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Committee **Rural Services and Wairarapa**
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Regional Pest Management Strategy - Operational Report 2004/05

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 2004/2005 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

2. Background

Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act requires the Council, as the Management Agency, to prepare an operational plan for each Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) which it has approved. Furthermore, the Agency must prepare a report on the plan and its implementation no later than five months after the end of the each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

A few Councils have determined to use the Annual Plan reporting process to provide details on performance against RPMS Operational Plan objectives. The Biosecurity Act does provide for this option. However, it is considered more transparent to utilise a separate reporting process where greater detail can be included on performance, trends, issues and expenditure. A separate report also provides a higher level of accountability and transparency for ratepayers.

3. Comment

Attachment 1 contains the Annual Report on implementation of the 2004/2005 Operational Plan. This is the third progress report detailing performance against the objectives in the twenty year Strategy.

In the 2004/05 year, emphasis has been applied to identifying and controlling Eradication and Containment pest plant species with particular focus on urban areas; continuing our focus on raising public awareness and understanding of biosecurity issues and pest management responsibilities; commencing integrated pest management in a small number of priority Key Native Ecosystem sites; and maintaining our joint venture pest management projects with various City and District

Councils. A number of other key outcomes were achieved. An overview of these is presented in the 'Highlights' section below.

Public demand for information on biosecurity issues continues to grow. There is no doubt that this interest has been fuelled by national biosecurity events such as the Waiheke Island Foot and Mouth disease threat, and more recently by the discovery of Didymo and Sea Squirt infestations. A well-informed public is essential for the achievement of both national and regional biosecurity objectives. Biosecurity agencies simply do not have enough resources to adequately explore and investigate all potential pest incursions. However, increased public knowledge has also led to an increased number of new pest infestations being notified. This necessitates an ongoing need to reprioritise work programmes to ensure adequate control is maintained on key species. In some cases this has resulted in some RPMS tasks being deferred.

The report includes a separate Pest Animal and Pest Plant section with an overview of major RPMS issues encountered during the year, details on the Key Native Ecosystem programmes, ecological monitoring activities, and finally, an outline of performance against key activity objectives.

4. Highlights for 2004/05

The new Strategy introduced some significant changes from the original 1996-2001 document. This followed an in-depth analysis of community aspirations via submissions, and a review of our ability to deliver on both short and long term objectives. The use of the pest infestation curve to focus our resource inputs was a major step forward in managing pests in the region. The eradication of regional significant pests at low densities and containment of others to specific areas is, and will continue to be, a high priority.

Key highlights included:

- Completion of intensive possum and predator control in 76 private and territorial authority KNE Management Areas, totalling over 17,000 hectares;
- Strengthening our relationship with the Department of Conservation with joint efforts in the Mt Bruce Pukaha buffer predator control programme, the Waihora KNE project, eradication of pest fish and plants in the Kapiti area, and controlling perennial nettle on Matua / Somes Island;
- Commencing boneseed control programmes in Kapiti and various Wairarapa coastal settlements;
- Completing urban surveys for Eradication and Containment pest plant species in Masterton, Carterton, and parts of Featherston, Martinborough, Wellington City and Kapiti;
- Commencing a regional awareness programme relating to unwanted cats and their adverse impacts on native wildlife;
- Managing a total of 1,465 client enquiries.

The attached Report contains details of other highlights concerning pest plants and animals.

5. Communications

Public notices will be utilised to inform the public that the Annual Report is available for inspection.

Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers for their review and comment.

Consideration will be given to using Elements to provide a summary of the key issues.

6. Recommendation

- (1) That the Committee, as the delegated Management Agency, approves the Annual Report on the implementation of the 2004/2005 Operational Plan for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.*
- (2) That a copy of the Report be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.*
- (3) That the Report be made available for public inspection.*

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