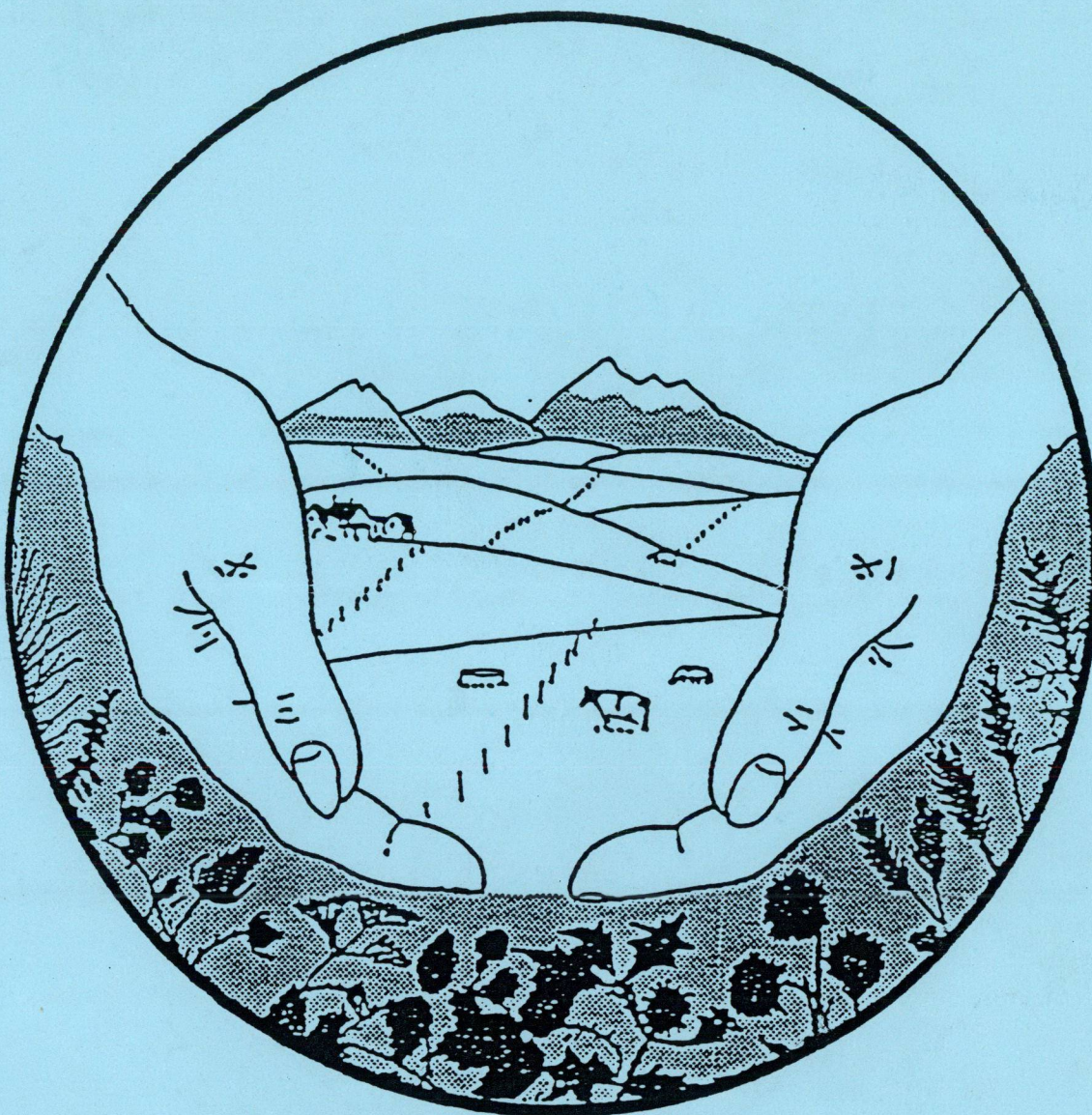


PROTECT



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE OF NOXIOUS PLANTS OFFICERS INC.

ISSUE NO. XV11 APRIL 1991



Institute of Noxious Plants Officers

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EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

It has been a long time coming, but finally another issue of Protect is here for your consumption.

The emphasis of this issue pertains to Institute business and the reports contained herein from the Secretary and the President should serve to bring you up with the play on most issues.

Before I go any further, may I extend my own best wishes for the future to those new members who have been appointed in recent times. Welcome aboard.

I have received word from North Canterbury of a possible first for one of our members. Ian Frizzell (one of our more senior contingent), was recently appointed President of the Amuri A and P Association. I hope the Amuri Show was a success for you Ian and congratulations on your achievement.

Our Treasurer advises me that those members presently unfinancial need to pay the additional \$2.00 surcharge now. This does not apply to the new members. You should find your receipts enclosed with this issue.

One of the Institute's Honorary Members, Geoff Burnside, has written to me recently and asked that I pass on his regards to all in our membership. Thank you Geoff for the articles you sent for inclusion in Protect.

The two Australian Noxious Weeds Officers who visited our shores this time last year have sent a report on their visit. The report is being circulated throughout the respective Branches so if you wish to see it let your Executive Member know.

You will find a couple of loose papers enclosed with this issue pertaining to Institute apparel. There has been a lot of effort put into this by our Secretary, so how about giving it your full support. I cannot oblige by providing a colour brochure on the items, but many of you should have access to an Ezi-Buy Catalogue (ask your wife or girlfriend) if you wish to see the colours. They are all mix and match. The consensus of opinion among the Executive is not to limit the jersey colour to just one. The suggestion is however that the respective Branches may decide on one colour for their Branch and so be it. The bottom line though is to leave it up to individuals to choose their own, but discuss it among your Branch or sub-group of officers to come up with some uniformity.

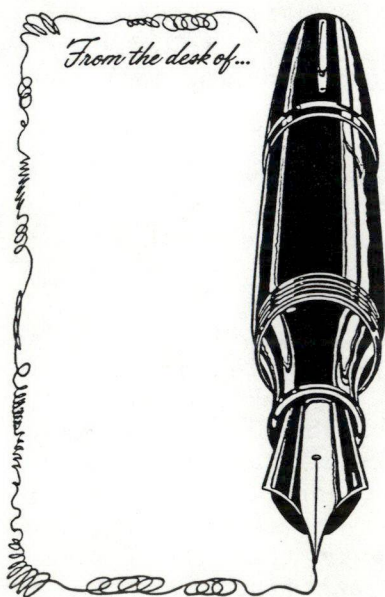
The event of 1992 for Noxious Plants Officers could well be the VIII International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds being staged at Lincoln University, Canterbury, in February. There is some information on the Symposium in this issue. If you wish to know more detail a contact address is mentioned. It will be a once in a life time chance to participate so you people with the ability to incorporate training into your budget should make provision to support this happening.

This issue has a full membership list enclosed. It is the most up to date one that we have, but we want you to tell us if there are any details that are incorrect. It is not an easy task keeping the list in a correct form, especially since reorganisation. However, I ask that you check your own details. If they are correct, all well and good - do nothing. If they are not correct please advise me AND the National Secretary. If there are gaps in your details e.g. no private address or employer details, send those details to us. This is your chance to have your details corrected. DO IT NOW - IMMEDIATELY, not in a month's time. It will only take you a minute or two to write to me. A corrected listing will be published at a later date.

Despite my pleas for items for Protect, you are still not giving it your support. I need more information and a regular supply of it. How many times do I have to ask? And to those Executive members who attended the Wellington meeting - I have seen little evidence of your commitment to forward items.

On a personal note, my best wishes go out to Neville Daniel who is presently recovering from heart surgery. Some of the old valves have had a re-bore I think and reports are that Neville is making a good recovery. You could perhaps write up Part II of your African expedition Neville as you recuperate?

Thats all from me, so happy reading.



Keith Crothers
EDITOR

26 April 1991

HOT
OFF THE
WIRE!



S T O P P R E S S

The first meeting of the new Pest and Plant Training Committee was held in Palmerston North on Wednesday, 17 April 1991. Important points to emerge included:

1. Unanimous acceptance of the need for a national qualification to be recognised by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.
2. Regional Council will fund the whole training package through levies to the Local Government Association.
3. A job description for the "Pest and Plant Training Co-ordinator" will be finalised at the next meeting. The position will be advertised throughout the Regional Government initially.

The Committee will meet again on 23 May 1991. Jack Crow was very pleased with the unanimity of opinion amongst Committee members.

NOTE: The Institute is fortunate to have another of its members represented on the Committee, namely Ray Read.

Amuri A and P Show — March 2

Strong farming link

This year's president of the Amuri A and P Association, Mr Ian Frizzell, is a noxious plants officer with the Canterbury Regional Council.

He is the association's first president who is not a farmer.

"I farmed at Springbank, near Rangiora, for a number of years, before selling up and moving to Culverden," says Mr Frizzell.

"Although I am not farming, I am very much involved with Amuri farmers whom I advise on weed control."

Part of Mr Frizzell's work is to implement the Noxious Plants Act.

Before the Canterbury Regional Council was established, he worked for the former Amuri County Council.

"We had a policy of not being heavy handed when implementing the Noxious Plants Act. This policy has continued with the new organisation."

Mr Frizzell also assists the DSIR in the biological control of weeds.

His links with A and P associations go back to his days in the Young Farmers' Club. He was involved in the original YFC committee which organised shearing and wool-handling classes for the Northern A and P Association.

He was also involved with the Northern A and P Association when the 1966 centennial show was held at Rangiora.

He joined the Amuri A and P Association in 1971.

A keen vegetable gardener, he has been involved with the produce shed. He is also a keen produce exhibitor and has judged produce classes at the Kaikoura Show.

He is a past secretary of the Culverden Rugby Committee and honorary vice-president of the Culverden Cricket Club.

He is a past president of the North Canterbury Golf sub-association and a member of the Canterbury Eagles Golfing Society which fosters junior golf.

His wife, Glenys, is a part-time practice nurse at the Rotherham Medical Centre and is an Amuri area committee member of the Order of St John.



Institute of Noxious Plants Officers

Our Reference: 27/91

28 March 1991

The President and Members
Institute of Noxious Plants Officers

Dear Member

GENERAL UPDATE

As annual branch meetings take place, most of you will become aware that the Executive has been grappling with some major problems. I would like to take this opportunity to bring all members up to date with recent decisions.

1991 Training Seminar

Invitations will be posted out in May. If your address is different from that in the Protect mailing list to be published soon, please advise either Murray Keith or myself, as soon as possible.

To be a successful seminar, we need participants. Please promote it with your manager, and expound on the benefits of your attendance.

The venue, timing and format of the 1991 Training Seminar has been changed by the Executive, after a considerable amount of soul searching. This year's Training Seminar is to be held in Blenheim from 19-21 August inclusive. It is to be a simultaneous training seminar with Pest Management officers. A programme has yet to be promulgated. However, the draft programme prepared by the Otago/Southland Branch will be used as a base guide-line.

The Executive will be responsible for organising this year's training seminar, assisted by a local committee consisting of Messrs David Brown, Sean Boswell, Eric Eden and co-opted staff of the Nelson-Marlborough Regional Council. In shifting the training seminar from Invercargill, I believe the Institute needs to carry out some damage control. The President has agreed to undertake this matter.

INPO Executive Meeting, Wellington 7-8 March 1991

Items of General Interest

a) Senior Executive Meeting with Noxious Plants Council:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Matters discussed | - Training |
| | - Legislation |
| | - Classification of Plants |
| | - Field Officers |

b) Branch Reorganisation

All branches have been asked to look at reorganisation before conference. Executive members to report back to Executive meeting prior to conference.

c) Future Conferences

Executive members to discuss options, etc, with Branch Executive and report back as above.

d) Publicity Campaign

P Ingram is to co-ordinate a publicity campaign and develop concepts for final approval by Executive.

e) Forest Friendly Awards

Northland branch has decided that this would be put forward as a remit to the AGM.

f) Review of Constitution

This is ongoing, the working party will present a report to the AGM on proposals.

g) International Biological Conference: Lincoln 1992

The Institute is supporting the conference and is making a donation of \$500 towards the running of the international symposium.

h) INPO Jerseys

The National Secretary is to investigate the cost (etc) of short sleeve knitshirts, sweatshirts and jerseys. More detail on this soon.

i) Field Officers

Owing to Doug Robertson retiring shortly, concern was expressed over a proposal for one field officer to cover New Zealand.

It was resolved that the Institute write to the Noxious Plants Council and the Minister of Agriculture on the employment of two field officers, thus ensuring an even work load.

j) INPO Training

The Institute was requested to nominate a representative on the Pest and Plant Training Group.

As a result of a vote, J Crow was elected as the Institute's representative. The appointment is to be made annually.

For more information regarding the Executive meeting, please do not hesitate to contact your Branch Executive member or myself.

SUBS

There are a number of members with outstanding subs. If you are one of these members, please forward your payment to Murray as soon as possible.



OBITUARY

Jack Crawford recently passed away, he was one of the original NPOs.

RETIREMENTS

Arthur Zrinyi
Bob Dodd

NEW MEMBERS

Jeff Jeffery
John Mather
Mark Haywood
Philippa Bollond
David Wiltshire
Terence Broughton
Bruce Pope
Tim Payne

Thats all for now.

Regards



E J Eden
NATIONAL SECRETARY

....council to contract out noxious weeds service ?

As part of the regional council's restructuring plan it is looking at contracting out part of its noxious weeds control programme.

While the regional council would retain control of policy on noxious weeds it will contract out property inspection services.

Regional council chairman, Richard Johnson, says options being looked at are district councils taking over the inspection

services.

But there is no reason why farmers can't put together contracting groups to identify costs at their level and apply to take over the inspection services.

"We want the most efficient and cost effective system, whether it is through district councils or other bodies contracting for the work."

The regional council is looking at several options for funding noxious plant work if it

goes back to district councils.

These include district councils tendering a budget to meet regional council work requirements and this is then fully funded by the regional council, sharing funding between the regional and district councils or district councils fully funding the service.

The regional council is planning to meet with district councils to look at the options.



Institute of Noxious Plants Officers

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C/- Northland Regional Council
Private Bag
WHANGAREI

4 April 1991

Dear Member

Following the Executive meeting of 7-8 March 1991, it is appropriate that you all be brought up to date with developments. Please read this letter in conjunction with the letter from National Secretary.

Because the National Training Seminar and Conference had been re-scheduled for August (to accommodate the Institute of Pest Management Officers) it became necessary to hold an executive meeting in the interim. A large number of important issues had to be resolved quickly and I am pleased to report to you that, in over nine hours of discussions, all of the vital points were covered. Other tasks were given to various Executive members to complete.

The earlier meeting with Noxious Plants Council's Chairman, Don McNabb, deputy Chairman Peter Franks, and Secretary John Randall, was very successful indeed. I.N.P.O. was represented by myself, Eric Eden, Peter Ingram and Keith Crothers. Noxious Plants Council is still legally responsible for managing the training of NPO's and is insisting that the Local Government Association's National Training Committee perform to its satisfaction. We are united on training matters. As a footnote to this issue, Peter Franks has been appointed as the NPC and Federated Farmers representative on the new six member Weeds and Pests Training Committee. The other members are: Reg Barrett (Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council CEO), Chairman and employers representative; Craig McKellar (Waikato Regional Council Senior Pest Destruction Officer), I.P.M.O. representative; Ray Read (Otago Regional Council Noxious Plants Manager), South Island Regional Council's representative, Jack Craw (Northland Regional Council Senior Noxious Plants Officer), I.N.P.O. representative; Ray Willman (Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council) Local Body and Labours Unions representative.

As a result of this NPC-INPO meeting, I am confident that the future training of NPO's is secure. NPC have even looked at funding transitional training costs (until the Local Government Association committee funding base is established) out of the Special Project allocation, subject to ministerial approval.

John Randall reported that the Biological Security Bill (note the name change) will be introduced in the 1991-93 legislative programme. However over 100 other Bills have higher priority, including the Resource Management Bill which will affect the Biological Security Bill to a small degree. We have been assured yet again that all statutory tools will be included in the Bill, which will be

Contd

drafted by Derek Robinson, Don Crump and John Randall, all of MAF Quality Management. It is intended that the new Act be administered by MAF officials only, with no industry or end-user representation. This point predictably caused much debate, as all other groups (Department of Conservation, forestry groups, primary producers, INPO, IPMO, DSIR, MFE, LGA, etc) want a voice. Rest assured that this issue is not dead. MAF Quality Management must be forced to accede to the user pays/user says principle.

Regarding 1991 Conference, I would like to remind you all once again that we are still organising our own Training Seminar, with separate programme, finances and lecture rooms. We are having a common opening session with the Institute of Pest Management Officers (to accommodate the Minister, Councillors and other guests), a joint dinner with guest speaker, and possibly a brief joint closure. This is a one-off situation brought about by the combination of both officer groups training administrations. It need not set a precedent and will only be repeated if it offers measurable gains to both the participants and the Institute.

You will be pleased to know that Institute finances are in good heart. Our thanks as always go to Murray (Babe Ruth) Turner. Conference 1990 made a profit of \$1604, on a \$39 000 turnover, which was almost entirely due to the sponsors contribution (\$1450). Please bear this in mind.

The National Field Days equipment is to be refurbished, at a cost of around \$500. Remember it belongs to us and can be used by any NPO group at any time, subject to prior booking.

The executive spent some time at our meeting looking at how we can improve our effectiveness. I feel really the answer lies in the hands of the members. You must demand the best possible communication both ways from your Executive member. Branches should always elect the best person possible for the job, monitor their performance and make adjustments where necessary. The Executive member is not an honorary position (like branch Chairman). It is the administrative heart of the Institute. If members are having problems in their job, eg, training, work-related knowledge, control programmes, application of the Act, etc (not industrial problems), then they should contact their Executive member. If satisfaction is not forthcoming, then either Peter Ingram, Keith Crothers, Eric Eden or myself should be approached. That's what we're here to do!

Finally, a plea on behalf of our overworked and undersupplied Editor. Please send Keith Crothers any and all information that may be of interest to other members. Don't worry about him receiving duplicated copy - Keith would far rather get six identical cuttings than none. It's your magazine!

On behalf of the Institute, I would like to thank Eric Eden and David Brown for offering to co-ordinate most of the work on Executives behalf regarding 1991 National Training Seminar. Special thanks also must go to Keith Crothers who unselfishly gave us his planned Invercargill programme.

I look forward to meeting you all in Blenheim.

Yours faithfully



C Jack Crow
NATIONAL PRESIDENT



The Symposium

Registration for the symposium will take place on Sunday evening, February 2, and the conference will end on Friday afternoon, February 7, 1992.

On Wednesday afternoon there will be a half day field trip to see research into the biological control of broom, *Cytisus scoparius*. This work is being carried out at Hanmer, a small geothermal resort town in the mountains of North Canterbury, two hours' drive from Christchurch. The cost of this trip will be included in the conference fee.

A conference dinner will be held at a Christchurch venue. A full and interesting alternative programme is planned for those accompanying symposium delegates.

Post-Conference Tour

A four day tour of the South Island is being organised after the conference. Delegates will see New Zealand weed problems and several biological control programmes in action. In keeping with one of the major themes of the conference, the tour will examine weed problems in National Parks and possible biological control solutions to those problems. Weeds of pastoral agriculture will also be featured.

Organising Committee

Richard Hill, DSIR Plant Protection
Pauline Syrett, DSIR Plant Protection
Rowan Emberson, Lincoln University
Graeme Bourdot, MAF
Don Crabb, Lincoln University
Hugh Gourlay, DSIR Plant Protection
Tom Jessep, DSIR Plant Protection
Lindsay Scott, Canterbury Regional Council

Convener
Secretary
Treasurer



VIII International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds

2 - 7 February, 1992

Lincoln University
Canterbury, New Zealand

Contact address:

DSIR Plant Protection,
Private Bag,
Christchurch,
New Zealand

Telephone (64) (3) 252 511
Facsimile (64) (3) 252 074
Telex NZ4703

1st Circular

January 1990

The VIII International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds will be held at Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand from 2 - 7 February, 1992.

This is only the second of these symposia to be held in the southern hemisphere since they began in 1969. It is the premier world meeting of scientists interested in the biological control of weeds. Papers presented at the symposium will cover all aspects of the theory and practice of biological control of weeds.

The symposium will be held two weeks before the inaugural International Weed Control Conference to be held in Melbourne, Australia, from the 15 - 20 February.

Lincoln is a small rural community 20 km south of the city of Christchurch and its International Airport. Lincoln University is an attractive, small, agriculturally oriented campus, with 2500 students. It is well equipped to hold conferences in relaxed and informal surroundings.

Single accommodation is available in student hostels, each self-contained unit comprising six bedrooms, a lounge and a bathroom. Limited twin and family accommodation is available in student apartments.

Full accommodation and meals will cost approximately NZ\$80 (US\$50) per person per day. The registration fee will be approximately NZ\$200 (US\$120) with reduced rates for students. The final costs will be detailed in the second circular.

The Programme

The major themes for the Symposium will be:

Biological Control in Protected Natural Areas
The Economics of Biological Control of Weeds

Suggested session titles for the Symposium are:

- Biological control of weeds in
 - aquatic habitats
 - crops
 - exotic forests
 - pastures and rangelands
 - protected natural areas
- Economics of biological control of weeds
- Insect/plant relationships in biological control
- Procedures for importing biological control agents
- Rearing biological control agents.
- Theory of biological control of weeds

The conference will allow ample time for discussion of papers. Workshops will debate topical issues. The number of papers presented formally will be limited.

Emphasis will be placed on poster papers. Conference sessions will be dedicated to considering poster papers and these will be published fully in the proceedings.

The Logo

The logo chosen for the Symposium shows a feeding insect set against a background depicting the agriculturally diverse Canterbury Plains, the high inland mountains and the unique braided river-beds which cross the plains.

Provisional Programme

Sunday 2 February

16.00 - 21.00 Registration
Evening: Reception

Monday 3 February

8.30 Official Opening
Opening address: 'Biological Control, past, present and future'
Richard Groves, CSIRO, Canberra, Australia.

10.00 Biological control in protected natural areas.

14.00 Economics of biological control of weeds
Keynote address: Glen Greer, Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit, Lincoln University, N.Z.

Evening: Poster session with wine and cheese.

Tuesday 4 February

8.30 Theory and evaluation of biological control of weeds.
Keynote address: Les Ehler, University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A.

14.00 Biological control in aquatic habitats.

Evening: Workshop discussion sessions.

Wednesday 5 February

8.30 Biological control in pasture and rangeland.

11.00 Biological control in forests.

12.00 Half-day field trip to Hanmer Springs, North Canterbury.

18.30 Symposium Dinner (see below for details).

Thursday 6 February

8.30 Biological control in crops.

10.00 Agent-plant relationships in biological control of weeds.
Keynote address (pathogens): Harry Evans, IIBC, Silwood Park, U.K.
Keynote address (insects): Heinz Mueller, Swiss Federal Research Station, Wädenswil, Switzerland.

16.00 Discussion of IX Symposium and IOBC affiliation.

Evening: Workshop discussion sessions.

