

**Report 00.311**

3 May 2000

File: Y/4/1/1

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

## **Bovine Tb Vector Control Programme for 2000/01**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee that the Animal Health Board may not fully support the Council's proposed 2000/01 Bovine Tb programme, and to advise of opportunities to address this situation.

### **2. Background**

The Council's draft Bovine Tb vector control programme for 2000/01 and beyond, as outlined in the proposed Long Term Financial Strategy "Towards a Greater Wellington", was developed to reflect the councillors desire for further significant reductions in reactor numbers in the region.

Committee members will recall that the proposed programme incorporated the maintenance of all existing operations plus the commencement of four new operational areas in the south Wairarapa over the next four years. This programme was also based upon the Animal Health Board approving an Eradication Zone over 100,000 hectares in northern Wairarapa, which would then attract 75% funding from the Animal Health Board instead of the current 50%.

At the time the proposed programme was developed, it was known by officers and Committee members that the total work would only be able to proceed if the Animal Health Board approved and funded the various components accordingly. The need for Animal Health Board funding support has been made clear in "Towards a Greater Wellington" and in supporting publicity.

### **3. Comment**

Officers developed the proposed programme around three basic assumptions:

- (1) That the Animal Health Board would continue to fund the ongoing maintenance of existing operational areas. No difficulties are seen over this assumption.

- (2) The Eradication Zone would be approved as it met the relevant criteria and therefore it should be funded 75% by the Animal Health Board.
- (3) That expansion into south-east Wairarapa would be likely to be supported by the Animal Health Board as there had been ongoing discussions with them and AgriQuality during the past two years about tackling the rising vector numbers in this area.

In recent weeks it has become increasingly clear that assumptions (2) and (3) above were likely to not receive Animal Health Board support, particularly if the Animal Health Board did not receive the additional \$5 million funding that it has sought from the Government.

The current position is set out in the attached correspondence.

The attached Animal Health Board letter seems to suggest that:

- (a) The Eradication Zone will probably be funded provided the Crown makes available all or most of the additional funds sought by the Animal Health Board.
- (b) Even if the Crown provides all of the requested additional funding, the south-east Wairarapa expansion is not certain of funding next year.

#### **4. Opportunities for Change**

Possible opportunities for changing the situation include:

- (1) Lobbying the Government to support the Animal Health Board's funding request. Regional Councils, jointly through the Regional Affairs Committee, have been doing this, and this Council's Chairman is also writing to the Minister of Agriculture about this matter.
- (2) Arrangements have been in place for some time for Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee members to meet Animal Health Board representatives in Masterton on 29 May. While the Animal Health Board will be wishing to discuss the proposed National Strategy for 2001/02 and onwards, the opportunity should be taken by this Council to persuade the Animal Health Board of the merits of our situation for the coming year in particular.

Clearly, the Animal Health Board is currently favouring starting some new operations in other parts of the country in preference to ones in this region. This is disappointing to say the least given this Council's very strong commitment to Bovine Tb work over the past ten years, and also the high performance achieved with the operations. It can also be argued that the Eradication Zone funding should be a priority ahead of any new operations.

- (3) Depending upon the outcomes of lobbying both the Government and the Animal Health Board, there may need to be arrangements made to next year's budget. The timing of all this is quite uncertain at present, but it could be very close to the start of the new financial year. Existing scheduled meetings where budget changes could be discussed include the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee meeting on 12 June, and the Policy and Finance Committee meeting on 29 June.

## **5. Recommendation**

*That the Committee note the current unsatisfactory situation with the future Bovine Tb budget, and that every opportunity be pursued to achieve funding support from the Animal Health Board for the proposed Long Term Financial Strategy Vector Control Programme.*

Colin Wright  
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa