

We don't want to be tenants in our own land

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NEW Zealand should copy other countries and refuse foreigners the right to own agricultural land.

"One does not sell the land people walk on."

So said the Lakota Sioux chief Crazy Horse in 1875, voicing an understanding of economics, nationalism, and a concern for the future of citizens and families that resonates to this day.

NZ First is opposed to the sale to foreigners of NZ land in general, and farmland in particular, for a number of reasons.

In stating that, it is important to understand what is meant by the term "foreigner". In this context it refers to any individual or corporate entity from any foreign country that intends to take ownership of property in this country without making a corresponding commitment to living here and becoming a citizen and contributing to society.

The realisable dream of owning a family farm – or a home and section, for that matter – and passing it on to the kids has been one of the cornerstones of the development of the egalitarian NZ nation since the first settlers arrived.

Larger farms, and with them corporate ownership, was always going to result

from the march of technology, which has allowed fewer people to manage greater acreages, and that was always going to make the dream further away for some.

The reality of competition from foreign buyers with bottomless chequebooks will make it impossible for most.

The death of that dream will take with it an essential part of the character of this country, and that the soul of our nation is worth preserving is a truth we hold to be self-evident.

The unpleasant prospect of New Zealanders becoming tenants in our own land is real.

The hard-nosed economic counter to the emotive argument is twofold. First, the sale of established, producing farmland to non-residents does not constitute investment, however much the promoters of neo-liberal theory and their acolytes would like the public to believe it does.

It is transfer of ownership and wealth, and that is all. Second, the repatriation of farming profit to non-resident foreigners has a negative impact on NZ's balance of payments, which increases foreign debt and interest rates and puts fiscal pressure on the Government and private businesses and individuals.

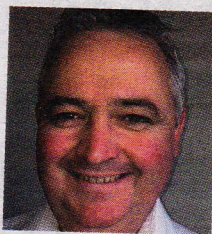
Foreign, non-resident owners, misleadingly described as investors, who redirect profit and revenue streams that remained previously in circulation in NZ to offshore economies create no benefit to anyone other than themselves.

If they are not – and for the most part they are not – adding skills, technologies, business expansion, jobs, value, export receipts or training, over and above what any NZ resident owner would bring they are not of any advantage to this country, and by diverting profit offshore they bring us material disadvantage.

NZ First is not opposed to suitably qualified migrants coming here and developing new farms from previously unproductive land, obtaining residency, and contributing to society and the economy, because that is investment that increases the value of our economy and the wealth of the nation.

We oppose the purchase of land in NZ by nationals of countries that do not allow our citizens and companies reciprocal rights of ownership.

Around the world more nations are restricting or refusing foreigners the right to own agricultural land, and we believe NZ should be among them.



Richard Prosser.

