

Our view...

Rural News March 18, 2014

Lock the gate!

RURAL NEWS believes it is time for farmers around the country to take a stand against the constant carping and attacks by Fish & Game New Zealand on the dairy farming sector.

We are calling on all New Zealand farmers to refuse any further access to or across their land by fishers and hunters. It is clear that their governing body, Fish & Game, has no respect or regard for the dairy farming sector, and therefore do not want to be associated with the farming sector – including hunting and fishing on their land.

Rural News acknowledges it is a serious call to ask farmers to block access and one not to be taken lightly. However, we believe as an advocate for the New Zealand farming sector and farmers it is time Fish and Game's incessant and anti-farming attitude was challenged.

The monopolistic lobby has been beating the same anti-dairying drum for more than a decade. Its myopic, negative view of the sector and clear non-appreciation of any of the work done by farmers and the wider agricultural sector to improve water quality over the years has become tiresome.

Its latest offering – the dodgy online survey again attacking the dairy sector – is the latest example of the length to which the lobby group will go to tarnish the New Zealand economy's star performer.

Rural News says enough is enough. We believe that most fishers and hunters understand the importance of dairying to our economy. Most will also acknowledge the work and resources put in by stakeholders – farmers, workers and processors – to promote sustainability and improve water quality.

However, it is clear the executive of Fish and Game does not. Therefore we are calling on farmers to lock their gates to all fishers and hunters until they can convince their governing body to drop its adversarial approach to the farming sector and play a more constructive role in working hand-in-hand with the sector. Until then we say to farmers, keep the gates locked!

Let us know what you think: editor@ruralnews.co.nz

See more on Fish and Game's stance in this issue

Rural News March 18, 2014

CLEAN WATER ALL OF NEW ZEALAND'S PROBLEM

NORM ATKINS (*Rural News*, March 4) derides Massey scientist Dr Mike Joy for his concerns over river water quality and haggles about whether town or country is to blame.

This divisive approach does nothing to help the problem; it is an issue for town and country and central and local government.

Freshwater is our planet's most valuable resource by virtue that it confers life, yet we worry more about peak oil than peak freshwater.

It beggars belief that we can pollute our freshwater to such an extent given such a small population. The River Thames in London (population twice that of the whole of NZ) is cleaner than many of our rivers, such as the Manawatu, as evidenced by its Atlantic salmon runs and trout population upstream from Henley.

It's no good Norm Atkins denying dairying's guilt. Dairy pasture grown in adverse areas, such as the dry Canterbury Plains, only persists by virtue of massive irrigation and whether this irrigation water comes from the aquifer or direct from rivers matters little. Both will deplete rivers and so a pernicious cycle prevails – more irrigation, more dairy intensification, more pollution, less river water, increased pollutant concentrations.

Urban NZ is just as guilty, with town councils discharging sewage, part-treated at best, into rivers. Central government response to date has been a limp-wristed set of voluntary standards on freshwater management with an implementation date of 2030. Still, as long as the voting populace of New Zealand is happy to continue to subsidise polluters through income tax used to clean up the mess they leave then we get what we deserve.

David Haynes

President

New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers