 in Greytown, aged 84. Shortly before Jack's passing, Ray Clarey visited him to discuss taking part in the Institute's oral history project.

Here is a summary of a eulogy Ray presented about his former colleague.

In his earlier years, among other things, Jack was involved in farm development in the King Country before joining the Hunua Rabbit Board (based at Owahango) in about 1966.

He shortly thereafter became the Supervisor. He retained this position throughout the various amalgamations with Meringa, Tokirima and Ohura North Pest Destruction Boards that formed the Central King Country PDB in 1974/75. He was at that time the Supervisor of a very large district.

The CKC Board became heavily involved in large-scale Bovine Tb possum control operations in 1977.

With this experience Jack was encouraged to join the



**Jack Henderson**

Agricultural Pest Destruction Council in 1982 as a Field Officer to complement and assist the national Bovine Tb problem.

He was based in Greytown. At the time the Wairarapa/Southern Hawkes Bay area had the biggest Bovine Tb issues – some 364 herds on movement control. Today the Wairarapa has one of the lowest rates of infection. Jack would be pleased with this outcome.

He assisted with a nationwide possum density survey to enable better planning for future control.

Jack was also a pilot and his flying skills were put to good use during this exercise – it was possible to see the possum front as they moved into South Westland by the defoliation of the bush canopy.

Jack retired from the APDC in 1989.

He was also an accomplished sketch artist with many of his works relating to his love of hunting and firearms.

## Honouring Peter Joynt

In August this year a small number of colleagues and NZBI members meet in Dargaville to present the late Peter Joynt's wife, Marg, and family, the Peter Ingram Award. Peter was awarded the trophy at NETS2012 in Taupo. It was a real shame that his sudden passing in November 2011 meant he could not be honoured in person.

Marg and family gratefully accepted the award on Peter's behalf and many kind words were exchanged about Peter's contributions to the community, both local and nationally. Special mention was made of his tireless work with Manchurian wild rice control. Peter will be remembered as a very active family man, a wonderful husband and a great colleague. Articles on Peter's achievements appear in this year's Winter and Spring issues of *Protect*.

**Contributed by Peter's Institute colleagues.**



**Standing from Left: Paul Ralph, Don Mackenzie, Jack Craw, Marg Joynt, Carl Cooper, Dave Galloway and Rebecca Kemp. Front Curtis Harris, Doug Foster, and Lisa Bowman.**

## News from MPI

## Review sets future direction for border services

**B**order agencies have agreed on a pathway of improvements to New Zealand's border services published on September 25.

"Agencies have comprehensively reviewed the way New Zealand runs its border services, with the aim of improving border protection and biosecurity, and making trade and travel easier," said Wayne McNee, Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and chair of the Border Sector Governance Group.

"A clear pathway of change over the next five years has been developed to drive greater collaboration between the three agencies working at the border – MPI, Customs and Immigration New Zealand.

"The government is making significant investments in technology at the border," Mr McNee said.

"It is important we leverage these investments and explore what other future improvements to border services they may make possible."

The development of a Joint Border Management System between Customs and MPI will improve border protection by providing better information to manage border risks, and a single online window for traders to comply with border requirements, cutting their costs.

Carolyn Tremain, Comptroller of Customs, said

**'A clear pathway of change over the next five years has been developed to drive greater collaboration between the three agencies working at the border.'**

Wayne McNee,  
MPI Director-  
General

that the system would realise significant financial benefits for industry by speeding the flow of low-risk goods across the border.

Also under development is the Immigration Global Management System. Immigration New Zealand head Steve Stuart said the new system would contribute to the faster facilitation of passengers across the border.

Among the new opportunities identified by the review is the possibility of conducting joint customs and biosecurity inspections for cargo at the

border, and potentially questioning Australian and New Zealand air passengers about customs, immigration and biosecurity matters at the same point in their journey through an airport.