Friday 7 February

8.30 Strategies for rearing, release and management of biological control agents.

11.30 New approaches to biological control of weeds.

17.30 Concluding session: summing up and voting on IOBC affiliation and venue for IX Symposium.

Saturday 8 February

3 - day field trip begins (see below for details)

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Immediate Past President:

D.J. Brown	---	Blenheim
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Vice Presidents:

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K. Crothers	---	Southland Dist. Council

National Secretary:

E.J. Eden	---	Nelson/Marlborough Regional Council
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M. Turner	---	P.O. Box 10, Clyde
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National Editor:

K. Crothers	---	Southland Dist. Council
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Pearson J.	Jerry	27 Burns Street, Cambridge
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Syrett P.	Pauline	Lincoln Research Centre, D.S.I.R., Private Bag, Christchurch
Ward G.	Geoff	Grange Road, Snelsh Beach, Warkworth.
Noxious Plants Officers' Assn.		New South Wales, Australia c/- Ken Hayes, Chief Weeds Officer, Coffs Harbour City Council, P.O. Box 155, Coffs Harbour N.S.W. 2450, AUSTRALIA.
		OR Graham Matthews, Noxious Weeds Officer, Bellingen Shire Council, P.O. Box 117, Bellingen, N.S.W. 2454, AUSTRALIA.
Jessep T.	Tom	Lincoln Research Centre, D.S.I.R. Private Bag, Christchurch.

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	Pooley D.D.	Des	Bay of Plenty R.C.
	Proctor N.C.	Noel	Horowhenua D.C.
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	Regan T.J.	Terry	Bay of Plenty R.C.
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3.

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	30 South St., Papakura Auckland
	1111 Allenby St., Hastings
	83 Hyde Avenue, Taupo
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	17 Lilburn St., Warkworth
	61 Marcellan Drive, Red Beach, Orewa
	82 Fache St., Clyde
	78 Wensley Rd., Richmond, Nelson
	131 Royal Road, Massey Auckland 8
	42 Botany Rd., Howick, Auckland
	7 Murray St., Bell Block, New Plymouth
	3 Shere St., Pleasant Point, Sth. Canterbury
	5 Frederick St., Hillsborough, Auckland
	Monavale R.D. 3, Cambridge
	105 Stanley Avenue, Te Aroha
	Mgapeke Road, R.D. 5, Tauranga
	Box 54, Leeston
	8 Byron Place, New Plymouth
	100 Hamlet Street, Stratford

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING PAPER

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MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
MINISTER OF CONSERVATION
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER OF FORESTRY
MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE IWI
TRANSITION AGENCY
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MINISTER OF MAORI AFFAIRS
MINISTER OF RESEARCH, SCIENCE,
AND TECHNOLOGY
MINISTER OF SCIENCE (DSIR)

NOXIOUS PLANTS AND PEST CONTROL

BACKGROUND

There is a fast growing noxious plants and pest control problem in New Zealand. Examples include Old Mans Beard, Rabbits, Possums and Wasps.

A number of state, quasi-state agencies and local authorities have an interest and commitment to mitigating the problems, but there is a lack of coordination and control in the various approaches.

One of the aims of the Resource Management Law Reform is to have an integrated and holistic approach. This type of approach could also be an objective for land use management in this particular field.

PRESENT POSITION

The following organisations that presently have an interest in noxious plants and pest control include :

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Ministry of Forestry
- Forestry Research Institute
- Department of Scientific and Industrial Research
- Ministry for the Environment
- Department of Conservation
- Animal Health Board
- Local Authorities
- Foundation of Research, Science and Technology
- Prime Minister's Department

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Forestry and Department of Conservation are responsible for establishing national policies for pest identification and control, in agriculture (including horticulture), production forestry and conservation respectively. Each organisation is skilled in a particular field and applies its skills to a particular area of pest management.

Agriculture and/or forestry pest management activity can adversely affect the natural environment just as pest management practices relating to the natural environment can adversely affect agriculture or forestry management. National agencies need to recognise the impact of their pest management policies on other environments managed by other agencies including those of Local Government.

Local government noxious plants and pest control policies (particularly those of regional councils) need to be integrated with central government pest control policies. The regional council coordinating role is vital as it is the link between the policies of national agencies and the

Contact Person:

implementation of policy in the regions. There is a need therefore to reinforce cooperation between regional local government and national agencies on a more formal basis.

Noxious plants and pest control relate equally to both the primary industry and the natural environment. However there is currently no national coordinating body with overall responsibility to set standards to ensure that effective operations management and codes of practice apply across all agencies. There is also no established 'independent' research organisation that can provide specialist service to any of the agencies involved to counter possible negative impacts from many of their proposals, eg development of chemical or biological control methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Government favourably consider establishing an Environmental Protection Agency through the Ministry for the Environment as the suggested national coordination organisation.
2. That an independent research organisation be nominated to provide the necessary specialist services to any of the agencies involved.
3. That further, to enable an integrated and holistic approach to noxious plant and pest control to be undertaken, the Government urgently investigate :
 - (a) The extent of the problems;
 - (b) the research programmes required;
 - (c) the appropriate agencies to carry out the work;
 - (d) a national programme of priority;
 - (e) funding responsibilities;
 - (f) training programmes required;
 - (g) legislative amendments required.

REGIONAL COUNCIL INFORMATION PAPER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER OF CONSERVATION
MINISTER OF TOURISM
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PEST DESTRUCTION AND NOXIOUS PLANT CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the policy, staffing and expenditure implications for the delivery of pest destruction and noxious plant control programmes in the event that Regional Councils are abolished. It identifies issues of significance to the Agriculture, Environment, Conservation and Tourism portfolios.

THE PRESENT POSITION

Together with the management of land and water resources, the control of noxious plants and the destruction of a range of animal and insect pests notably rabbits and possums, are essential services for New Zealand's farming sector and primary production industries.

The devastation presently occurring to South Island high country farms from rabbit infestations, and the effect of possum transmitted Bovine Tb, are graphic examples of the problems which face the nation's primary sector. Animal, insect pests and noxious plants also pose ecological threats to environmental amenities, conservation and water catchment estates, national and regional parks, native forests and the tourist industry.

The farming community as well as a range of environmental and down-stream industry sectors therefore have a sizeable interest in ensuring that effective management/eradication of these pests and noxious plants occurs.

While this is a national problem, Regional Councils play a very important role in undertaking eradication and control programmes; coordinating the individual activities of the 150 former Noxious Plants Authorities and Pest Destruction Boards previously undertaken in a largely piecemeal fashion; ensuring that adequate standards are maintained and training is provided to staff working in this area; educating and raising public and environmental awareness of these problems; and contributing a substantial level of regional ratepayer funding to these management programmes.

Regional Councils employ 330 noxious plants and pest management staff nationally. They also employ additional private contractors to deliver these services in their regions. The total operational cost of these programmes for Regional Councils in 1990 was \$30.3 million. \$21.7 million (72%) of this total was funded by regional ratepayers. Approximately three-quarters of this expenditure was for pest destruction programmes.

Further details are summarised in the attached fold-out table (Appendix 1).

THE FUTURE

If Regional Councils are abolished the alternatives are for these regional functions to be transferred to either territorial local authorities/ad hoc agencies, or to Government departments.

Territorial Authorities/Ad Hoc Special Purpose Agencies

On-the-ground service delivery by territorial authorities or the private sector is possible. However dispersal of the

responsibility amongst several territorial authorities in a region would face the considerable difficulties of coordinated service delivery; policy and priority setting; integration with appropriate land management practices and advice to complement eradication programmes; as well as access to a sufficiently broad rating-base to provide adequate funds for concerted and ongoing management programmes.

Agricultural pests and noxious plants do not recognise administrative boundaries. While regions are to a lesser degree also constrained by administrative boundaries, they do have the advantage of sufficiently large, catchment-based areas within which comprehensive management programmes can be implemented. If required, cross-boundary coordination of eradication programmes, priorities and funding between two adjoining Regional Councils is significantly easier to achieve than with a large number of smaller territorial units.

Adequate funding and effective service delivery, are prime objectives. The actual method of delivering pest control and noxious plant eradication whether by Regional Council staff, territorial authority employees, ad hoc agencies or private contractors, is immaterial. The ratepayer (regional or territorial) has to pay either way. What does count is value for money which requires appropriate, comprehensive and integrated programmes; careful planning, management and monitoring of those programmes to ensure the required results are being achieved; and the financial as well as practical benefits of economies of scale.

