



The Institute of Noxious Plants Officers Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Editor

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NEWSLETTER NO. 2

SEPTEMBER, 1987

MEMBERS:

The past two months have been extremely busy and at times a frustrating period for members, especially those involved in the numerous meetings to discuss the ongoing administration of Noxious Plant Control. At the time of compiling this newsletter we are still waiting with considerable interest the collated report from the Seminar at Lincoln College on Plant and Animal Pest Control Administration. Also most of you will have read a copy of a draft Discussion Paper (July, 1987) prepared by and for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (if not contact your Executive Member).

In these times of change it is important for Noxious Plants Officers to maintain a high profile within the Council organisation and the community at large, promote yourselves as custodians of the environment, people who have the expertise to generally advise occupiers on all phases of weed control, not only Noxious Plants. Point out the various functions co-ordinated by you as the Noxious Plants Officer, e.g. Clematis eradication programmes, chemical tenders, educational awareness, but to name a few. But above all, don't give up.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK:

New Member: Des Pooley, Whakatane District Council - Welcome!

1988 Conference: Little information has been received on next year's Conference other than that the registration forms etc. will be going out to all members and D.N.P.A.'s at the end of this month.

Field Days Stand: This weed display stand will be available for hire. D.N.P.A.'s wishing to hire the display but who had not originally contributed to the funding would be charged \$250, plus be liable for damage and transportation. Contact Dick Healy, Hamilton, re hire etc.

Stickers

No more information has been received concerning the "Ask Us" stickers but according to comments received by me many Members hope that they will become available again.

Future Meetings

South Auckland Branch
Hawkes Bay Branch
Manawatu/West Coast Branch
Northland Branch

Waipa 14 October 1987
Waipukurau 5 February, 1988
Porirua 24/25 September 1987
Kawakawa October, 1987

AUSTRALIAN TRIP BY JACK, TED AND FRED

4TH BIENNIAL NOXIOUS PLANTS CONFERENCE HAWKESBURY AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, RICHMOND, NEW SOUTH WALES

Jack Crow, Ted Gard and myself attended the Noxious Plants Conference for Local Government conducted by the Department of Agriculture for New South Wales from 29 June 1987 to 3 July, 1987. There were approximately 280 persons in attendance which included 15 elected representatives.

The programme was an interesting one, covering a wide range of subjects delivered by top line speakers. The administration of noxious plant, is at the moment going through a change and believe it or not, in New South Wales they are considering adopting our present structure being the Noxious Plants Act 1978!!

They are progressing forward and it would appear that we are to turn backwards if M.A.F. should have their way. I have attached the conference programme saving a massive report in fine detail. New South Wales and South Australia have just declared Pampas in all species to be noxious plants because of the New Zealand situation. Their dry and open pasture would be very conducive to pampas getting established. You only have to look around the vacant areas of Sydney to see how rapidly it is spreading.

They gave us a tremendous time, and their Association have given our Institute honorary status. Their A.G.M. was an occasion to say the least - very laid back, and they have asked us to send them a copy of our Institute rules to help them get their Association onto a sound footing. They would also like to exchange Newsletters which I said we would. I also feel that as an Institute we should give their Association an honorary status as well.

Next year we will have their Du-Pont Award winner Mr. Jim Cherry as a guest at the New Plymouth Conference. It is also quite likely that one or two other Aussies could be interested in attending. I only hope that we look after them half as well as they looked after us.

On the Thursday afternoon I addressed the Conference on Noxious Plants Administration in New Zealand, outlining the administrative structures as it exists plus the Training package. Their Association and the New South Wales Department of Agriculture would like to adopt a similar training package which I said we would assist with.

Jack Crow was presented with an award for endurance by going "Walkabout" a story he will undoubtedly expand on more at next years Conference. A marathon for Jack would be an easy assignment in comparison!!

In closing, mention must be made on the organisation of both Du-Pont Australia and New Zealand for making the trip for all of us such a memorable one.

FRED MARSH

ADDRESS TO 4TH BIENNIAL NOXIOUS PLANTS CONFERENCE, HAWKESBURY
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

PRESENTED BY F.J. MARSH CHIEF NOXIOUS PLANTS OFFICER, WELLINGTON
DISTRICT NOXIOUS PLANT AUTHORITY, NEW ZEALAND

NOXIOUS PLANTS CONTROL IN NEW ZEALAND

I wish to thank the Conference, and both Du-Pont Australia and New Zealand for giving me this opportunity to address you on the subject of Noxious Plant Control in New Zealand. I will be dealing with the subject in two sections, the first on the administrative structure and secondly the training package for noxious plants officers.

It has been with interest that we have learned through our stay with you that you are experiencing the same difficulties with the crown that we were ten years ago where the crown is not bound by the Act.

The Noxious Plants Act 1978 which governs the administration of noxious plant control in New Zealand. We have a two tier structure with the Noxious Plants Council being the governing body down through to the District Noxious Plants Authorities. The Council has ten members, being one member appointed as Chairman by the Minister, two members representing New Zealand Counties Association, one member representing the Municipal Association, two members representing New Zealand Federated Farmers, one member representing the Commercial and Technical Group, plus the Director General of Lands, Forests and Agricultural and Fisheries. The Council is a body Corporate.

The function of the Council is to initiate and promote a policy on noxious plants administration throughout New Zealand to control and encourage co-ordination in implementing national and regional programmes for the control and or eradication of noxious

plants. Every local authority under the Act shall be a District Noxious Plants Authority. Notwithstanding this, local authorities who districts are adjacent to any other local authority within the same region may by agreement amalgamate to form a combined District Noxious Plants Authority. In my own particular case the Wellington District Noxious Plants Authority consists of one County and seven Municipalities.

District Noxious Plants Authorities shall under Section 41 of the Act appoint full time noxious plants officers, and under Section 42 shall be trained to meet the Noxious Plants Councils requirements for Officers. The training as I mentioned earlier will be dealt with later in my talk.

Under Section 2 of the Act the Crown is bound by the Act. Under our previous 1950 Act the Crown was not bound and we had the same difficulties that you are now faced with.

We have two classes of noxious plants, they are Class A and Class B. Class A noxious plants are those plants that in the opinion of the Council it would be in the national interest to have the plants declared to be Class A. We have two terrestrial plants and three aquatics declared as follows:

Cape Tulip
Johnson Grass
Water Hyacinth
Water Lettuce
Salvinia

The costs of implementing any programme to eradicate any Class A noxious plant shall be met from money appropriated by Parliament for that purpose. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are responsible for the total eradication programme. But in practice District Noxious Plants Authorities carry out the work as the Ministry do not have the resources.

District Noxious Plants Authorities are responsible for the administration of Class B Plants, and these are divided into three categories of priority.

- (i) "Target" - limited distribution (nationally or district) where eradication is considered possible providing a suitable sustained programme is implemented.
- (ii) "Surveillance" - Plants that have been eradicated from the district. If it appears 'target' action is reinstated.
- (iii) "Widespread" - widely distributed and abundant in suitable habitats in the district or which colonise as soon as these habitats become available. Programmes are aimed at containment to prevent spread to new areas or at protecting neighbouring properties where control is being carried out.

The drive behind this classification policy is to establish a preventive concept of noxious plants control.

Offences and penalties under the Act. Where an offence relates to a Class A noxious plant, a person who commits an offence shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or where the offence is a continuing one, \$200 for every day or part day during which the offence continues. Where the offence relates to a Class B noxious plants a fine not exceeding \$2,500 and where the offence is a continuing one, \$150 for every day or part day thereof.

With regards to offences in relation to Officers a fine of \$1,000 or where the offence is a continuing one \$50 for every day etc. Every person commits an offence in this regard who:

- a) Obstructs or hinders any Officer, or any person duly employed or authorised, in the exercise or performance of any function or power under this Part of this Act; or
- b) Threatens, assaults or uses abusive language to any person mentioned in paragraph (a) of this subsection while that person is engaged in that exercise or performance; or
- c) Wilfully and with intent to deceive gives any false or misleading information to any person mentioned in the said paragraph a); or
- d) Personates or falsely represents himself, to be an officer, or falsely represents himself, to be a person duly employed and authorised.

So, as you can see we do have realistic powers under our Act. It does seem ironical that here you are trying to achieve what we have achieved, and in New Zealand at the present there are moves to change this system again to one of non-intervention.

Training of Noxious Plants Officers - in New Zealand we have a very comprehensive training programme as I mentioned earlier, training is required under the Act and it is mandatory that Officers obtain the Certificate of Proficiency within three years of appointment. When an Officer is appointed, he is sent to another District Authority which has been designated as a Training Authority for secondment training. He also has to study a correspondence course for Noxious Plants Officers and then has to sit and pass the exams. Training is administered by the Local Government Training Board's Committee for Noxious Plants Officer Training. This Committee is also a committee of the Noxious Plants Council.