"These ideas will be explored in more detail over the next few years, as the new technology is implemented," Mr McNee said. (This item is abridged)

## Whale salami seized at border

**'The fact that they declared the item shows that our messages are getting through to travellers'**

Auckland airport  
biosecurity team  
manager Steve  
Gay

**S**alami produced from whale meat rang alarm bells for biosecurity officials at Auckland Airport at the end of September.

The salami was confiscated by an MPI quarantine inspector from two New Zealand travellers who had declared it before crossing the border.

It had been purchased in Norway as a souvenir, says Team Manager Steve Gay.

"The passengers were happy to hand over the salami. The fact that they declared the item shows that our messages are getting through to travellers about declaring or disposing of goods that pose a biosecurity risk before entering

New Zealand," Mr Gay says.

He says the salami was "definitely one of the more unusual seizures" by airport biosecurity staff over the last month.

He says the product was not covered by an import health standard, which raised biosecurity concerns about possible diseases in the meat.

In addition to biosecurity risk, there were concerns about whether the item was illegal under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The salami has been destroyed, says Mr Gay.

## Undeclared ostrich eggs

**B**iosecurity officials reported in November the bizarre discovery of two massive ostrich eggs in the luggage of a passenger at Auckland airport.

The two whole eggs with yolk each weighed about 1.5kg. They were found loosely wrapped in newspaper.

The passenger was fined \$400 and will face increased scrutiny by biosecurity officials if they make further flights to New Zealand, said team

**An  
example of  
an ostrich  
egg.**



## News from MPI

manager Steve Gay.

He said the eggs posed a high biosecurity risk to New Zealand.

"There was the chance they could be carrying avian diseases. And we can't write off the idea that the eggs were going to be used for breeding.

"It beggars belief that the passenger could possibly forget to declare something so obvious in size and so risky for our primary sector and environment.

"Air passengers pass more than 30 signs asking them to declare or dispose of risk items before they even speak to a quarantine inspector."

## Plant matter importation prosecutions successful

**A**s the result of two successful prosecutions by the Ministry for Primary Industries, two men have been sentenced for separate breaches to the Biosecurity Act after being caught with prohibited plant material.

In the first case, a man was intercepted in January 2012 at Auckland Airport with a number of packets of seeds concealed in his jacket and luggage after arriving on a flight from China.

The court heard that the man blamed his mother for the seeds and believed that she had packed them to ensure he had food on his journey. The judge was not impressed considering the seeds were wrapped up in 14 socks and buried at the bottom of his luggage.

On November 23, the man pleaded guilty to one

charge of attempting to possess unauthorised goods. He was convicted and fined \$2000, and ordered to pay court costs of \$132.89.

In the second case, a man was caught importing prohibited plant material after packages were intercepted by MPI staff at the international mail centre in Auckland under a false name. In March MPI investigators executed a search warrant at the man's address and seized a number of seeds as well as cuttings that had been planted in his garden.

On November 26, he pleaded guilty to two charges of possessing unauthorised goods. He was convicted and sentenced to 200 hours community work for the plant-related charge and 80 hours for the seeds-related charge to be served concurrently.

## Industry News

# New species register up and running

A world-leading register of species important to New Zealand was launched in August and is now available for use.

Designed and developed by Landcare Research, the New Zealand Organisms Register provides up-to-date information on more than 94,000 animals, plants, fungi and bacteria of significance to our economy, environment and society, making it the most complete digital species catalogue of any country.

Its key value was to provide an authoritative name and source of information on organisms relevant to New Zealand, which may be known by multiple names, said Jerry Cooper, Landcare Research scientist.

"Take didymo, for example, it is known by several different names but when an organism like this is discovered in New Zealand, you need to have that information to mount an effective biosecurity response."

The New Zealand Organisms Register uses the latest data-sharing technology to access species data from research providers both here and overseas, allowing it to keep up with new knowledge as it emerges, Dr Cooper said.

Department of Conservation Transformation and Threats Manager Allan Ross said the NZOR, which was modelled on the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, would be a valuable tool for all agencies in the natural resource sector.

