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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Wayne O'Donnell, Manager, Biosecurity

Regional Pest Management Strategy Approval

1. Purpose

To seek the Council's approval of the new Regional Pest Management Strategy 2001-2021.

2. Background

Development of the new Strategy commenced in mid-1999. A Sub-Committee was appointed in November 2000 to consider the review documents and to provide recommendations on submissions.

A total of 41 submissions were received and heard in June 2001. Decisions on submissions were notified in July 2001. Whilst a number of submitters voiced their concerns, only one, Safari Club International Ltd (SCI), decided to appeal the decision to the Environment Court. The appeal was based entirely on the inclusion of feral deer as a pest in the site-led Key Native Ecosystem management list.

Numerous discussions were held with SCI in an attempt to reach an understanding of their concerns and to explore compromise options. However, SCI remained firm in their stance on the matter. This single appeal prevented implementation of the entire Strategy.

In November 2001, the Committee agreed to the removal of feral deer as a pest in the site led management category of the proposed Strategy. This decision reflected the Committee's desire to get the new Strategy implemented. Delays then occurred before the parties signed off on a consent memorandum. The memorandum was forwarded to the Environment Court and was finally signed on the 17 July 2002.

3. The New Strategy

The appeal process has delayed implementation of the new Strategy by an entire year. Unfortunately, there were a number of time-bound objectives proposed for the 2001/02 year that were deferred due to the appeal. Most of these objectives were focussed on educating the public regarding new pests. The educational period was deemed appropriate prior to staff commencing enforcement actions.

It would now be appropriate to change the dates in the new Strategy to align with the new start date. This entails making a number of minor amendments. Section 88A of the Biosecurity Act 1993 permits minor amendments to a Strategy as long as the amendment does not have any significant effect on the rights and obligations of any person. Changing dates to provide for educational programmes is not considered a significant effect.

4. Strategy Term

All Regional Pest Management Strategies under the Biosecurity Act 1993 are required to be reviewed every five years. It was anticipated that the first review of the 2001-2021 Strategy would occur in the 2006 year. However, the delay now means a year 2007 review would be more effective. This now raises the question as to whether the date of the new Strategy should commence in 2002 and conclude in 2022.

Section 79F of the Biosecurity Act 1993 states that the Council must make a Regional Pest Management Strategy once it has made the amendments as directed by the Environment Court. The Council seal must also be affixed to the approved Strategy. Therefore, the new Strategy can only commence following full Council approval on the 17 September 2002.

5. Communication

A copy of the approved Strategy is legally required to be distributed to all public libraries in the Region. Public notice will be provided to advise that the new Strategy has been approved. The Biosecurity Department has been reviewing all public relations material associated with the Strategy. This material will be freely available to the public.

6. Recommendation

That the Committee recommends:

- (1) That the Council formally approves the amended proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy.*
- (2) That the term of the new Strategy be from 2002 to 2022.*

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