The 14 Regional Councils have advantages in many respects over 73 territorial authorities or the previous 150 ad hoc bodies. There are clear advantages in bringing together on a regional scale the policy-making, planning, management, performance monitoring and administrative aspects of physical resource management (including pests and noxious weeds), previously carried out and duplicated by a multiplicity of ad hoc bodies.

Transfer of pest destruction and noxious plants control to either territorial or ad hoc special-purpose bodies will not result in cost savings to ratepayers. At best, cost may remain the same but are likely to lead to a decrease in efficiency caused by the additional costs of disaggregated management and administrative systems. This will in turn reduce the amount of funding available for on-the-ground service delivery. Additional cost-recovery/funding systems will also need to be put into place and administered.

Central Government Role

The importance of this issue to the nation's primary sector is without doubt. The funding which Government provides to its own management programmes, suggests that either the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Department of Conservation, or the Ministry for the Environment, would need to take on these responsibilities in the event that Regional Councils are abolished.

This would have significant staffing (330) and funding implications. The present \$21.7 million regional ratepayer contribution towards the total cost of \$30.3 million, would be lost.

These departments do not currently have the type of policy delivery structures in place (especially at the district/regional level), to carry-out such roles. The trend in recent years has been for Government departments to have a national policy-setting role with policy-delivery responsibilities being delegated or devolved in many cases without funding, to organisations such as Regional Councils.

CONCLUSION

The management of agricultural pests and noxious plants together with responsible and integrated management of land and water

resources, are essential for maintaining the productive capacity of the nation's primary sector. In addition a range of associated environmental and other industry sectors such as tourism, have a major interest in this issue.

The former 150 Pest Destruction Boards and Noxious Plants Authorities have been integrated into 14 Regional Councils with streamlined staffing, management and funding to carry out such functions in a comprehensive an integrated manner.

The actual on-the-ground delivery of eradication programmes need not necessarily be a Regional Council function. What is important however is the design and integration of programmes, their management and monitoring, and access to sufficiently broad-based sources of ratepayer funding.

No cost savings would occur with the transfer of these responsibilities to either territorial authorities or special-purpose bodies. There may be a reduction in funding available for on-the-ground service delivery as a result.

A transfer of this regional function to Government leaves the taxpayer with 340 staff and a funding requirement of \$21.7 million to undertake this responsibility.

Organic growing methods cannot provide the quantity or quality of food required by today's consumers, says a major British report released in January.

The report, *Organic vs Conventional Crop Production*, directly attacks the organic lobby's manipulation of consumers.

Author George Lunt, a professor in Bath University's Biochemistry Department, set out to "debunk" the various myths associated with conventional fruit production in UK.

The report says food consumed in Britain contains far more chemicals of natural origin than are ever added by man.

Organics debunked

It also points out that several treatments used by organic producers (such as nicotine, pyrethrum and derris) are highly toxic, yet they escape the rigorous tests the government and manufacturers give to agrichemicals.

These natural compounds used regularly by organic growers

present proven health risks to consumers in terms of fungal poisoning and infection, the report adds.

Lunt says there is no quantitative data to back up claims that organic produce is healthier or better for consumers.

Contrary to popular belief, British fruit growers these days are very aware of their impact on the environment and are taking steps to reduce any adverse effects, he says.

"This discrepancy between the facts and public perception stems from sensational claims made by high-profile pressure groups."

Biological Gorse Control

NZ gorse is a big problem being overcome by problem bugs. The DSIR is using thrips and mites successfully to fight gorse.

Released from quarantine in April, numbers are now being bred-up in DSIR labs in Lincoln. Meanwhile, the gorse spider mites released last year have survived the past winter. Scientists, pleased with their progress, have topped up numbers and await damage results for the next winter.

The biological gorse-control programme is generating considerable interest in other countries where gorse is a problem.

All-natural herbicides still a possibility

The all-natural herbicide is not pie-in-the-sky thinking, says US weed scientist Jerry Doll. Black walnut trees produce a potent toxin called juglone which washes into the soil with rainfall and prevents growth of some broadleaf plants. It is toxic to insects and was rubbed on cattle backs to repel flies in the 19th century.

Rye deters the growth in some vegetables and wheat straw harms sugar beets. The key is knowing which crops kill weeds, he said.

COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE, FEBRUARY 1991

Tiny mite leads fight against gorse

WELLINGTON
A tiny mite that looks like a speck of sawdust could be the answer to the gorse control problem in the lower North Island.

Wellington Regional Council rural services noxious plant officer Kevin Worsley said the gorse spider mite — released by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research two years ago as part of a biological weed control programme — was becoming well established in Wairarapa's gorse-infested areas.

The DSIR released colonies in about 40 sites in sheltered, sunny areas in Wellington and the Wairarapa.

Mr Worsley said thousands of mites sucked the sap from gorse, weaken-

ing the plant. Although they could not fly, they travelled from plant to plant when the population increased by spinning a web to form a bridge.

Farmers were asked to assist the mites by spreading the colonies around gorse-infested paddocks.

Mr Worsley said the spider mite was a long-term control method.

With other biological methods, including flea beetles which attacked the roots, and gorse thrips which sucked sap, there was fresh hope gorse would ultimately be eradicated. — NZPA

SOUTHLAND TIMES

16.1.91



Wild ginger runs amok

Native bush under threat

Manukau City Council workers are asking the public to help it control the growth of wild ginger.

Denis Honey, supervisor of special service and resources, says the plant is wiping out south Auckland's native bush.

He says that while the problem is not as bad as in other parts of Auckland, something needs to be done now before it wipes out south Auckland's native bush entirely.

Mr Honey says the public can help by forming a group or two to cut off the tops of the wild ginger plants and letting them grow to almost two feet tall.

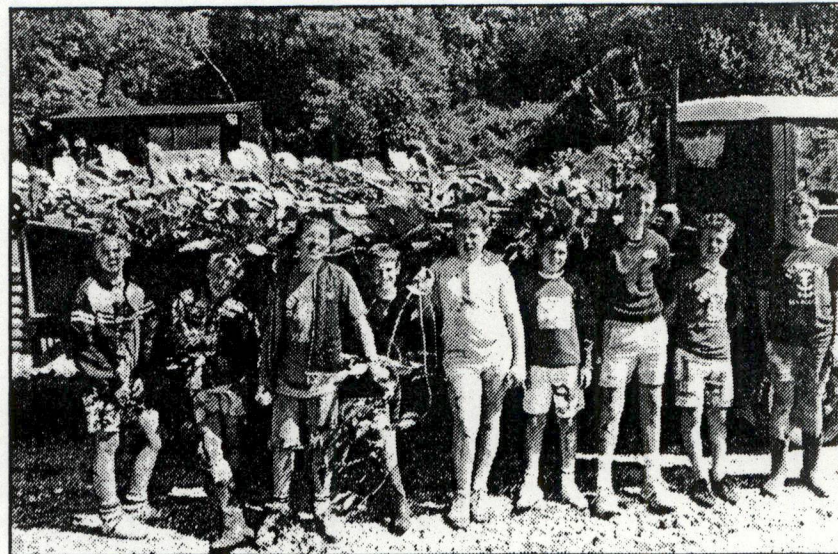
The council workers

can then treat the plants with a chemical marketed as Escort, which is the only chemical capable of controlling the growth of wild ginger.

Vegetation control foreman Neil Apperton says the council is meanwhile working with the New Zealand Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Manukau City Council community boards and ratepayer lobby groups.

"If we can get locals to recognise the plant, tell the council and help cut the plant, then we can really start eradicating it," he says.

"In areas where there are reserves, if we can involve community groups, it will give them



GINGER TOPPED: Howick Sea Scouts at Shelly Park Beach after cutting down some wild ginger recently.

some sort of awareness of the city and why the council is taking the plant out."

Wild ginger has the ability to take over native bush, thereby killing off any undergrowth.