"We are very pleased that this tool is now available for use and can be connected to the data systems of our major users.

"We now need other organisations involved in

biodiversity work such as councils and NGOs and the private science community to link into NZOR to gain the benefits of cost saving and better decision making from it."

The NZOR stands to provide widespread benefits wherever species names are needed, whether that is to conserve threatened species, manage ecosystems,

**'We now need other organisations involved in biodiversity work such as councils and NGOs and the private science community to link into NZOR.'**

Allan Ross  
DOC

or for biosecurity responses and decisions on species introductions. It will also be of value to the primary industry for export clearances and regional councils in pest and land management.

The Department of Conservation played a key role in the creation of the NZOR, helping to

fund its development over the last three years through its Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (TFBIS) programme.

Landcare Research is hosting the NZOR and leading the work to connect it into other agencies. Other key partners include the Ministry for Primary Industries, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, NIWA, and Te Papa.

For more information visit: [www.nzor.org.nz](http://www.nzor.org.nz).

Information supplied by the

**Department of Conservation**

## Industry News

# World's first Argentine ant dog joins pest-detection team

By Amanda Peart

**W**hen you think about rodents, feral goats and a small, brown ant that can kill a native bird your natural instinct would be to stay far away.

However Brian Shields and his trio of predator dogs actively seek them out.

Brian is a specialist biosecurity contractor for Auckland Council and started training predator dogs about seven years ago when working for the Department of Conservation.

He now boasts fully trained rodent and goat dogs and the most recent addition to the team is Rhys Jones, a Welsh springer spaniel which was certified earlier this year as the world's first dog trained to detect Argentine ants.

"It was just something I was really interested in doing. It is a really rewarding thing to train a dog like that and watch them do well, particularly when it's helping our efforts in pest-free areas," Brian said.

To get certification, the dogs go through a DOC-run course which tests their behaviour, relationship with their handler, ability to track their target species and avoidance of non-target species such as birds.

All the dogs also undergo kiwi aversion training.

Rhys has also recently undergone field accuracy trials with Landcare Research, with a 90 per cent success rate, "a good result for a young dog," Brian said.

"He's only 20 months old and will just get better with age and experience."

Rhys has worked with Brian on Kawau and Great Barrier islands, around mainland marinas and wharves and in several nurseries tracking the tiny invasive Argentine ant.

"I did some research into breeds that would be good for this sort of tracking and the spaniel has a very good 'nose to the ground' style of hunting, which is ideal for ants," he said.

Argentine ants are one of the world's most invasive ant species and are very aggressive. They out-compete native ants and other invertebrates for food and can even kill small native birds.

Rhys is trained to find ant trails rather than nests, and Brian receives frozen vials of Argentine ant pheromone from a Nelson lab to set up simulations on which he can train. "We go out to a park and set up the scenario. He learns behaviour, scent and avoidance," Brian said.

"Rhys is trained to find low numbers of ants when it



*Brian Shields, left, and Welsh springer spaniel Rhys Jones on the job on Kawau Island.*

is difficult for humans to spot them.

"We know where most Argentine ant sites are and we know the habitats they like, so his job will be to tell us whether we have got the last of them."

When tracking ants in the field, Rhys is on a lead with Brian and together they cover ground systematically in grids, seeking out ant trails.

"Rhys works on reward. If he sits up for a treat, I know he's found something," he said.

"I then tag the spot and someone will follow up to find the nest from this initial marking.

Rhys is also certified to seek out Argentine ants in nurseries, and pot plants or building materials that are going to islands.

**"All the dogs are excellent tools for monitoring and control, particularly Rhys with the Argentine ant emerging as a major new pest."**

## Industry News

"The key instructions for a dog to learn are sit, stay and 'get out of it'.

"Much of the avoidance training is about saying 'get out of it' and the dog learns that something is off-limits.

