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Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Waikato Regional proposed plan 1 stage.

We are in the Westcoast region farming at Mahoenui on a dry stock farm, farming 60% sheep and 40% cattle on a 475 ha hill country farm.

We do firmly believe in managing our land sustainability, and taking care of our waterways, like most other farmers.

Twenty five years ago we retired parts of our farm and planted areas in forestry and an assortment of other trees. We also installed three water systems that provide water to 90% of the farm.

The Issues we face are set out below:

1) Fencing of all permanent running water ways less than 25% slope

I agree in fencing off major water ways, but to fence off all permanently flowing waterbodies would make a lot of hillcountry farming unsustainable for reasons set out below:

- 1) The capital cost of installing all of these fences
- 2) The then huge cost of further water reticulation, and it would not be possible to get water to many areas of the farm.
- 3) The labour cost to maintaining and keeping current up to all these electric fences, and water systems.
- 4) Stock will not naturally move or flow when mustering. Adding a lot of time and stress to labour and stock.
- 5) You will create a lot worse erosion with cattle having to run down all of these ridges, rather than on the contour.
- 6) Stock will not graze your paddocks out evenly, that would then create major weed problems and stock performance would drop considerably.

The above will cost my farm an additional  $\frac{1}{2}$  labour unit. A reduction in stock performance and carrying capacity. It would make hillcountry like mine unsustainable.

(2)

## Nitrogen Management (Grandparenting approach)

I feel this is not a fair system to measure a farms nitrogen levels.

I would prefer a individual farm environment plan with the correct stocking rate and ratio of sheep to cattle, for varying classes of land. It would be a lot fairer and better for the environment

In our region the huge increase of cattle to the detriment of sheep over the past 10 years, largely due to the higher dairy pay out in recent years, has changed land usage. High stocking rates, and a lot of supplementary feed, fed out all year around.

- 1) With your proposed Grandparenting scheme the polluters will turn out to be the beneficiaries.
- 2) The farmers who where farming sustainably (not over stocked and running suitable stock classes) will be penalised.
- 3) They will not be able to increase stocking rates or cattle ratio to take advantage of the season and markets.
- 4) Those sustainable farmers will also be hit in the decrease in their land values when they come to sell, due to their reduced nitrogen cap.

There has not been enough science or research done to back up the 10% improvement in water quality in the time frame you have allocated. What then will be imposed upon farmers, another experient at the cost to our rural economies and communities. They are struggling at present with the downturn in commodity prices.

We have to compete on an overseas markets, no subsidies or handouts, totally exposed to market movements.

What ever policies that are bought in there will need to be a review process along the way, so there can be adjustments made.

(3)

If farmers and policy makers work collectively on this process something workable and good could come out of this process.

If you do not get buy in and belief from the greater majority of farmers this will not work.

I would be more than happy to discuss this submission with your pannel, at a later date.

Please contact me at,

Graeme Merchant  
725 Mangaorongo Rd  
Mahoenui 3978

graeme.merchant@xtra.co.nz

021 134 1672