We have an Executive Training Officer employed by the Board to co-ordinate all of the training through five Training Managers, three in the North Island and two in the South Island. The Training Managers are Senior Officers in multiple District Noxious Plants Authorities. Each Training Manager has on average

five training authorities under his direction where new appointees are placed for training. So a new Officer has a trainer appointed to see him through to final assessment as to his competence on the job as well as assisting with his study etc. Noxious Plants Officer training is the envy of all local government training in New Zealand. It is our Institutes great success story. We will assist you in any way that we can in this regard.

I thank you for the time given to me to address you and we look forward to hosting your Du-Pont winner next year in New Zealand.

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ADDRESS TO CHEMICAL APPLICATOR'S SECTION CONTRACTORS'
CONFERENCE - ASHBURTON- JUNE, 1987

Mr. Chairman,

BOB BLICK,
EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the opportunity and privilege to address your Conference.

Your representative, Mr. Graham Hide, spoke to our Conference at Nelson and mentioned some of the problems facing your industry today.

Having been fully involved in the control of plants such as Nodding Thistle, Broom, Gorse etc., I am fully aware of the problems you people are facing. With the termination of subsidy, S.M.P., low interest loans etc., the overall economic pressure in the farming scene has probably had more effect on chemical applicators than a lot of other related industries.

Noxious Plants Officers throughout the country are finding it difficult to maintain the gains that were achieved through subsidy, L.D.L. etc., and already we are seeing areas previously cleared, reverting back to scrub and weeds.

Your members play a vital role in the continued control of these plants, but unfortunately the most detrimental cause in the failure to get this work done, is the astronomical costs of chemicals, which despite the use of goats or other biological control methods, still remains the most effective means of controlling weeds if used properly.

In hindsight, it is now obvious that some of this land should never have been cleared, or else the long term land use should have been for industry such as forestry, rather than increased farm production. However, at the time, what the country wanted was increased production, and as Noxious Plants Officers, we were encouraged and indeed at times instructed, to make use of this funding to clear large areas of noxious plants.

In the days of subsidy, my phone was never silent, as there was always some farmer, or contractor, ringing about clearing land or looking for subsidy. Now it hardly ever rings for me, as I have nothing to offer, and any contact with me by the farmer, usually costs him money he does not want to spend, or has not got.

With the reclassification of noxious plants, there has been a change of direction to weed control, and now the emphasis is on target plants or plants that if left unattended, could cause major problems in the future. This approach has very sound merit, for if the first gorse, nodding thistle, ragwort plant had been eradicated before it seeded, we would not be faced with a massive annual bill to control these plants. Most D.N.P.A.'s see the need for this approach, and generally agree with the direction taken by the Noxious Plants Council and the Government. However, most Authorities are adamant that the fight against widespread plants such as gorse, nodding thistle, ragwort, etc., must continue to protect productive land, and also protect the interests of landowners who are trying to control their weeds.

Mr. Hide mentioned registration for chemical applicators and the fact that at present it is still voluntary. My own views on this subject are that all persons involved in the actual application of any herbicide or pesticide, should have to have registration for the particular problem they are dealing with, so that they have a full understanding of potential problems through misuse. In the days of subsidy, only work done by registered chemical applicators, or farmers working on their own property, received subsidy. This resulted in a lot more contractors becoming registered, simply because they missed out on work that was part of their income.

With the public awareness of chemical damage and the threat it plays in the future use of chemicals, it is important that those using chemicals, be seen to be acting responsibly, and I urge you to encourage those contractors who are not registered chemical applicators, to become so.

In the past, most Local Authorities and Government Departments would only use contractors who were registered chemical applicators, and this is something I myself have insisted on. However, with the established contractors retiring or selling out, it is becoming more difficult to engage registered chemical applicators, as there does not appear to be any incentive to become registered.

Earlier in this address I mentioned substantial changes that have occurred in our work which are now affecting your industry. Since the early 1970s, as you are well aware, there have been radical changes in the direction that noxious plants control has taken. We have gone from the situation where a number of plants were subsidised and the Crown and other Government Departments became responsible for weeds growing on their land. Over the years the subsidy was reduced until it ceased to exist, with a massive reduction in weed control.

Following this was the reclassification of noxious plants which I have already mentioned. Then the Noxious Plants Council was abolished by Government and a committee of four M.A.F. officers, plus two field officers, took their place.