"These instructions also keep a dog safe. If a dog sits and stays when told to, they will stay out of trouble, and if they learn to obey the 'get out of it' command they will leave a bad situation alone.

"We train for an hour each day during the week and two hours on a Saturday. Sunday is our day off.

"It is intensive, systematic training but in short bursts. I am just getting him used to what he is going to be doing.

"Like the rodents and goats that Tui and Ritchie help find, Argentine ants have a huge impact on the environment, so Rhys will be making a big difference once he's out in the field."

"All the dogs are excellent tools for monitoring and control, particularly Rhys with the Argentine ant emerging as a major new pest."

"He will help us a lot in our efforts to find, control and even eradicate the pest in some areas."

The benefits for biosecurity and conservation are many. Currently it is relatively easy to control and

locally eradicate Argentine ants. The difficult part is detecting ants at low density, especially following initial control work, to enable eradication to be achieved.

The standard monitoring (detection) method involves placing pottles on a 3m x 3m grid, and analysing the contents of every pottle with ants in them.

Currently Auckland Council Biosecurity spends more than \$100,000 on Argentine ant control on Great Barrier and Kawau islands, and for 40,000 pottles this consumes well over half the total budget, no matter how effective the previous year's control work has been.

Auckland Council is optimistic that Brian and Rhys will be able to replace the standard monitoring and make savings that can be used to treat more Argentine ant sites.



## From the Archives

19 November 1997

Dear Mr Galloway

I refer to your letter received 16 October 1997, concerning the renaming of the New Zealand Noxious Plants Officers Institute to the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute Inc.

It is pleasing to see that your Institute is moving to address the changes brought about by the introduction of the Biosecurity Act 1993 and the new focus of pest management. I understand that in order to ensure the Institute proceeded in the appropriate direction, extensive discussions were undertaken with your members. Maintaining an active membership that is focussed on biosecurity issues should ensure a robust new Institute.

Yours sincerely

Hon Simon Upton

Minister for Biosecurity

## Industry News

# NZ ferrets sought after as pets in Japan

**U**nderground ferret breeders in New Zealand are feeding Japanese demand for the blacklisted animals.

An “unwanted organism” in New Zealand is one of the most sought-after exotic pets in Japan, and buyers are making trips here to seek out the best from an underground network of breeders.

Last year, nearly 600 ferrets from New Zealand were exported to Japan, according to figures provided to *The New Zealand Herald* newspaper by the office of the Japanese Consulate General in Auckland.

New Zealand was the third-largest exporter of ferrets to the country behind the United States and Canada, despite having only one registered ferret exporter.

It is illegal to keep or breed ferrets in New Zealand, except for export – which requires permission from the Department of Conservation under the Wildlife (Farming of Unprotected Wildlife) Regulations 1985.

Southland Ferrets is the only New Zealand farm with a licence to breed the animals for export, but a Japanese wholesale pet buyer who arrived in Auckland in October told *The New Zealand Herald* she would rather obtain ferrets from underground breeders in Northland and the Waikato.

“The ferrets that are not commercially bred on a farm are often more used to human touch and are also more tame,” the buyer said.

“What we look for is ferrets that are of show quality, which could fetch more than five times more in price than an ordinary farm ferret.”

New Zealand ferrets are popular because pet lovers believe they are healthier and can live a longer life because they come from a “healthy, clean and green” country, she said.

In Japan, locally bred ferrets retail for about \$300, but those imported from New Zealand, bought for about \$50 in New Zealand, can fetch up to \$1500.

A Tokyo tour company, run by a Japanese woman married to a Kiwi, organises trips to link buyers with breeders and helps with the export arrangements, the buyer said.

The ferrets obtained from underground suppliers are often exported alongside the legally bred ones.

In Japan, ferrets are a popular pet, behind only dogs and cats and ahead of rabbits, and ferret lovers get together regularly for “ferret festivals” where ferret games and races are held, and even ferret fashion shows.

