

PVGA Submitter appearance for PC1

Block 2

Wednesday 3rd July 2019

Kylie Faulkner – Acting President

Thank you for again for the opportunity to speak at the Block 2 Hearing. My name is Kylie Faulkner and I am the Acting President of the Pukekohe Vegetable Growers Association.

I am also a third-generation greens grower based at Bombay. Although our business only has one farm in the Waikato Region, I have a vested interest in the decisions that are made within PC1. An invisible line in the road between two regional councils can have a huge impact on the way we run our business. We are not the only Horticultural business facing this.

I would like to speak to you on a couple of topics today. But before I do, I want to talk about:

Sustainability

What do growers mean when we say we want to be sustainable?

Sustainability is a multi-faceted condition. It requires development across **environmental, social-cultural and economic concerns** in order to ***meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.***

Land Use change:

Commercial Vegetable Production is very different and is complex. The decisions made with regards to land use change in PC1 will either be an enabler or inhibitor to Commercial Vegetable Production.

Critically, the decisions here will have a major impact on New Zealand's ability to feed itself. We need to make provisions for vegetables to be able to be grown across all of NZ.

Recently KPMG produced its annual report, the Agri-Business Agenda. Part of this report highlighted that consumers are progressively eating for health. Healthy eating will become an absolute necessary as our health system cannot continue to fund the massive range of treatments now required as a consequence of poor diets and unhealthy foods.

Here Commercial Vegetable Production plays an important role to undertake the healthy, fresh food that New Zealanders need for their well-being.

At the Field Days last month, the Prime Minister stated that consumers were seeking 3 factors from the producers:

- 1) Being able to trust the food
- 2) Eating quality produce
- 3) For food to be sustainably grown

Land Use for CVP is assessing the risk and working out the best efficiencies for the business. Rotation of crops, variety spread, rotation with other growers, cover crops, geographic spread, seasonal spread, disease and pest management, nutrient management and water management.

Do you know that a grower cannot cultivate or work the land in Winter?

Ground preparation needs to be planned for in the Autumn and Spring months. This all requires strategic thinking – not on a yearly basis but on a 3-5-year plan.

During this hearing process growers have been highlighting the need for rotation for pest and disease management. Growers foster a deep relationship with their soils.

Soils are, the structural foundation for any food production system. To put it simply, if we don't look after our soils, we cannot produce **FRESH, HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL NEW ZEALANDERS at a reasonable price.**

Overseer

This system has its place in the right circumstances. However, in CVP we need a model with flexibility to work with our rotations of land and crop. As growers we need to have an alternative option.

There also needs to be clarity of the process and how to get approval of an alternative model.

As growers we are not just sitting back and waiting for Council to come up with solutions. The PVGA have been working with Horticulture New Zealand on the best and most manageable approach.

Not only looking at an alternative model for PC1 but looking at how we can incorporate into using across many councils.

Certified Schemes

New Zealand GAP Programme is a certified industry scheme that the majority of growers would follow.

It ensures the safe and sustainable production of fruit and vegetables in New Zealand. To be NZ GAP certified, growers must demonstrate their commitment and ability to meet sustainable and responsible practises.

To be able to sell to the Supermarkets, Processors, Food Service Restaurant chains and auction systems you **MUST** be NZ GAP certified.

NZGAP is constantly moving with the times and improving. We now have a social practise component and an environmental add on available.

The PVGA believe the Council should support existing Industry schemes. NZ GAP is audited via a third party. It can work to meet the requirements of Council.

We understand the Council will be looking for certainty around the Farm Environment Plans independent certification. This assurance and auditing could come from NZGAP.

As the integrated farm environment plans gain traction at central government level, it makes sense for all aspects of CVP management to be governed under this umbrella.

Growers are the most appropriate people to write their farm environment plans. Farm environment plans are used as part of our Risk Management.

We need flexibility to make decisions based on our risk management systems. Because the reality is for us the best of plans can change in 5 minutes. This can be because of the weather, staffing, machinery etc.

With tools and guides like NZ GAP, Codes of Practise for Nutrient Management, Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines and the Franklin Sustainability Project, growers are able to assess and make the right choices. We are always looking for ways to improve on what our environmental impact is.

Four contaminants

To be clear the PVGA and growers support the need to improve the water quality of the Waikato river.

The PVGA believes that all 4 contaminants need to be looked at. We need to take a more balanced, multi contaminant approach to effectively achieve the water quality targets.

A sub catchment approach may be the best way to do this.

Water quality is a high priority for growers. To be able to grow fresh and healthy food we must have access to clean water.

I believe this will be covered further in Block 3.

Back to my statement at the start:

Sustainability is a multi-faceted condition. It requires development across **environmental**, **social-cultural** and **economic concerns** in order to ***meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.***

You have an obligation to ensure the decisions made in this process will support the long-term sustainability of not just the Waikato, but New Zealand as a whole.

Thank you for your time.