For groups who are

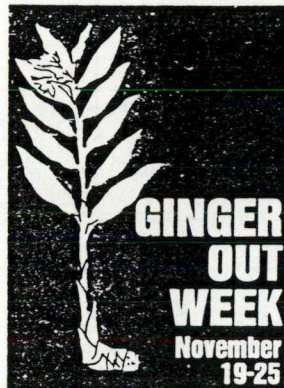
interested in helping, contact Mr Honey or Mr Apperton on 278-6402, extension 823.

The Manukau City Council is meanwhile asking the Auckland Regional Council to declare wild ginger a noxious plant.

An Auckland-wide campaign to eradicate ginger will begin next month.

The *Manukau Courier* will run more stories on ginger during Ginger Out Week which runs from November 19 to 25.

Turning the wild ginger tide



RIDDING GINGER: Manukau City Council noxious plants officer George Stanisich and council registered treatment control officer Bob Purdie shift a wild ginger bulb which was dumped in the Oxford Park Reserve in Manurewa.

This year could see the turning of the wild ginger tide which is slowly but surely submerging our native bush reserves.

The big question is, will resources, legislation and particularly commitment by Auckland communities, rise sufficiently to overcome the headstart that ginger has slowly built up over the past 70 years.

Once established, ginger roots soon spread across the ground, smothering native plants and acting like a giant sponge by soaking up ground moisture, particularly during summer. In time, ginger kills mature trees, whether they be exotic, indigenous or planted.

This effect of wild ginger has not gone unnoticed. In recent months, the Auckland

Regional Council's noxious plants authority has endorsed Waitakere City Council's request to have ginger declared as a Class B noxious plant. That request has been forwarded to the Noxious Plants Council for official approval.

There are still some gardeners who grow ginger for its perfume, and don't see what all the fuss is about.

Ginger is best pulled out when the plants are

less than a year old. Older plants need lifting out with a garden fork and the seed heads and rhizomes (roots) taken to the tip for burying.

Dumping of ginger roots on roadsides or in bushy areas only spreads the problem.

Larger infestations may be best tackled with the herbicide Escort.

Ginger Out Week started yesterday and

continues until Sunday.

The aim of the week is to raise awareness of the ginger problem and help the public to identify and control the plant.

For further information contact noxious plants officers Graeme Wrightson and George Stanisich of the Manukau City Council (ph 277-6402) or Jim Hart of the Papakura District Council (ph 299-8870).

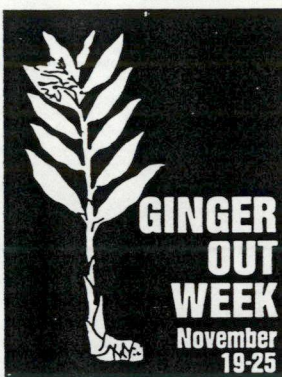
War on ginger

Ginger Out Week is November 19-25. The aim of the week is to raise awareness of the ginger problem and help the public to identify and control the plant.

The *Manukau Courier* is supporting a campaign to help eradicate wild ginger which is rapidly infesting parks, reserves, and bush. This is the first of a series of articles leading up to Ginger Out Week written by Rod Smart.

Ginger grows so well in the Auckland region, it has now escaped from cultivated gardens and is becoming established in parks, reserves, foreshores, bush margins and even competing under mature forest canopies.

Once established, wild ginger soon smothers young native plants and the matted root systems act like giant sponges soaking up soil moisture and putting mature trees under stress.



There are two gingers in Auckland. They have similar-shaped flowers

and leaves and are both spread by rhizomes (roots) but only Kahili Ginger has the additional capacity for being spread by bird distributed seed. The roots of both types of ginger are difficult to kill and the dumping of ginger roots by irresponsible home gardeners on roadsides and reserves is only spreading the problem further.

Ginger is controllable, but it's tough going as the surface growing roots are hard to remove

and any piece left in the ground will re-sprout.

With the development of the herbicide Escort effective and efficient control is now possible, although the ginger roots take 12-15 months to die and compost down.

Garden forks are about the best tool to prise the rhizomes off the ground surface but don't break the handle! Compost the leaves and take the seed heads and rhizomes to the tip for burying.

For further information contact noxious plants officers Graeme Wrightson and George Stanisich of the Manukau City Council, ph 277-6402, or Jim Hart of the Papakura District Council, ph 299-8870.

Education is key to weed control

By RUTH MASANI

Manukau noxious plants officer George Stanisich wants as many south Auckland schools as possible to take part in Ginger Out Week.

He is writing to schools to tell them that he and council special service and resources supervisor Dennis Honey and vegetation control officer Bob Purdie will be at the Oxford Park Reserve in Manurewa giving talks on ginger.

He will recommend the schools use the visit as part of their nature studies programme.

The problem is convincing schools to want to participate he says. One primary school has already refused to take a class of pupils out to the Manurewa reserve.

Mr Honey says it is important for schools to know about ginger as the plant could lead to children having fewer reserves to visit or play in.

Schools or people interested in hearing talks about wild ginger should contact Mr Stanisich on 277-6402.

Manukau noxious plants officer Graeme Wrightson says meanwhile that signs and displays will be erected at ward offices and libraries throughout south Auckland.

A hotline to give basic information about ginger



GINGER OUT: Manukau City Council noxious plants officer George Stanisich shows what wild ginger looks like.

will operate especially during the week, he says. Its number will be 263-7100.

Mr Honey says the Oxford Park Reserve was chosen as a focus for Ginger Out Week as nearby residents had complained about a high incidence of ginger dumpings in the park.

A visit by a noxious plants officer recently found several large bulbs of ginger on the edge of the park and ginger plants.

While the problem may not be as great as in other parts of Auckland, Mr Honey says that if nothing is done now it can become a major problem.

Fungal disease could trim beard problem

WELLINGTON

A promising way to control the smothering forest weed old man's beard has been found, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research says.

DSIR plant protection scientist Adrian Spiers said yesterday he was confident a fungal disease which lived on old man's beard in its European home could be used as a biological control agent in New Zealand.

Originally introduced as a garden climber, old man's beard can choke even the tallest forest trees.

Conservationists regard old man's beard as a major threat to New Zealand lowland forest.

Dr Spiers, back from a cross-Europe expedition looking at the plant in its natural habitat, has collected a number of fungi which attack the leaves of old man's beard.

Before any release of the fungi here, at least two years of tests would be carried out to see if they would attack local populations of clematic vitalba (the botanical name of old man's beard) and the related native species of clematis, he said in a statement.

If the fungi was released it would probably take several years to control the plant. But fungal diseases could spread with great speed and damage.

In New Zealand a fungal disease had hit the common cultivar of silver poplar in the past five years and now they were dying.

Similarly lupins used to stabilize sand country for forestry were being killed throughout New Zealand by a new fungal disease.

Dr Spiers said the fungi he found in Europe caused leaves to fall off, weakening the plant.

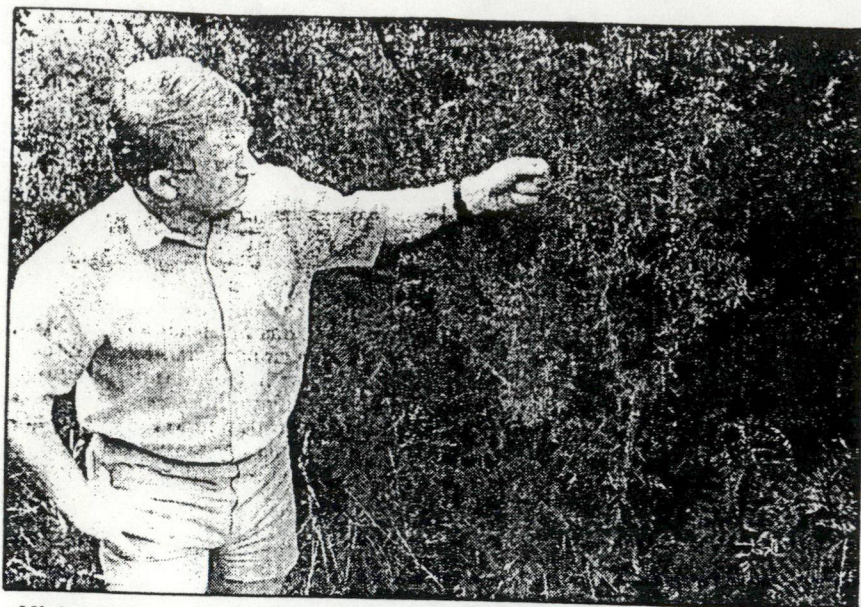
Dr Spiers found old man's beard was common throughout its range from southern England to Rumania.