Yukinobu Kigawa, from the Japanese Consulate General office, said most apartments in Japan do not allow residents to keep dogs and cats, but do not restrict them from keeping ferrets or other small animals.

“Ferrets are quiet animals and do not cause a nuisance to neighbours.”

Mr Kigawa said there was no need for an import permit to bring a ferret into Japan, just a veterinarian note to certify that New Zealand was free from rabies and that the ferrets were born and kept there since birth.

Martin Dennis of Southland Ferrets said the Japanese had bought ferrets from him since he started the business 17 years ago. Government figures showed 1066 ferrets were exported last year, but the number bought from his farm had fallen.

The Ministry for Primary Industries says, 548 ferrets were exported to Japan, 386 to Belgium, 108 to Hong Kong and 24 to Singapore last year.

But the Japanese authorities’ figures showed 596 ferrets were imported from New Zealand.

Ferrets were introduced into New Zealand from Europe in the 1880s to help control the wild rabbit population.

Abridged from an article by **Lincoln Tan**, *The New Zealand Herald*, October 29, 2012

## Industry News

# Biosecurity reform bill becomes law

A bill that makes significant changes to the Biosecurity Act passed into law in September.

The Biosecurity Law Reform Bill makes a wide range of amendments to the Act, along with related amendments to four other Acts.

“New Zealand has a highly effective biosecurity system which is recognised as world-leading, but the legislation has not kept pace with the way the system has had to evolve to meet ever-growing challenges,” said David Carter, Primary Industries Minister.

“The amended Act covers the areas of border biosecurity, joint decision-making on newly detected harmful organisms and ongoing management of established pests.

“The reforms will enable better use of information

to target risks and encourage partnerships in the management of potential biosecurity incursions.”

Mr Carter said a key plank of the reforms was the development of government-industry agreements on preparing for, and responding to, newly detected pests and diseases, and for sharing the costs of jointly agreed activities.

“Protecting New Zealand from biosecurity risks cannot be the role of government alone. Industry expertise needs to be brought to the decision-making table to help improve prioritisation and our preparedness to respond to incursion,” Mr Carter said.

From a media statement from the **Minister for Primary Industries**, 12 September 2012.

## Industry News

# New plant pathogen containment facility opens up local possibilities

By Alison Evans and Lynley Hayes

Landcare Research's new state-of-the-art plant pathogen and invertebrate transitional and containment facility is open and nearly ready for business in Tamaki, Auckland.

It has been named the Beever Plant Pathogen Containment Facility in honour of the late Dr Ross Beever, and his wife, Dr Jessica Beever. Ross made significant contributions to fungal taxonomy, genetics, plant pathology, and the conservation of New Zealand's flora, and Jessica is continuing to document and aid the conservation of New Zealand bryophytes.

The new \$2.2 million facility, the first and only one of its kind in New Zealand, was officially opened on November 1 by Jessica and her whānau. There was a dawn ceremony to bless the building followed by the official opening and viewing opportunity.

The facility boosts New Zealand's weed biocontrol programmes which until now have had to rely on overseas facilities and collaborators to undertake any work involving plant pathogens, a situation often plagued by personnel and logistics problems.

"Now that our own staff can do this work here in a world-class facility it will be much more straightforward to tackle some projects," said plant pathologist Sarah Dodd, who has been a key player in the development of the new facility.

Some work that was previously unfeasible can also now be considered. For example, the Brazilian yellow leaf spot fungus (*Kordyana* sp.), which attacks tradescantia (*Tradescantia fluminensis*), requires plant-to-plant infection, so obtaining safe, clean material for release could not be done without access to a containment facility in New Zealand, since none is available in Brazil.

"As well as weed biocontrol studies, the facility will also be suitable for safely undertaking research into exotic plant pathogens that pose a threat to native flora, for example, Kauri dieback PTA, and to other desirable plant species for example kiwifruit PSA bacterium," said Stan Bellgard, who also played a key role in the design of the facility.