The restructuring of the Lands and Survey Department has put the future of unoccupied Crown land spraying at risk, as this work now comes under the Department of Conservation, who have instructed us that they will carry out their own noxious plant control work. The most important thing which concerns N.P.O.'s is the uncertainty of who will administer noxious plant control in the future. This is causing considerable concern amongst Noxious Plants Officers, as there have been suggestions that weeds and pest, and possibly conservation and catchment authorities, could all be amalgamated.

We as Noxious Plants Officers have developed a very successful training package which demands that all new Noxious Plants Officers achieve a minimum level of knowledge in noxious plant control - this is called C.O.P.

Through this training, which can take up to three years, we have gained new officers who are dedicated to the job of noxious plant control, and we feel that this knowledge is now threatened if it is taken away from the control of Local Authorities.

In July, there is a meeting being held at Lincoln with all interested parties supposed to be invited. Our Institute has requested representation at any meeting held to discuss the future of our job, as we feel that we have developed a certain expertise in the field of weed control.

Assurance from Government representatives was given to our President last year, that we would have an input, but since then we have discovered there has already been one meeting held to which we were not invited. This has created a lot of ill-feeling amongst our members who, while we are not against change, feel that we should have an input into any future change in weed control.

So like your industry, Ladies and Gentlemen, ours is also facing an uncertain period at present, and we hope that common sense will prevail. Any major changes away from the present structure, which is administered by Local Authorities, could have a serious impact on your livelihoods.

In the field of weed control we have progressed; unfortunately this cannot be said of pest control.

Lincoln Seminar:

By now most of you will know that Geoff Ward (Rodney) was appointed as one of the members of a steering committee set up to prepare submissions to the Government on the findings of the

seminar. Apart from representing D.N.P.A.'s on this Committee, Geoff is also responsible for representing our Institute.

Profile: GEOFF WARD

I have twenty years experience in noxious plants administration. During the past 13 years I have been Agricultural Services Officer for Rodney with management responsibility for fourteen staff. Three of these are Noxious Plants Officers.

Three other staff are Pest Destruction Officers and I act as Secretary to the Auckland Regional Pest Authority which co-ordinates the vertebrate pest control activities of six local authorities.

As you know I have been involved for many years with Noxious Plants Officer training and am one of five Training Managers in New Zealand.

Having given considerable thought the Issues and Options paper on Pest Control Administration prepared by Lincoln College and produced a critical commentary on it, I was invited to represent half the North Island District Noxious Plants Authorities at the Lincoln Seminar.

I was both pleased and honoured to be appointed as one of the members of a steering committee set up to prepare submissions to the Government from the findings of the Seminar. Membership of this committee was ratified by all those who had been invited to attend. It is also an encouragement to know I have the positive support of yourself, Kevin Worsley, National President and Fred Marsh.

The noxious plants scene as we have known it has gone. Unless we all work together now there may be little to work for in the future.

I believe that with a long and in depth involvement with noxious plants and vertebrate pest control management I have a useful contribution to make at this crucial time.

In the meantime our efforts should be put towards safeguarding the interests of the landowners and the land which we serve.

Future Funding and direction of Noxious Plant Control:

Rodney D.N.P.A. along with a number of other Authorities from throughout the country have written to the Minister of Agriculture stating their concern regarding future funding and the direction of Noxious Plant control.

Rodney's reply goes much as follows. (I must apologise to Geoff if I have not got the wording 100%).

"You will be aware of the National Seminar of Pest Control Administration held at Lincoln at which a representative from Rodney D.N.P.A. was in attendance.

My department is also preparing a review on Noxious Plants administration and expect to forward this to interested organisations in October.

There is also a review under way in Pest Administration and at this stage it is anticipated that all aspects from these reports will be drawn together and form a joint report on pest control at a local and national level.

This last report is to be completed in December and circulated for comment in February, 1988.

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It is important that we as Noxious Plants Officers continue to prepare submissions on our future direction through our Branches or D.N.P.A.'s. Sooner rather than later we will have to present these various submissions to the appropriate Authorities. We must be prepared.

Keep them positive

BRANCH NEWS:

South Auckland Branch - 12 August, 1987

Present: 27 Visitors: 9 Apologies: 5

Field days stand - a comprehensive report has been compiled by D. Healey on the stand. These are being sent to N.P.C., D.N.P.A.'s and Ministry of Agriculture. If you require one contact Dick, C/- Hamilton City.

