

**From:** [Lionel Hume](#)  
**To:** [Plan Hearings](#)  
**Subject:** PC7 evidence statements  
**Date:** Friday, 17 July 2020 1:28:56 pm  
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Dear Tavisha

### **Proposed Plan Change 7 to the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan**

Attached are 3 hearing evidence statements on behalf of the Combined Canterbury Provinces of Federated Farmers of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

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**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 7 to the Proposed  
Canterbury Land and Water  
Regional Plan

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BRENDAN CAIRD ON BEHALF OF THE COMBINED  
CANTERBURY PROVINCES OF FEDERATED FARMERS OF NEW ZEALAND**

Dated 17 JULY 2020

## **Introduction**

1. My name is Brendan James Caird, director of BJ Caird Ltd, which owns and operates a 191ha effective dairy platform at 1026 Seadown Road, Timaru, and a 90ha support block at 60 Georgetown Road, Temuka.
2. The milking platform is situated alongside the south bank of the Opihi river and the support block is on the north side between the Opihi and the Temuka rivers.
3. My submission relates to the proposed objectives and rules for the Mātaitai Zone in Plan Change 7 of the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan.

## **The farm and its operation**

4. I was raised on a small sheep and crop farm at St Andrews, south of Timaru. Upon leaving school I obtained a job on a dairy farm near Temuka, achieving ownership of our first farm in 1998. This farm was sold in 2008.
5. We bought our current dairy farm in 2007, which comprises 135ha of land, of which 117ha is farm-productive (some of the title is in the riverbed area). We milked 480 cows for the first three years (stocking rate of over 4 cows/ha) and since then added a 34ha lease in 2010, 12ha purchase 2011 and, last year, we purchased a final 32ha to give a total 213ha with 191.5ha effective.
6. We now milk 650 cows at peak with a stocking rate of 3.4 cows/ha. At dry-off the cows (less culls) are trucked to the support block for winter. The 90ha support block was added to the business in 2008 (65ha owned and 25ha leased) and has been grazing 190 calves from weaning to 22 months of age. Up to 480 cows are also wintered on this block.
7. I operate the support block and office, and we employ 3 full-time staff with several casual staff at various stages of the season. Two of our three full-time staff members have families, all of them are New Zealanders, and they live on our farm.
8. We recognise the need to farm in a more environmentally friendly manner, and we have implemented many measures, which I discuss below, to ensure we farm in an efficient and environmentally responsible way.

## Environmentally sustainable farming

9. Between 2010 and 2013, we changed our irrigation system from roto rainers to centre pivots. A larger 100 ha pivot runs on the Variable Rate Irrigation system (VRI) and the soil over most of the farm has been mapped using electro-magnetic induction technology, to identify the various soil moisture-holding capacities across the farm. This enables the pivot to apply varying amounts of water, depending on where the soil is located and its particular needs, to meet plant needs while minimising drainage and loss of nutrients.
10. We have a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) through Opuha Water which has increased our environmental awareness, and our FEP is audited as part of our consent to farm application.
11. We have been using soil moisture tapes for around 10 years to determine irrigation needs. We do not apply any nitrogen fertiliser between 1st May and mid to late August; it is applied little and often by a contractor, with GPS and proof of placement technology. *N Protect* is now the main fertiliser we apply, which is a product that contains a urea inhibitor, thereby reducing gaseous nitrogen losses (and it costs \$50 per ton more than urea).
12. Soil testing of every paddock has been carried out in three of the last five years, while we monitor paddocks in the other 2 years. We use a farm advisor, who visits every month, to set and monitor a plan each season to optimise supplement feed use and cow productivity.
13. We use mostly fodder beet for autumn and winter feed, which is low in protein, so there is less nitrogen excreted in the cows' urine. We grow oats after winter feed to help absorb surplus nitrogen and to reduce N loss. We reduce our stocking rate sooner in the Autumn by culling cows earlier.
14. In 2010 we pulled out a lot of willows that were choking the creek and a wetland area. We have since been planting 200-300 native plants per year alongside the creek and in the wetland area. We have also more recently fenced off and retired several lower-lying areas on both properties that hold water when wet.
15. In 2013 we built a 50-day effluent storage pond with a solids separator and increased the consented effluent area to cover the whole farm. Effluent is now pumped out

monthly through pivots at low application rates of 3-5 ml when soil moisture conditions are ideal for the application.

16. In 2018 we increased the length of a culvert under the track near the dairy shed so any runoff can be diverted away from the creek. As soon as taking over any new property we have always fenced off any unfenced waterways.
17. In 2017 we entered the Dairy Business of the Year Awards and won the National Environmental Award for the Lowest Environmental Impact as well as the Best Canterbury Farm Performance.

### **The proposed Mātaitai Zone**

18. Both properties are completely within the proposed Mātaitai zone. While we have a consent to farm, and we will be required to farm at the GMP N loss rate this year, we are concerned will be impacted by being within this new zone when we have to renew our consent.
19. I believe there are potential risks that were not clearly considered or identified by ECan; for example:
  - This zone could affect land values as any property with further restrictions or compliance will become less attractive for potential purchasers, and
  - Farmers would be wary to invest in technology and infrastructure which can have positive environmental impacts if further constraints mean our business is not so viable.
20. If we operate within our consent, and at best practice, this should be sufficient to show our commitment to safeguarding the land, without the need for further scrutiny and extra compliance/consenting costs that no doubt will arise from being within the proposed zone. In particular, the requirement to implement methods to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on freshwater mātaitai.

### **Conclusions**

21. We have heavily invested in, and committed to, sustainable and environmentally sound farming. I think that if you already need a consent to farm, run efficient irrigation and

meet all other existing and proposed rules, there should be no further regulatory uncertainty or restrictions based on being within a Mātaitai zone.

22. More consent requirements as part of the Mātaitai zone was a complete surprise to us. It has added stress and uncertainty as to what this will mean to our farming operation. From what I am aware, local runanga members have been reluctant to communicate with anyone other than ECan through this whole plan change 7 process.



Brendan Caird

17 July 2020