Other research organisations have shown an interest in using the facility and access will be made available where possible, to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), other CRIs, universities, overseas research institutes, businesses, and private individuals.

Although the facility will be primarily used to securely hold and study micro-organisms associated with plants it can also be used to hold invertebrates if required – for



**Dr Jessica Beever opens the Beever Pathogen Containment facility, named in honour of herself and her husband, the late Dr Ross Beever.**

example if the Miller Invertebrate Containment Facility at Lincoln is at capacity, or when projects would be better done in Auckland such as developing biocontrol for weeds that do not occur in the south.

All imported material entering the facility must have approval from the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 40 of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, as well as approval to import into containment from the MPI, granted under the Biosecurity Act 1993. MPI also audits the facility, initially to certify that it is fit for purpose, and then at least annually to check for compliance with regulations.

One of the key features of the facility is the ability to grow plants in sealed glasshouses under natural light.

"Providing natural light is very important so that growing conditions match those expected in the field and help to maintain healthy host plants. Rust fungi for example, often need natural light to sporulate and remain viable," Sarah said.

As soon as the final checks are completed, and the paperwork in place, the first inhabitants will be imported, hopefully before Christmas. These are likely to be the newly approved lantana rusts (*Puccinia lantana* and *Prospodium tuberculatum*) allowing releases to begin in the new year.

Contact: Sarah Dodd:  
[dodds@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:dodds@landcareresearch.co.nz)

Watch a video about the opening, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D33EsuKcnR8&list=UUM2UxA BcyNTxMiIQNXgvNMg&index=1&feature=plcp>

## Industry News

# Compendium of global weed data expanded and republished

A second edition of *A Global Compendium of Weeds* is now available from The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia. Here is an introductory item, by its compiler, Dr Rod Randall.

It doesn't seem like it's been 10 years since 2002 when the original *A Global Compendium of Weeds* was published. Of course I've not been sitting around referring to the same text all those years. I've continued to collect weed data and a few months ago it seemed about the right time to publish again. In 2002 I remember saying something like "a second edition was decades away"...

However thanks to a radical reworking of the underlying database by Philip Thomas from HEAR in the early 2000s, publication this time around was a relatively painless, and quick, exercise.

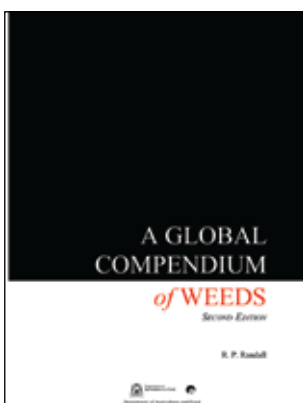
This edition is in a similar format, albeit not as pretty as the original editors and publishers Rob and Fiona Richardson's, but it looks and works in a similar manner. And yes, it does have some differences brought about by my experience with the first compendium. Hopefully for the better.

Firstly there is more detail as to what weed status has been applied by which reference and the extensive index of synonyms and common names has gone. I decided to only list those synonyms that are also mentioned in the text so no matter what name you look up you should also be directed to the current name and any other synonyms listed in the book, without the use of an index. Common names, well they just take up space and added little real value.

As a database sourced document I cannot be certain that every entry is accurate but I spend crazy amounts of time working on the database as part of my everyday job and constantly update taxonomy and references on a daily basis, however there are bound to be errors and omissions and you are welcome to send me your suggestions. I still get emails today about the first edition and every single communication is considered and responded to and I thank you one and all for taking the time to



**Dr Rod Randall on the look out for new weed species.**



**No matter what name you look up you should also be directed to the current name and any other synonyms listed in the book**

send those emails.

The bottom line, this edition is just over 200 pages longer than the first (now 1115 pages), but there are more than 12,000 additional names listed (33,000+), and more than 1000 new references, and it's free.

