

Tabled at hearing 18/09/14  
Fed Farmers

**Hearing Statement of Mr Ian Upston**

**Hearing of Submissions on Variation 1 to the Proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan**

**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2014**

**Submitter ID: 52237**

My name is Ian Upston

Today I will speak in support of both my own submission and the submission of the North Canterbury Province of Federated Farmers.

I farm a 400 acre beef farm just South of the Selwyn River near Dunsandel.

My first point is that I am very concerned about the cost of compliance with regulations introduced as part of Variation 1. I understand that I will be expected to prepare a farm environment plan (which will be subject to audit) and that I will have to have an Overseer budget done every year. I am very worried about how much this will cost, given the modest returns on my farm. I will also have a sense of constantly being under unnecessary surveillance.

I understand that the higher a farm is leaching the more you are going to be looked at, but I think this is too much for me and if this is what it has come to I would shut up shop. I am 65 years old this year, but I am still in good health and might farm for a few more years, but with all the stress of dealing with Variation 1 it would be pointless to continue.

My second point is that I run a very low-input farm system, that I do not think puts a lot of pressure on the land.

In my father's time, we put on large amounts of fertiliser and farmed quite intensively, but following very difficult times with high interest rates, droughts, and withdrawal of agricultural subsidies in the 1980s, I have followed a policy of minimal inputs with no re-grassing and very low fertiliser use. I have one paddock which has not been cultivated since 1953. No fertiliser has been applied on my farm since the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1992.

Despite what many would see as an unconventional farm situation, I have continued to farm successfully. I currently carry 500 head of cattle and regularly achieve good gradings for weight and animal condition at the time of sale.

I use ryegrass straw as a supplement over winter. In a dry autumn when I cannot save pasture, I might spend up to \$55,000 on supplements, but in a typical year the cost of supplements is closer to \$5000 to \$10,000. This straw brings large amounts of carbon and organic matter to my farm system; and I can see the effects of this in my soil. Earlier this year I had soil assessments done to see whether my farming regime had resulted in nutrient or mineral deficiencies, which found very high organic matter levels, including high fungal

and worm content. I think this high level of soil health reflects how I farm, with low inputs other than additions of carbon and organic matter (as straw).

I do have a small area of irrigated land, which makes up about 20% of my property and gets me through dry periods at low cost.

My third point is that I am very concerned about having to keep stock out of watercourses all the time.

There are intermittently watercourses on my property, which dry are dry most of the time and can remain dry for 2-3 years at a time, but will run when the Selwyn River gets high. These watercourses need to be able to be kept clear of vegetation and weed. The only way that I can afford do this with the current cost structures of farm system is through grazing, stock have got to be able to get into these streams at dry times to clean them out. Due to the flat nature of the land, and the fact that I farm cattle, it is feasible to run a 'hot wire' (temporary fence) to keep cattle out of the streams when they do have water in them.

I know that if I don't do this these channels start to fill up and my grazing land is not longer able to drain properly and turns into a bog, because that it is the state that it was in when my family started farming the property. I do not think it would help at all if these areas were blocked up with planting and I cannot see that there is the same environmental gain as could be achieved by excluding stock from a permanently running stream.

Ian Upston

September 2014

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↑ Upston

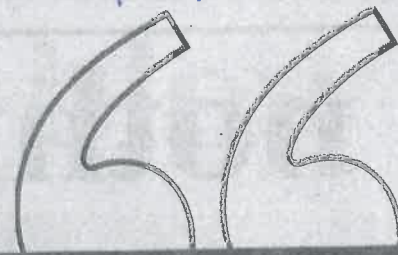




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# Perspective



**HE SAYS:**

Frogs, locusts and lice still to come.  
Wayne Reid

THE PRESS, Friday, March 7, 2014

A14

## I warned ECan and city council about flooding

Wednesday's flood in Christchurch was not due to a one-in-100-year storm. It was due to a one-in-five-year storm, so expect the same, on average, every five years.

The reasons for this flood are:

- Some areas have sunk due to earthquake action.
- Some streams and drains have silted up and not been cleaned out.
- Some pumps have not been updated to cope - for example, the screw pumps that kept the Aylesford area dry for 30 years.
- More land upstream has been subdivided and built on.
- People are replacing gardens and lawn with pavers and asphalt.

□ The Christchurch City Council's Parks and Waterways Administration team's philosophy that waterway landscaping is a top priority and drainage is the lowest priority. Planting in waterway and flood channels looks good, but increases flooding.

□ The city council philosophy that more and more land can be subdivided and more and more land built on, by creating retention basins rather than widening streams and rivers. This would be fine if rainfall behaved as in theory. Unfortunately, it doesn't. It is a recipe for flooding as this year and earlier floods showed. Each storm overloads some basins and

yet others remain empty. Is this bad design or nature not conforming to the modelling?

□ The wish by city council staff to naturalise streams and rivers so that they revert back to their natural form. Unfortunately, their natural form was more like swamps than waterways. The first settlers widened the rivers and streams to drain Christchurch. Today, the city council dumps shingle into the streams and rivers to narrow them to make maintenance easier.

ECan handed over all drainage in the city to the city council a couple of years ago. This has enabled the city council to do

drainage work without having to get a resource consent. This prevents any scrutiny of their schemes.

Long before this, ECan and the city council came up with Variation 48. This was an amendment to the City Plan, whereby the council combats flooding by declaring flood management areas where new buildings have to be built up to one metre or so higher than their neighbours.

This enabled the city council to continue upstream development and yet state they are mitigating flooding. Fine for new housing. Tough for everyone else.

I have been to numerous hearings and even the Environment Court to warn the city council and ECan of the serious flooding that would result from their philosophy.

I don't need to warn any more. The results are obvious to the citizens of Christchurch.

The only ones who don't know what to do now are the city council and ECan.

Ideology has failed. Sound engineering and common sense are what is required.

**WARREN LEWIS**  
Chartered professional engineer  
Lewis and Barrow Ltd  
Christchurch

I.A. UPSTON  
WILLOWBURN FARM

- 1990-91 year most recent fertilizer application (superphosphate) \$1280 + spreading cost \$80 on oat crop.
- 1986-87 last year pasture seeds purchased \$792 fertilizer nil. no recall slowdown with cocksfoot
- 1984-85 \$1317 fertilizer \$586 pasture seeds ~~regeneromics hit~~
- 1983-84 \$1317 fertilizer pasture seeds nil.
- 1982-83 fertilizer nil \$105 pasture seeds
- 1981-82 fertilizer \$603 pasture seeds nil.
- 1980-81 fertilizer \$355 pasture seeds \$195
- 1979-80 fertilizer \$676 pasture seeds \$191
- 1978-79 fertilizer \$745 pasture seeds \$410

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WILLOWBURN FARM

STRAW & HAY PURCHASES

- 2012-13 104 Big rounds meadow hay  
69 Big square " (173 total) big bales
- 2011-12 84 big rounds eaten hay  
6 " "  
200 big square r' grass straw  
22 " " (312 total) big bales
- 2010-11 39 big rounds X BARRY W  
36 " ~~LANCASTERS~~  
42 big bales  
42 " PNA  
36 Widdelburn (195 total) big bales
- 2009-10 Nil for year
- 2008-9 821 big squares LANCASTERS  
162 Widdelburn  
\$5000 molassis (983 total) big bales