It was a particularly bad problem in the Rhine Valley even strangling some of the grape vines the area is famous for.

Dr Spiers said his visit made him more confident a biological control for old man's beard would come from fungal diseases.

But the DSIR was exploring other possible biological controls by looking for insects that eat old man's beard. — NZPA

Hill bugs prepare for attack



Mick Holden, rural services officer, Waikato District Council, shows the damage done by the gorse spider mite on one of the council's trial sites in the western Waikato hill country.

N. Z. FARMER 13. 2. 91

Noxious plants legislation criticised

THE OPERATIONS and rural services committee of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council is concerned over the present legislation which deals with noxious plants control.

Under the 1978 Noxious Plants Act landowners are made responsible for weed control to the 'mid point' of any road which passes their property and this makes landowners responsible for the maintenance of berms on all roads including State Highways.

Many property owners believe this situation is unjust and refuse to control weeds in these areas as the owner of the berms is either a district council or, in the case of state highways, Transit New Zealand. It is felt the owners should undertake noxious plant control over the berms they own.

The regional council believes the legislation is out of date and should be changed. Following discussions with Transit New Zealand, the council has undertaken a trial programme of spraying the State Highway 2 berms from the outskirts of Tauranga to Apata.

The council believes this process will have a beneficial effect when they try to implement noxious plant control programmes on adjacent private land.

THE rugged hill country to the west of Hamilton is a nursery for many of the insects being trialled to control noxious weeds like ragwort and gorse.

Mick Holden, rural services officer, Waikato District Council, spends part of each week monitoring trial sites for ragwort, gorse, and nodding thistle.

"With the nodding thistle we have tried to set the trial sites in the west, so the prevailing wind will eventually blow the control agents right across the Waikato," says Mr Holden.

Two trials are being done on the nodding thistle. One is with the receptacle weevil, which has been established throughout the country. The second trial is with the crown weevil. The crown weevil works on the thistle at the rosette stage, and the larvae burrow into the thistle, allowing fungal infections to get in and kill the plant.

"Ultimately we will have the two weevils working in tandem, with the receptacle weevil larvae eating the seed heads, and the crown weevil attacking the plant at the rosette stage."

Mr Holden says he is pleased with the results so far on the hill country, but says there are still many other areas where the weevils will need to spread if the weed is to be completely controlled.

Mr Holden says one problem with the receptacle weevil is it only has one generation a year.

"This is unlike the thistle, which will have several generations a year, so it outstrips the weevil in terms of reproductive ability," he says. However, Mr Holden says there is a belief the weevil is adjusting its reproductive cycle to its hosts.

Mr Holden says the district also has a two-pronged weapon to attack ragwort in the area.

The first is the ragwort flea beetle which attacks the leaf of the ragwort plant, and whose larvae burrow into the plant's crown.

"We have had a very successful release of this control — we may get fluctuations in its population, but it seems to be reaching a critical mass now," says Mr Holden.

Cinnabar moth is the other ragwort control. This has been difficult to establish in many areas, but Mr Holden says he is pleased with his trials on the moth. It is now established in Karakariki, 20km west of Hamilton.

"We have had the moth established for a year now, and I think the reason our trials have been successful is because we place all the moths in one spot, rather than scattering them all over the place," says Mr Holden.

He believes natural selection will see the most suited moths surviving in the denser population, and reproducing.

The council is also trialling the gorse spider mite in the hill country.

Mr Holden says he is "not totally happy with it," and that the mite has had a slow start. However, those areas where the mite has established itself show little sign of regrowth.

The council has established trial sites as far south as Turangi and as far north as Mercer for all the weeds, but Mr Holden says there are still several areas they intend to target.

"The Maramarua forest, in the north-eastern Waikato, is a perfect place to release the ragwort flea beetle," he says. Central Waikato another area the council intends to target for ragwort.

Mr Holden emphasises the biological control programme is long-term.

"Biological control is not an overnight success," he says. "We are doing it because we anticipate severe restrictions on chemical use over the next few years, and rightly so," says Mr Holden.

Demon weevils assault weeds

BIOLOGICAL warfare is being waged by the DSIR and regional councils against noxious weeds — but bombs and gases are not in their armoury.

Instead the weapons are a variety of weevils, mites and fleas that offer a long-term solution to problem weeds such as ragwort, thistles and gorse.

One of the successes of the biological campaign has been on alligator weed in the Northland region. Jack Craw, noxious weeds officer, Whangarei Regional Council, says there are two parasites that attack the weed.

The first is an aquatic flea beetle that was released in 1982, and the second is known as *Vogtia*, released in 1987. "This is a moth whose caterpillar eats the hollow stem of the weed," says Mr Craw.

He says alligator weed grows in areas similar to willow weed, and is difficult to control with herbicides.

"It often grows over waterways, so it is impossible to spray herbicide on water that is being used for irrigation. It is also difficult to dredge up, because where do you put it once you have pulled it out?"

Mr Craw says the biological control programme has been "extremely successful" in Northland.

However there has not been as much success with cinnabar moths controlling ragwort in Northland, or in the Bay of Plenty. Mr Craw says the moth develops well to the pupae stage, but only one percent of its population develop any further.

Pauline Syrett, DSIR Lincoln, says there has been some problems

Ms Syrett says the DSIR is running workshops with the regional noxious plants officers, on how to collect the flea beetle, transport it and spread it around neighbouring areas.

One of the better established biological control agents is the receptacle weevil whose larvae feed on the seeds of the nodding thistle. The benefit of this weevil to pastoral farming is estimated to be around \$3m.

In 1982 the crown weevil was released in Ashburton and from this new populations are being established throughout the country. The crown weevil lays eggs in the thistle rosette

and tiny grubs feed off this until fully grown.

Judy Grindell, DSIR Lincoln, says one problem with the crown weevil is that it is not as active in late summer. "We are now hoping to release a new control, called a Gall Fly," she says.

Californian thistle has long been the scourge of most farmers. Ms Grindell says two control agents have just been released from quarantine, which may be able to control it. The parasites are weevils that attack the stems and leaves of the thistles.

"It will be a couple of years before we know whether the insects have established or not," says Ms Grindell.

Science has become a fulltime ally of regional councils in the battle to eliminate noxious weeds. RICHARD RENNIE reports.

with establishing the moth in some areas. "Adverse weather conditions such as high rainfall can wash out the pupae and prevent the numbers building up to significant levels," she says.

Ms Syrett says the moth was never meant to control ragwort by itself, and it is more effective working with the ragwort flea beetle, which bores into the stem of the plant and travels into the root system.

Terry Regan, noxious weeds officer, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatane, says the flea beetle is highly promising as a ragwort control.

Mr Regan says the flea beetle is effective, but it is a slow spreader, and needs to be helped.

Ginger plant spreading to bush and moving south

THE GINGER plant, introduced to New Zealand as a decorative species 80 years ago, has spread from its garden origins to become a major problem in native forests.

The plant with its invasive growth habit through rhizomes has spread into native forest areas and prevents regeneration of native forests by choking out any young seedlings.

It is the plant of most serious concern in the Waitakere Ranges north of Auckland says Waitakere City Council senior noxious plants officer Lance Vervoort.

The plant is widespread throughout native areas in Northland and Coromandel Peninsula but is rapidly spreading southwards along the East Coast. It is also found around Wanganui and Wellington and the West Coast of the South Island.

It is frost tender but can survive colder conditions and generally prefers shade, although several hectares have been found growing on an exposed hillside in Northland, says Mr Vervoort.

While it is a problem in native woodlands it is not yet regarded as a threat to farming. Sheep and goats have been known to eat it although it is predominantly cellulose with a waxy fibre making it relatively unpalatable.

