BEFORE THE	Canterbury Regional Council
IN THE MATTER OF	the Environment Canterbury (Temporary Commissioners and Improved Water Management) Act 2010
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	Submission and Further Submission on Proposed Plan Change 5 to the Proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NEIL ROBERT CAMPBELL ON BEHALF OF THE COMBINED CANTERBURY PROVINCES OF FEDERATED FARMERS OF NEW ZEALAND

Dated 22 July 2016

Introduction

1. My name is Neil Robert Campbell. I farm at 550 Middle Valley Road, Fairlie in partnership with my wife Lyn. We are located in the upper Opihi Catchment currently zoned Orange (at risk).

2. My submission relates to the Plan Change 5 limitation of 20 hectares of winter grazing of cattle before requiring a consent, where winter grazing is defined as break feeding of in-situ forage crops or brought in supplementary feed.

The farm and its operation

3. We bought our original 520 hectare (450 ha effective) property in 1993. The property was at the time farmed extensively, selling store cattle and lambs. Gorse was encroaching on to productive land. In 2003 an adjoining 247 hectares was purchased adding a tremendous balance by being safe winter country, but summer dry.

4. Our property on the Middle Valley floor rises from 328 meters above sea level through to 595 meter above sea level with Spur Road as the back boundary.

5. The soils are all clay-based being Claremont silt loams in the valley to Kakahu Clay downs as you rise up.

6. The farm's Overseer-estimated N Baseline is 11 kg N per annum.

7. Approximately 50 hectares of exotic trees have been planted (Pines and Oregons) on gorse-infested faces. Since the removal of feral goats we have native bush regenerating in some gullies and we have been developing native plantings around a pond used as a sediment trap off our deer block.

8. To maximise production and to work with the strengths and weaknesses of our property a diverse mix of livestock and crops is produced.

9. Our biggest climatic threats are drought and extreme snow events. There is no water available for irrigation and the topography is also limiting.

10. What we choose to produce is based on soil type and altitude. There is a 100-hectare autumn sown arable crop on the Claremont silt loams on the Valley floor (most drought

prone) through to 500 breeding hinds on the highest and coldest part of the property (not fawning until November, to fit with late spring growth at that altitude).

11. Through the mid altitude part of the property deer are fattened, dairy heifers grazed and a mixture of trading stock are run. The type of stock depends on margins, type of feed available and expected weight gain.

Winter grazing

12. Throughout my 41 years of farming there have been many developments, technology, genetics etc. Some developments like centre-pivot irrigation revolutionised irrigation making it economical to put small regular amounts of water on.

13. A plant that has come into popular use for supplementary feeding of livestock in the last 5 years is fodder beet. I believe this plant offers profound long-term benefits to the class of country we farm. In 5 years the area grown in New Zealand has gone from 0 to 50,000 hectares.

14. Benefits of fodder beet:
    a. Produces good tonnages of dry matter in dry seasons, with a 20 tonne dry matter per ha average over the last 2 years.
    b. Drought Proof.
    c. Can be eaten in early autumn to late November (it holds its quality).
    d. Long harvest option (April/May to November).
    e. Grows well with limited N Inputs.
    f. Can be lifted and sold.
    g. Good live weight gains can be achieved especially cattle.
    h. No wastage, bulbs don't rot in the ground.
    i. Butterfly resistant and insect tolerant.

15. Disadvantages:
    a. Expensive to establish - $2,300 per hectare.
    b. A three-week transition to adjust cattle diet properly to avoid gut damage and achieve maximum weight gain.
    c. If cattle removed for more than 3 days they need readjusting. .

16. This plant has given us the ability to produce stock for sale on the shoulders of the season, attracting premiums, spreading the kill season of our processors and in the case of lamb, keeping chilled product on the shelf 12 months of the year.

17. Fodder beet is planted in September through to November and is not usually grazed until April/May at the earliest, so it is along time in the ground.

18. We typically grow 60 ha of fodder beet per annum, along with 10 ha of kale. 90% of the fodder beet is break-fed between 1 May and 30 Sept. 70% is fed to cattle and the rest is fed to deer or sheep. The kale is typically fed to sheep.

19. Depending on stock trading options, particularly buy-price, no decision is made until the last minute about what we purchase e.g. beef, lamb or deer. With the high cost of crop establishment it is imperative we utilise this feed resource wisely.

20. Any impediment, such as the need for a resource consent and being confined to our N baseline is potentially a severe restriction. It would affect the way we feed our crop and opportunities would be lost.

21. While fodder beet offers some resilience to drought our other major threat, snow, is another issue. Managing stock when there is a snowstorm involves moving them to the lowest parts of the property where there is less depth of snow and safer vehicle access to bring supplementary feed to animals. The 20 ha winter grazing threshold is likely to be exceeded under these conditions.

22. In these circumstances, time is of critical importance and the welfare of our stock is paramount. In addition, with a heavy snowfall, power and communication is usually lost. Requiring a consent under these circumstances is ludicrous!

Conclusions

23. We typically grow 60 ha of fodder beet annually (along with 10 ha of kale), 90% of which is break fed between 1 May and 30 Sept. 70% is fed to cattle and the rest is fed to deer or sheep. We have an Overseer N Baseline estimate of 11 kg/ha/yr.

24. We are at the low end of the N discharge range. Surely there is no environmental benefit in requiring us to obtain a land use consent. In addition, having to adhere to our N baseline would impose significant constraints on our farming operation.

25. Restricting the area of winter feed to 20 hectares is draconian to say the least. If I have 100 hectares total I can winter cattle on 20 hectares or 20% of the farm, but if I have 700 hectares I can only winter cattle on 20 hectares or 2.9% of the farm. A proportional approach (relating permitted area of winter grazing to total area) would make more sense for large properties.

26. The current proposal has the potential to significantly reduce land values on large titles because that land would now have limited production options.

27. Farmers, by implementing good management practice GMP and having a farm environmental plan FEP in place, are in the right place to minimise environmental risks.

Neil Campbell
22 July 2016