

Tabled at hearing 28/3/2013

LWRP Submission from John Grigg No.190

Commissioners,

On reviewing my submission there are a number of points I wish to add.

Firstly an apology for my mistake in thinking that The Dunsandel Ground water users group had submitted. The driving force behind that group has moved on to Irrigation New Zealand and that is where my support should have gone.

Feeling that my inherent knowledge around how sheep behave around water wasn't scientific enough, I went looking.

I Googled "sheep behavior around water" and "sheep in water"

I learnt a number of interesting facts

- Sheep use smell to locate water

- Sheep and cattle tend to graze into the wind

- Sheep move more quickly toward water than away

I even found a YouTube video of "angry sheep pushes man into water"

In other words there were no articles I could find pertaining to this issue.

So I tried another tack and headed for some New Zealand knowledge as we are one of the premier countries with regard to sheep research.

I was pointed in the direction of AgResearch. The attached email from Keith Betteridge gives his impressions on the issue.

[Refer to attached email]

This confirms my own observations over the last 25 years on our property.

I would be interested to know where the Council obtained its expert and scientific opinion on the behavior of sheep around waterways. If this opinion was not substantiated by scientific back up then it is fundamentally flawed.

Sheep are also a useful tool to manage weeds and grass near waterways. They reduce the need for chemical control of weeds near waterways. With control by sheep and follow up spraying by farmers we can reduce the effect of nitrogen from Gorse and broom leeching into the river. As shown in the Photos in my submission.

I also submitted on the risk of fire. The recent Fire in the Southland Waituna Swamp illustrates the issue, and shows that even swamps are susceptible in a dry period. Long rank growth and a hot Canterbury Nor'wester are a recipe for a disaster. We are instructed by councils to mow our road sides and keep rank growth to a minimum. Sheep contribute in this respect and manage a lot of the risk by keeping the growth under control along waterways and beside swamps. I do not wish to lose the nationally significant area on our farm to a fire that could have been avoided by sensible management.

Again I will reinforce my view that I agree cattle, deer and pigs should be excluded from waterways, however I strongly feel that this should not apply to sheep. I trust that you as commissioners will take a serious look at this issue so we can move forward and continue to look after an area that I am passionate to keep and enhance for future generations.

The other area I submitted on was Nutrient budgeting.

I read a recent article on the proposal to have a permanent outlet from Lake Ellesmere to the sea. I was intrigued to see the reasons why the weed beds – aquatic macrophytes – had not established after the Wahine Storm. Opening the Lake sucked the water from the bottom of the Lake. That should be great for reducing the nutrient load of the Lake. But no! Aquatic macrophytes want a still and nutrient full environment in which to grow. Sounds very much like a good cropping farm to me! It also appears to be a Nutrient catchment zone that the weed beds need to survive.

Without human intervention the Lake would quietly fill up and flood the surrounding area until it spilt over the bar, taking the top of the lake out to sea while leaving the nutrients behind. So, because we as humans don't want the flooding of the lake we modify the environment by controlling the lake level artificially.

It is a manmade artificial environment.

I applaud the new proposal as it is a sensible option to take the lake as close as possible to its natural state without the flooding – namely a nutrient catchment zone. This will allow the weed beds to re-establish in a rich and fertile environment.

This is why I submitted that we need sensible regulations that adapt to scientific knowledge and understanding as they develop. In a previous submission to Ecan I commented that Farmers generally use best practice principals. This meant using DDT in the middle of last century to control grass grub. As the knowledge of DDT improved that practice ceased. This is why it is extremely important that you as commissioners put in rules and regulations that are sensible and adaptable to advancements in science and the overall understanding of the environment we live in.

Thank you for considering my submission. As you can see I am a passionate family farmer. Family farmers realize that we are custodians of the land and we endeavour to pass on the land in a better state to the next generation. To do this we need sensible regulation that balances the ability for farmers to achieve their goals, with the perceptions of non-farmers who come from a different understanding of the environment.

Schutz, Karin

8 March 2013 2:21 p.m.

To: j.grigg@haldonpastures.com

Grigg! Not Gregg....foreigners huh :)

Just following up on our phone conversation. I am sure Keith Betteridge at AgResearch in Palmerston North can help you more than I, his email is keith.betteridge@agresearch.co.nz and his phone number is 06 351 8053

I will also get back to you next week when I have spoken to some of our sheep people.

Have a great weekend,
Karin

Karin Schütz, PhD
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Betteridge, Keith

16 March 2013 12:53 a.m.

To: John Grigg

Hi John,

I am writing this from Japan where I am on a 2 week visit. I would very much like to be able to help you in a professional way, but I have only my impressions to pass on, in relation to sheep and waterways, as I only have reasonable data on cattle.

Sheep can get by on fewer drinks/day than cattle, and indeed if they are managed without water they can get by in most situations without water trough water, so I guess they would not go out of the way to go into streams for drinking.

I have never seen nor heard of sheep wallowing in water: deer yes and cattle rarely if ever, though they will stand in water

In my experience sheep do NOT stand in water

I am unaware of sheep eroding stream banks. In truly sheep-managed pastures, the turf is more dense than in cattle pasture, and thus resists treading damage to a greater degree than would a more open cattle pasture. Further, sheep have about half the loading (kg/m^2) than cattle so individually cattle would be much more damaging than sheep around stream banks.

I don't believe that sheep damage stream banks or stream beds, but I have no data to support this proposition.

The fact that there are no useful data available is in itself indicative that sheep cause little damage around unfenced streams.

Not particularly useful I'm afraid and I can understand why the question has been shuffled along to me. I don't know who to pass it to now!

Good luck and I hope this is of some use

Regards

Keith

From: John Grigg [mailto:]
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2013 10:31 AM
To: Betteridge, Keith
Subject: Hello Keith,

Karin referred me to you with regard to some queries I have.

I am trying to find out if there has been any research on the behaviour of sheep around waterways. I am a Sheep and cropping farmer on the Canterbury Plains. I have the Hororata River through the Farm, the Selwyn River on one side and numerous Spring feed streams on the farm. I have personal knowledge of our own sheep's behaviour but I need some scientific knowledge or at least an experts opinion on the drinking and general behaviour around water.

I understand that there has been work on Cattle and deer as they are more destructive.

The main issues I am trying to answer are:

- 1/ Do Sheep wallow in water
- 2/ Do sheep avoid water except when drinking
- 3/ Do Sheep erode the banks of rivers
- 4/ Except when pushed such as intensive break feeding of feed crops do sheep cause significant damage to river and stream banks.

I am putting forward a submission to Environment Canterbury at the end of the Month.

I would appreciate you ideas on this matter

Regards

John Grigg

Sent from Windows Mail

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