My name is Tom Hurst. I have been farming at Makikihi since 1963, that is 52 years ago. When I started farming 160ha was considered to be an economic unit. Sheep farming was the principle income but usually there was a paddock of wheat and barley and sometimes a paddock of ryegrass. A relatively simple farming system that provided a good living for farming families. Wool was the principle income followed by lambs and cropping. Over the next 50 years things have changed. The first big one was the UK joining the EU so our privileged market position was lost. The biggest changes started in the 1980s. Low prices with the removal of SMPs ie subsidies, droughts, high interest rates falling land prices was the creation of a perfect storm. Darwin said that only species that survive are those who adapt to the current environment. In this context the farmers that survived economically were those who adapted. Farms became bigger and intensification started with more cropping greater irrigation and land use change to dairy farming.

I was a member of the Waimate County Council from 1980 to 1989 and Chairman for the last 6 years. We were well aware of the plight that our ratepayers were under and for a number of years we held our rate rises to nil increase. In one three year period in the mid 80s there was only one dwelling consent issued by the County. Our population was declining and economically we were going back. The difference between then and now is huge. An indication of the difference is the dwelling consents issued in the last two financial years. Year ending June 14, 31 dwelling worth $8.11M. Total consents $38.16M. For year ending June 15, 26 dwelling worth $10.89M, total consents $19.89M.

Waimate District is a vastly different place than 30 years ago. Things are happening here. Employment opportunities, higher standards of living and a real good feeling about the area. Plan change 3 has the potential to stop development in its tracks. The is still a great deal of scope for development in farming in this area. Sheep have all but disappeared from lower areas in our district. It is easy to see why when the gross returns from three types of farming systems are compared. Sheep farming will return gross $12 to $1500 per ha.

- Cropping $3 to $4000 per ha
- Dairy at $4.50 pay out $5.5K to 6.5K per ha
- at $5.50 pay out $6.6K to $8.25K per ha

Much as some people would like to return to the so called good old days it is not even worth considering. Waimate District is just like many areas in this country that have adapted and changed and has provided to all people and increased standard of living to our total population.

How many New Zealanders would have gone to the Rugby World Cup Final if our standard of living was at the 1980s level?

The effects of plan change 3 on The Hurst Farm at Makikihi

Our farm is 700ha. We have four different soil types. There are three different contours Flats, medium and steep downs. Aspect on the steeper country goes from north to south to east. We grow 12 different crops. Half our cropping ground is irrigated. We have three different livestock systems. Sheep, dairy heifers, winter grazing of dairy cows. We grow winter feed crops for dairy grazers. We also have forestry blocks. If that is not enough variables we live in a climate that has
large swings in rain fall patterns from year to year. Under plan change 3 we are expected to have nutrient requirements for all these different situations. This will be a task that will be impossible to achieve. If there are going to be restrictions on nutrient use they must allow for continued development. Also they must be easy to understand and have a buy in from the farming community. The proposed plan does none of this I suggest you go back to the drawing board. Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission

2015

Tom Hurst  4th Nov

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