



Report 06.630
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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Land Management Funding – Public Meeting

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the public meeting held to discuss land management funding levels in light of the July 2006 storm damage, and to advise of the meeting outcomes.

2. Background

A public meeting was held in the Cody Lounge, Masterton Town Hall on Thursday 21st September 2006. The meeting was called by the Wairarapa branch of Federated Farmers following extensive damage to the Wairarapa hill country in the storms of 4-6 July 2006.

Federated Farmers organised the meeting and invited farmers, Regional Councillors, District Councillors, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and Ministry for the Environment policy representatives. The meeting was attended by 70 people with approximately 50 farmers making up the bulk of the audience.

Presentations were made by John Dalziell, Dave Cameron and Jim Weston, President of Federated Farmers. John Dalziell's presentation was similar to the ones he had made through the LTCCP submission process, and also to the Committee, on the need for additional funding for land management services over the next ten years.

3. Discussion

The meeting progressed through to a period of question and answers, interspersed with comments from members of the audience. The recent storms had brought a focus onto Greater Wellington's ability to supply enough poles to meet the increased demand from farmers. In response to an early question regarding funding and staff resources Ian Buchanan commented that Greater Wellington were going to address the long term sustainability of the hill country through an integrated catchment management

approach. The timeframe for developing the policy around this approach would take up to two years. Council would then be in a better position to determine resources and funding. He saw no reason why the farm planning and the planting of poles would not form an integral part of the programme.

Central government representatives discussed the context of the government's position on adverse events and in particular its response to Horizons Regional Council's Sustainable Land Use Initiative in which central government is being asked for \$40m over the next ten years. It clear that government are carefully considering what approach will be taken, however it was also clear that their involvement will be increased as a result of recent storm events e.g Manawatu, Tauranga and Whakatane.

4. Meeting Outcomes

The Mayor of Masterton, Mr Bob Francis was asked to summarise the discussions. He noted that Greater Wellington needed to provide adequate numbers of poles to meet reasonable needs in the short term. In regard to the longer term an ability to improve consultation with the hill country landowners was viewed as a necessary step. The formation of a consultation group would achieve this aim, it would also give Greater Wellington more confidence that a more formal partnership approach would eventuate.

Mr Francis concluded that the development of a more strategic approach should result in benefits for landowners and he was confident that landowner's needs would be well considered in the process.

5. Response to date

The formation of a hill country advisory group is strongly supported by staff. It may be prudent to align the terms of reference for this group with the Integrated Catchment Management strategy. However it is managed the group will provide a key part of an improved partnership approach to sustainable land management.

Staff have sourced additional poles from a commercial operation in Palmerston North that will secure enough poles to adequately meet client demand for the next four years. The supply is secured to October 2010, and is within existing budget provisions.

6. Communications

A number of articles on the shortage of poles to meet current demand have appeared in Wairarapa printed media in the past two months.

Reports of the meeting have appeared in the recent Rural Services Newsletter and further opportunities will arise once the ICM project is formalised within Council.

7. Recommendation

That the Committee

1. *Receive the report*
2. *Note the contents of the report.*

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