



**Report**                    **04.682**  
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**Committee**            **Rural Services Wairarapa Committee**  
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## **Launch of Biosecurity New Zealand**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee about the new Central Government organisation, Biosecurity New Zealand, which has taken over responsibility for all Crown Biosecurity functions.

### **2. Background**

A Biosecurity Summit was held in Auckland on the 18 and 19 November 2004 to launch the new organisation responsible for Crown Biosecurity activities. The new organisation is titled Biosecurity New Zealand and will be domiciled within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The new agency replaces the MAF Biosecurity Authority.

The new agency reflects MAF's expanded mandate and responsibilities in the Biosecurity area. Under the Biosecurity Strategy, which the government accepted in 2003, MAF will assume overall accountability for New Zealand's Biosecurity efforts. This 'whole of system' leadership role encompasses economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes. It also includes international trade, and animal welfare responsibilities.

The changes will see Biosecurity New Zealand pick up responsibility from the Ministry of Fisheries for the management of risks to marine biosecurity. In addition, the coordination of six national pest management programmes is expected to pass from the Department of Conservation to the new agency in July 2005. The new agency will also have responsibility for the protection of wider environmental and human health biosecurity values and for ensuring greater responsiveness to Maori.

### **3. Biosecurity NZ Structure**

The new agency is lead by the Assistant Director General – Biosecurity (ADG). Barry O’Neal, previously head of the MAF Biosecurity Authority, has been appointed to the new position.

There are five Directors responsible to the ADG. They include –

- Director Pre Clearance
- Director Post Clearance
- Director Policy and Business
- Director Animal Welfare
- Director Compliance and Enforcement Group
- Director Incursion Investigations and Reference Laboratories

Regional Councils’ will be predominantly involved with the Post Clearance directory, headed by Peter Thomson, former head of the MAF Biosecurity Authority Forestry Division. This directory will be responsible for national internal surveillance and incursion response. They will also seek to coordinate existing and future pest management activities.

The agency has identified two priorities that directly affect regional councils. They include -

- strengthening their relationships with external stakeholders, including other agencies, local government and Maori; and
- expanding their pest management coordination and leadership roles.

Councils may also have roles in future incursion responses, and in helping develop the direction of future biosecurity research initiatives.

Direct linkages with regional councils will be via the Central / Regional Government Forum and the regional councils’ Biosecurity Managers Group.

### **4. The Future**

The new agency has a number of major issues to confront. Firstly, there is the need for a major cultural shift within MAF. Many of the other former Crown biosecurity agencies have voiced concerns over whether the new agency can extract itself from the perceived insular MAF culture and take on the ‘whole of system’ management responsibility.

The new agency also needs to build capability to enable it to manage the much wider biosecurity responsibilities it now has.

Biosecurity NZ has made a number of bold statements concerning ‘integrated biosecurity decision making’ and enhanced coordination of pest management activities with regional councils. They will now be under considerable pressure to deliver on these promises.

Regional council’s will seek to improve current relationships as it is clear that enhanced relationships and communication with the new agency should lead to improved internal biosecurity decision making and greater efficiencies in resource allocation. It is likely that changes to the Biosecurity Act 1993 will be considered to ensure that future biosecurity decision making can be made more effective.

## **5. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and the information noted.*

Report prepared by:

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