New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management (Submitter 116)

Additional Information for PLWRP Hearing, 28th March, 2013

1. Professional Capacity

NZIPIM acknowledge the time limitation of professionals who can complete the audits, environmental plans and nutrient budgets. For the estimated 14,000 nutrient management plans to be completed, at 5 hours per farm to be completed, 380 consultants are required (1,800 hours per year). We do not have this level of capacity in Canterbury.

A stocktake of current practitioners, and their capacity, and confirmation of resources to meet the PLWRP compliance is required.

2. Time Frames for Nutrient Management Plans

We note that the plan requires nutrient management plans be submitted by 31st August, following a 30th June year. This allows only 2 months to complete the task. This increases the number of consultants to 2,280 for 2 months work. With no work for the balance of the year. Changes to this component of the plan are essential to be workable.

We recommend at least 6 months be allowed for submission, or a rolling balance date. Eg, Dairy, 31st March. Arable, 31st March. Sheep and Beef, 30th Sept.

3. Training and Accreditation

We require resourcing to be allocated for up skilling farm management consultants, creating bridges to train young graduates to achieve credibility with farmers and consideration of multiple layers of practice change techniques to achieved desired outcomes. ECan can leverage their resources in this regard by collaborating with the industry good bodies, NZIPIM, Universities and CRI’s. We are encouraged by the collaboration to date, but it is still unclear on the requirements for training for existing practitioners.

Training for current practitioners that is realistic for time requirements and reflects their experience and expertise.

4. Frequency of Environmental Plans and Nutrient Budgets

If the intention of PLWRP is to be a collaborative approach, as professionals we need the time and resources to spend with clients to showcase integrated farm systems and best practice and how these impact their farm program, sustainability and profitability. This is a skill set that farm management consultants are trained in. For the PLWRP to be endorsed and adopted by farmers we need to have the time and resources to do this well. Just writing out reports and nutrient budgets without analysing system impacts and “what if” scenario’s will not educate farmers, but encourages a box ticking mentality. This will slow the adoption process of technology and management necessary to achieve the successful outcome of less nutrient losses from the Agricultural sector of Canterbury.

We suggest that formal, robust plans should be completed on a 2-3 year basis, not annually. Plans should be review annually by the farmers. Farmers should revise the plan if farmers if they are going to change their farm program which will may result in lifts of nutrient losses of more than 10 %, eg, audit self management for interim years, with formal auditable reports every 3 years. Farm programs typically will vary little on a season to season basis.

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