Guest Speakers

Mr. G. Ward: Agricultural Services Officer addressed the meeting on the Lincoln Seminar.
Copy could be obtained direct from Geoff.

Mr. R. Storey: M.P. for Waikato - informed the meeting on Nationals views with regard to agricultural policies generally and spoke of the state's responsibility with regard to weed and pest control.

He believed the user pays situation was being over developed and was concerned with divisions within departments, e.g. M.A.F. and the D.S.I.R.

He also said reorganisation of weed and pest control may well be a step backward, which will have a direct result on the viability of some farms.

Northland Branch - 17 July, 1987

Present: 21

Mr. A. Gate: brought up the subject of the newsletter replacement for "Protect". From resulting discussion Austen suggested that any material forwarded to Eric Eden for this newsletter should be in such a form that it is ready for immediate use.

Let's have some articles for the next newsletter.

Thanks to those who have taken the time to send articles.

Conference 1990, Hamilton:

Jack Crow outlined his reasons for suggesting at Conference that the Northland Branch hold the 1990 Conference at Hamilton, e.g. Northland Branch have never held a Conference and it has been made more difficult by Counties Association statement that there should be no conferences north of Hamilton.

If you have any interesting branch news let's have it.

Institute Jerseys

I have three orders on hand, these will be forwarded when 3 - 4 more orders have been received. Cost nos \$50 all sizes. This includes post, GST etc. etc.

Conference Proceedings

I have a limited number of these available at a cost of \$10 each. If you require more please drop me a note.

INSTITUTE OF NOXIOUS PLANTS OFFICERS INC.

C/- MASTERTON COUNTY COUNCIL

PO BOX 39, MASTERTON

16 September 1987

TO THE EXECUTIVE & ALL MEMBERS

On the 15th of September Fred Marsh & myself met at Wellington with Mr R McLaglan, Chief Executive and Mr R Odinet Technical Officer for NZ Federated Farmers and discussed the implications if adopted of the Draft paper on N.P. Administration. A copy of this paper was sent to the Executive to discuss with members three weeks ago.

Both gentlemen indicated support for a continuance of N.P. control similar to the present system and requested that the Institute keep them advised as things develop.

During the discussions it became obvious that when the final paper is available for submissions as an Institute we will need more information and facts to argue our case if the draft is any indication of the final papers contents.

To counteract the proposal regarding latent plants as shown on page 30 of the Draft Paper and to build up a case for the current system please fill out the attached forms and return to the National Secretary as soon as possible and no later than the 12th of October.

KEVIN WORSLEY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

KJW/LDJ

LATENT PLANTS

These are the proposed latent Plants listed in the Draft paper. Tall needle grass, White edged nightshade, Green cestrum, Noogoora bur, African feather grass, African love grass, Alligator weed, Annual wild rice, Bog bean, Bur daisy, Calamint, Chilean needle grass, Chinese pennisetum, Coltsfoot, Eelgrass (South island), Egeria, Entire marshwort, Field horsetail, Fleabane, Goats rue, Grecian thistle, Green cestrum, Horse nettle, Hydrilla, Manchurian wild rice, Mercer grass, Nassella tussock (Excluding Tussock board areas), Perennial nettle, Phragmites, Red cestrum, Saffron thistle, Sea aster, Skeleton weed, Spiny broom, Tall needle grass, Water poppy, Yellow water lily.

If any sites are known in your area please supply the following information.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>NO. OF SITES</u>	<u>WHO LOCATED SITES</u> (EG - NPO, MAF, FARMER, ETC.)	<u>YEAR WORK FIRST CARRIED OUT</u>	<u>DISTANCE FROM OFFICE</u>	<u>WHO CLEARS</u> (EG - NPO, MAF, FARMER, ETC.)	<u>APPROXIMATE COST PER ANNUM PER SPECIES</u>

Comments:-

TARGET PLANTS

Please give similar details for one or two top priority Target Plants in your area. Do not include any which are on the Latent Plant list.

Any further information you may be able to supply which indicates the value of the current N.P. system would be appreciated. Please also indicate the reaction by your employing authority to the phasing out of the subsidy on the employment of N.P.O.'s

SIGNED N.P.O. _____

NAME OF DNPA

SPECIES OF CLASSIFIED WIDESPREAD PLANTS:-

SPECIES OF CLASSIFIED TARGET PLANTS:-

CLASS A PLANTS

[illegible]

Please indicate if MAF have requested the DNPA to undertake the control of any Class A Plants and if so the degree of involvement.

Comments:-