You can download the pdf from: [http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/objectwr/imported\\_assets/content/pw/weed/global-compendium-weeds.pdf](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/objectwr/imported_assets/content/pw/weed/global-compendium-weeds.pdf). If you wish to print it out, you'll need a good laser printer that can do double sided printing and then find someone willing to bind 1100 loose leaf pages but I find its quicker and simpler to search as a pdf document, far faster even than as a word document.

And of course your feedback is still most welcome.

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## NZBI Profile

# Des Pooley – thanks, and keep up the good work

**D**es Pooley, Biosecurity Officer with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, recently retired from his long held post. Though past the retirement age, he repeatedly put off his final day, finding it difficult to leave behind the work and the people he loved so much.

Among many other things, Des fought a small cluster of alligator weed infestations for a number of years and while he might have officially retired, he isn't easily going to give up the fight and now contracts his alligator weed fighting skills back to BOPRC.

Des' working life began with farming near Matamata, with a seven-year stint in the NZ army, 12 years sharemilking and a spell as manager at Watchorn's Transport. He neatly combined many of the skills learnt during these years in his new career in 1985 as a Noxious Plant Officer with the Whakatāne District Council where he worked alongside Terry Reagan. With the advent of regional councils, he was transferred to the then Environment Bay of Plenty in 1990.

Early pest plant work was of course dominated by ragwort but Des' enthusiastic dispersal of ragwort flea beetles put an end to that. Most of us tremble with the mention of that eradication word but not Des; he managed quite a few local eradications of the likes of johnson grass and water hyacinth.

Des got himself trained up in everything that came his way. One of his qualifications was boatmaster. So it was his job every year to provide his boat-driving services to the Rotorua pest plant team so they could get to the many lakeside African feather grass and yellow flag infestations.

Des was passionate about the pest plant cause, spreading the word in regular classroom visits, A&P shows, community groups and articles in the local media. He was also passionate about his community, from coastal Whakatāne into the ranges of Te Urewera and there are few people in it Des doesn't know. This led him to become liaison officer for a staggering 43 BOPRC Environmental Enhancement Fund projects since the fund began in 2003. Such was his contribution to these projects in Kawerau that he became fondly



*Des Pooley releasing of broom seed beetle in the Galatea area*

known by his colleagues as the "Mayor of Kawerau".

He was always happy to go the extra mile and could often be found decontaminating kayaks for didymo before an event in the pouring rain in the middle of the night or the frost of a winter's dawn. It didn't matter to Des, it was a job that had to be done. When the privet calls began to pour in in November, he'd respond to every one with good grace and humour. His integrity, honesty, helpfulness and dogged determination earned him huge respect from everyone he worked with.

One of Des' greatest interests was biocontrol and he recognised its long-term value for dealing with widespread weeds right from the start. He released a host of different agents over the years and seemed to have his own private line to Landcare Research through which he took delivery of agents that his BOPRC colleagues did not even know were available.

Further afield, he was a stalwart of the NZBI, always active in the CNI branch and attending NETS whenever he could.

Des has spent 27 years chasing pest plants and has made a huge contribution in that time to the regional council, his colleagues and his community. Thanks Des and keep up the good work for a while longer yet!

Contributed by **Tim Senior and colleagues**

## NZBI Profile

# Walter Stahel – enduring knowledge still much in demand

**W**alter Stahel recently retired from his post as Biosecurity Officer with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. His devotion to his work was such that he kept at it for a number of years past the official retirement age.

Originally from Switzerland, Walter came to New Zealand in 1970. He spent some time working in a ski-lodge at Mt Ruapehu and then traversing the lower South Island on horseback while learning the craft of leatherwork and saddlemaking. In 1974 he settled in the small Central Otago town of Becks where he took up a job with the local pest destruction board.

Walter made the switch from pest animals to pest plants in 1985, working for the Waikohu District Council, based at Te Karaka, inland from Gisborne, as their noxious plants officer, where one of his major challenges was old man's beard. Following Cyclone Bola in 1988 Walter also organised and managed work crews who carried out many essential recovery tasks such as repairing fences on farms in the area.