It is not classed as a noxious plant but this is under discussion by the Noxious Plants Council.

Control is either by spraying with the herbicide Escort or by digging out. While it can be dug up its aggressive rhizomes means it must be disposed of effectively, says Lance Vervoort.

Part of the reason for its spread has been home gardeners dumping the pulled out plants onto roadsides.

There are two types of ginger, yellow and kahili. Of these the kahili variety is more difficult to control because it produces a seed which can be spread by birds but the yellow is also a problem because of its aggressive rhizomes. Ginger rhizomes left on concrete have been known to produce shoots and colonise the surface of the concrete, he says.

Drought, weed devastate farms

New structure sees staff reductions

THE OTAGO Regional Council will operate on a staff 13 fewer than the 158 recommended by the transitional committee before amalgamation last year, following a staff review.

The review began when an independent consultancy recommended in May that the council have 152 staff.

The new chief executive, Harry Bayly, said that after a visit to Dunedin in September, before he took up his position, he decided 145 were needed to run the council.

The council has a staff of about 140 as up to eight left the council around the time of the review, and some of the transitional committee's recommended positions have never been filled.

There could be some redundancies, but most people would be re-arranged to suit the new structure. A pest manager and a noxious plants manager were new appointments and four other managers would have changed duties, Bayly said.

NZ Local Government, December 1990

By Eirwen Harris

South Canterbury and Otago sheep farmers are cutting stock numbers drastically because their land is ruined by smothering weed, rabbits or drought.

Farmers in neighbouring provinces are afraid the devastation will spread.

Worst hit is the Maniototo district in Central Otago where farmers in the grip of the worst drought for 40 years are also plagued by rabbits and hieracium, an imported weed that chokes grass and tussock.

The region is described a disaster area.

Maniototo farmer John Beattie said yesterday the country looked terrible. "It took us a generation to get tussock back on to this country," he said. "Now rabbits and hieracium have stripped it again."

Up for sale

The irrigation schemes vital for farmers to water their parched land are sending them broke. Mr Beattie said he knew of five farms that had been put up for sale because the farmers could not afford the cost of irrigation.

Irrigation would save the district in the long term but in the short term people were struggling to finance it. "It's very frustrating," he said.

Central and eastern Otago farmers in the triangle from Hawea to Palmerston and Roxburgh, including Alexandra and Ranfurly, are also affected.

Roxburgh Valley farmer John Rowley said water quotas of 40 per cent had already been imposed on irrigation schemes, allowing drought-stricken

farmers to water their land only twice a season.

Farmers faced the grim prospect of no irrigation if it did not rain this winter, he said.

Rabbits were a major problem, but one that could be controlled by the introduction of myxomatosis.

Spreading

After five years of waiting for a government decision on the introduction of myxomatosis, local farmers had paid for two farmers, one of them a vet, to study the biological control in Australia.

Farmers were convinced myxomatosis would be effective and environmentally friendly, Mr Rowley said.

But the most frightening of the three environmental problems farmers faced was hieracium, a weed imported in the 1860s that had inexplicably started spreading and smothering all other ground cover in recent years.

The weed destroys grazing and destabilises land by killing tussock.

There was no known control for it.

Some farmers had reduced stock numbers by up to 50 per cent.

South Canterbury farmers are also destocking, not because of drought but of rabbits and hieracium. It was not unusual for farmers to reduce stock numbers by up to 30 per cent. Timaru farmer Bruce McCully said.

New chemicals code to promote safety

SAFE AND responsible use of chemicals is the theme of a Agricultural Chemical Users Code of Practice, a 31-page document produced by Federated Farmers and the Vegetable, Fruit, Berry and Grape Growers Federations.

Working party chairman, Keith Jowsey, said "Early in 1990 it became clear that while there was an abundance of written material on chemical use there was an urgent need to produce a document that:

(1) would be the nucleus of education programmes to provide practical guidance for the safe, responsible and efficient use of agrichemicals and

(2) be an umbrella document from which codes could be developed for specific agricultural and horticultural activities.

"The times demand users take an even greater responsibility for the way they treat agrichemicals from the time of purchase to empty container disposal. This applies to herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and all chemicals used by growers."

The document provides primary industries with a guide for the safe use and an opportunity to work towards self regulation.

"Industries must now grasp the opportunity this document provides and put in place substantial education programmes aimed at tidying up all aspects of agrichemical handling, say the working party."

NZ Nurserymens Associa-

tion (NZNA) secretary, John Mawson, attended the briefing session when the document was launched mid-December.

"It is a timely document," he said. "A great deal of work has been done establishing the code and a great deal more will be required in implementing it into the horticultural industry. The executive will be taking a close look at the recommendations."

The code will be on the agenda for the next NZNA national executive meeting.

Ode from Naughty Valley

WAS our first trip to the city — mother
fretted for our sake —

Just remember city cousins never give, but
always take.

And the city mob was smiling when they
saw our country clothes,
Plain we came from Naughty Valley
where the Noddy thistle grows.

Now we've just been here a fortnight but
our money belts are full.

Though they're played us on the dart
board and they took us on at pool.

But we've shot the shifty possum when a
single eye he shows,
In the dark up Naughty Valley where the
Noddy thistle grows.

Now we've tasted beer and whisky and
we've watched them drink it deep.

But it only made them blether — then it
put them all to sleep.

Why we've seen men going crazy when old
Grandmas home brew flows,
Fighting mad up Naughty Valley where
the Noddy thistle grows.

We've been to all-night parties searching
for something that's new.

In the bars and spas and parlours and at
Dolly's Massage too.

But we've found nothing to better
Grandad's home-made videos,
That he shot up Naughty Valley where the
Noddy thistle grows.

So it's time to leave the strip shows,
topless beaches and the rest.

Turn our backs on sinful city for that gully
in the west.

Where the saucy country wenches are still
swimming, I suppose,
In the nude in Naughty Valley where the
Noddy thistle grows.

Little need to envy TV stars upon their
tinsel throne.

Little need of money problems where old
Grandpa makes his own.

Yes, we'll settle for the good life while the
marijuana blows

In the hills up Naughty Valley where the
Noddy thistle grows.

Mack



Council battles to remove privet

By RUTH MASANI

A plant believed to trigger asthma attacks may be dug up from all public and private properties if the Manukau City Council wins its way.

The council last week decided it would like to control privet's growth by asking the Auckland Regional Council to declare it a noxious plant.

But getting people to remove privet from private land may be difficult, so the council has decided to get officers to report back to the planning and resource management committee with ways in which the council can get people to co-operate.

It was suggested by councillor Dorothy Jellicich that the council possibly subsidise part of the cost to remove the plant.

The planning committee's decision was made after they were told in a council report that privet can trigger asthma attacks.

Researchers at Green Lane Hospital have found a strong link between privet and asthma, the report said.

An extract from a book *Poisonous Plants in New Zealand* contained in the report said that while privet poisoning was not common in New Zealand, there have been isolated cases involving the loss of stock. Children who have found the privet berries attractive have become sick, it said.

A retired DSIR researcher told the council

in the report that privet can be considered invasive to native bush. He said saving native bush should be a more important reason for controlling privet than the suspected health problems.

The former Manukau City Council adopted a policy of removing privet from council reserves and roadsides, committee members were told.

While the council was told by officers that privet may cost thousands of dollars to remove as it grew prolifically in Auckland, was difficult to kill and required extensive follow-up to prevent re-growth, committee members decided to proceed with its recommendation to the ARC for health reasons.

Councillor Allan Brewster said two other cities have declared privet a noxious plant and as Manukau City has a healthy city image it wants to portray, the Manukau council should proceed with its recommendation.

Councillor Chris Mountfort added that while he supported getting rid of privet for health reasons he would like to point out that council may be entering into another area with other equally health risk plants.

"You can get exactly the same number of problems from pollen and perfume," he said.

Councillor Peter Carter said in response that it was an indisputable fact that privet was particularly irritable to asthma sufferers.