



The Institute of Noxious Plants Officers Inc.

NEWSLETTER

NO. 1

Editor

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MEMBERS:

This is the first of what is intended to be a bi-monthly newsletter, to replace Protect. I look forward to receiving your articles and comments for inclusion in future newsletters.

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE:

SEMINAR ON PLANT & ANIMAL PEST CONTROL ADMINISTRATION

This Seminar was held at Lincoln College on July 9 and 10 with 70 delegates representing various organisations involved in animal pest and noxious plant control throughout N.Z. Included were representatives from Counties Association, DNPA's, N.P.C., Pest Destruction Council, Pest Boards, Pest Destruction Officers Institute, M.A.F., Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, Catchment Boards and various other Government organisations.

Fred Marsh and myself represented the Institute and two other members were present - Terry Regan who had been asked to represent his D.N.P.A. and Geoff Ward who was also a D.N.P.A. representative.

The Seminar was run on a workshop basis with delegates being divided into seven groups, where they remained for all workshops. This allowed little opportunity for discussion at full seminar level and the final decisions were collated from the reporting back of the groups.

The final agreements of the Seminar were:

1. That there should be an amalgamation of animal and plant pest administration in N.Z.
2. That the administration should be on the lines of that proposed in Option IV in the Discussion Paper, a copy of which has been sent to all Executive Members. This option proposes a dual administrative structure but the Seminar would only agree to this option if there were members on the National Administration elected by and fully representing the Local Administrations. In other words an organisation not dissimilar from the N.P.C. or A.P.D.C. The Seminar was adamant that this representation should be included in the National body and a vote was demanded, indicating a majority in favour of more than 90%. To make sure that the majority views of the Seminar are accurately collated and presented to the Minister a small Committee was chosen and delegated this responsibility.

The final outcome of the amalgamation of noxious plant and animal pest administration will be determined by Government. If the proposals of the Seminar are implemented then the demand to have local representation at National level will be important as this will give district pest authorities some control over national decisions particularly dealing with determining which pests are of national importance and the degree of funding for their control and also the future of training

From the point of view of N.P.O.'s probably the decisions and determinations taken at the local level will be more important. The local administrations most likely will be user funded and autonomous with the structure and size of each district being determined at a local level. Generally these administrations will be based on Territorial Local Government.

It is my opinion from what we currently know about likely changes, that N.P.O.'s should not be fearful. However when the new local structures are being determined where possible officers should be prepared to assist and make constructive suggestions. We must also be prepared to be flexible and accept possible future changes in our work content.

THE FUTURE OF CONFERENCES

Following the recent announcement that the subsidy paid to D.N.P.A.'s on the employment of N.P.O.'s is reduced and will be phased out I am concerned with the effect this may have on future conference attendance.

By the time of the 1988 Conference at New Plymouth the subsidy will be further reduced to 16% making the cost of sending officers that much greater. To assist the organisers I would request Institute Members to diplomatically ascertain from their employing authorities if they will be able to attend and advise as soon as possible. It appears that the cost of meals and accommodation at New Plymouth will be somewhat less than those experienced at recent venues.

K.J. WORSLEY,
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Of Members

T. (Snow) Payne (Hamilton City) has retired from the job.
Stan Dulieu has resigned as a Member.
Jack Craw has just returned from a trip to Aussie land.
A new appointment is to be made shortly at Ellesmere D.N.P.A. (Canterbury)

The Institute is looking at the possibility of retaining for its use dependent on costs the stickers designed for the National Field Days.

The National Field Days recently held near Hamilton in which the South Auckland Branch had a display was on all accounts a huge success.

With the announcement by Government of the curtailment of the subsidy on N.P.O.'s salaries the Institute may have to look at cheaper venues for the annual conference.

In response to a letter sent to N.P.C. re plant identification the reply is as follows: "there has been some misunderstanding over this issue. Where identification services are for plants of known or potential concern there is no charge. Charging would occur for situations where the person submitting the specimen directly benefits from the identification and/or control advice. An assurance has also been given that in future advertisements appearing on T.V. with regard to noxious plants the Institute's suggestions on involvement by N.P.O.'s will be kept in mind.

Forthcoming events include the N.Z. Weed and Pest Control Society Annual Conference in Nelson 11 - 13th August, 1987 and a Canterbury Branch Meeting on 13th August, 1987.

NATIONAL FIELD DAYS - MYSTERY CREEK, 1987

The Members of the South Auckland Branch decided that a display at this major agricultural field day showing various alternatives in weed control would be beneficial to both Noxious Plants Officers, who were concerned that their positions were becoming unstable and occupiers who faced a down turn in the farming economy along with rising chemical prices.

A determined committee oversaw the construction of a professionally designed unit covering the following control methods.

1. Biological control
2. Controlled grazing on Nodding Thistle
3. Aquatics display
4. Mechanical control
5. Chemical control
6. Goats for weed control
7. Noxious Plants Identification competition

It was estimated that 64,000 people attended the field days. Officers were kept busy with the many enquiries and also handing out "Weed Control - Ask Us" stickers, which were stuck on almost everyone attending. The "Weed Control - Ask Us" display was well attended by the public and members running the display must be complimented for their professional approach, all decked out in collar and tie with Institute jerseys.

Now the bad news:

Subsidy for the employment of Noxious Plants Officers is to be phased out as part of the Governments 1987 Expenditure Review. The following proportions of Government Subsidy have been approved by the Minister of Agriculture on the recommendation of M.A.F.? or Cabinet?

- 33 percent effective from 1 July 1987
- 16 percent effective from 1 April 1988
- 0 percent effective from 1 April 1989

Reactions to the announcement regarding the subsidy has varied from unprintable to items in many of the daily papers. Otago Daily Times 30 June, 1987 and I quote "News that the 50 percent subsidy paid to local authorities being phased out came as a bombshell to the Waimate County Council. The County Chairman, Mr. T.H. Hurst stated he was absolutely horrified." We budgeted on a 50 percent subsidy for the whole financial year". I understand a number of Councils are planning to protest the announcement, as it came after most Councils rates have been set.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS (IN BRIEF)

Otago Daily Times July 1, 1987

'Pest boards best equipped for job'

The Waimate County Council was told in no uncertain terms this week by the Pest boards covering its area that they are best equipped to do the job of keeping pests at bay. The County Clerk, Mr. M.A. Johnson had suggested in a discussion document that pest destruction and noxious plants control could be amalgamated and possibly run by the Council. However Mr. W.R.C. Cleave, Chairman of the Hakataramea Valley P.D.B. said he was doubtful if the County Council could help even with rates collection. He described the discussion document as "airy-fairy".

Petition on 245-T Wellington (P.A.)

A 12,000 signature petition calling for a ban on the manufacture and use of 245-T was presented to the Minister of Works and Development, the Rt Hon. F.M. Colman on Monday 29 June, 1987. Mr. Colman said the petition would be presented to the House before going to a government petition committee.

A ministerial committee of inquiry last year concluded there was no proof the continuing manufacture of 245-T at the Ivon Watkins-Dow plant in New Plymouth posed a public health hazard.

The Central Otago News

A new nassella tussock infestation has been found in the Cardrona Valley. Nassella tussock ranger Mr. (ever vigilant) Doug Gordon said the area of about 4 hectares at Spotts Creek is a couple of kilometres from a previously known area he thought was under control. (Keep it up Doug).

Institute Jerseys

Unfortunately increased prices will mean that jerseys ordered from this date will cost \$50 (includes GST and postage etc.)

Conference

Proceedings for the Nelson Conference are at the printers and will hopefully be out before the end of the month.

Branch News

Thanks to the South Auckland branch for forwarding me a copy of their meeting minutes to help in the compiling of the Newsletter. (I look forward to receiving others).

South Auckland: (In brief)

1. 22 members in attendance 11 May, 1987
2. New Appointment Franklin County - Jo Geddes (welcome)
3. Executive members spoke on the withdrawal of subsidy to local bodies for Noxious Plants Officers and the possible consequences.

Outcome

This branch request Union involvement be made at all levels regarding the future of Noxious Plants Officers and official notification be made to the Union concerned on a local and national level on such matters and That the Secretary write to the Noxious Plants Council outlining concerns with regard to the future of Noxious Plants Officers and Noxious Plants control.

Northern South Island Branch:

Pending Branch trip to Entomology Division, D.S.I.R. Lincoln as well as other venues. Hopefully a combined Branch meeting can be arranged with Canterbury Branch Members.