Walter and his family made the move to Tauranga in 1989, with changes in title to Pest Plant Officer and then later Biosecurity Officer along the way. His "patch" covered the area from Tauranga west to Waihi Beach. Over the years he developed an impressive knowledge of plants, botany and weed ecology and had the knack of discovering new and unusual plants. He is also a keen photographer and has compiled an extensive library of plant photos which will serve the council for many years to come. A Google search of many weed images will often throw up one of Walter's photos. Even at home, he has an extensive library of botanical reference books from here and his native Switzerland.

Walter's botanical knowledge made him the obvious choice to carry out nursery inspections across the Bay of Plenty region. A look at the NPPA inspection database is likely to show that Walter has carried out more nursery inspections than anyone else in the country. In this work, as in everything else, Walter was meticulous. In the absence of anyone else in the region with the necessary knowledge and

**Walter developed an impressive knowledge of plants, botany and weed ecology and had the knack of discovering new and unusual plants.**



*Walter releasing Tradescantia leaf beetles.*

experience, Walter is continuing to carry out this work under contract.

Walter's interests did not stop at weeds. He is also passionate about the wider protection of biodiversity and developed a particular interest in Matakana Island in the Tauranga Harbour. He developed close relationships with the Māori owners of the land and worked on a biodiversity management plan to protect and enhance the ecology of the island. The island was certainly a refuge for weeds too and Walter, after years of dogged determination became a master at dealing with a couple of the more unusual ones: royal fern and coastal tea tree.

Walter's knowledge and experience is still sought after by his old colleagues who regularly contact him for advice and expertise.

Contributed by **Tim Senior and colleagues**

## Comment

# Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012 – pest management changes

Prepared by  
John Sanson

**T**he Pest Management National Plan of Action, which was launched in March 2011, proposed a range of improvements to the pest management system, and informed a number of the recent changes to the Biosecurity Act.

Key changes for pest management introduced under the Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012 include:

1. Pest management strategies are renamed as pest management plans.
2. Regional plans will in future include “good neighbour rules”. Good neighbour rules are a new concept under which the Crown can be required to comply with some regional pest management obligations.
3. There is a new process for developing and reviewing pest management plans:
  - The period for reviewing plans is now extended from five years to 10 years;
  - A partial plan review can now be undertaken, whereas previously the whole plan had to be reviewed. This provides much greater flexibility to address new pest issues that arise.
4. The Act now allows for national and regional pathway management plans. Management of pathways provides a proactive way to manage pest

**Regional plans will in future include “good neighbour rules”**

spread, and in many cases will be more efficient and effective than management of individual pests under a pest plan.

5. There are new complementary pest management system leadership functions for MPI and regional councils:

- The Director-General of MPI provides overall system leadership, which includes overseeing New Zealand's systems for pest management; and
- Regional councils provide leadership regionally.

These leadership roles include facilitating communication, co-operation and co-ordination, and promoting public support for pest management.

The amendments in the Reform Act have now been consolidated into the Biosecurity Act which can be found on the legislation website, available at the following link: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz>.

MPI will work with our pest management partners and stakeholders to progressively implement these changes, including understanding the opportunities for managing pathways and developing a co-ordinated view of how we want national and regional pest management leadership to work.

## Beijing unveils two fly policy

**B**eijing authorities have announced new guidelines for the city's public toilets, including a limit of two flies per facility. Beijing's Municipal Commission of City Administration and Environment said the regulations aimed to standardise toilet management at places such as parks, railway stations, hospitals and shopping malls. An official from the commission said the guidelines on flies were meant for easy monitoring. However commentators have cast doubt over whether the guidelines could be enforced. The rules offer no suggestions on how to measure the fly population or how to achieve the exacting standard. The guidelines also have no suggestions about control when the fly-level is exactly two. Do they leave them or kill them? The rules also do not distinguish between live and dead flies.

Adapted from an article in The China Digital Times, May 2012.