

NPCA Newsletter



National Pest
Control Agencies

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NPCA provides a forum for agencies and stakeholders involved in vertebrate pest control to co-operatively address industry issues, share information, develop best practice and promote training/professional development. Any individual or organisation engaged in the vertebrate pest control industry is eligible for membership.

The NPCA is run by a management committee of six people and a National Co-ordinator.

Management committee:

Bill Martyn, (Chairperson), *Local Government New Zealand*

Brent Rohloff, *Animal Health Board*

Bruce Warburton, *Landcare Research*

Martin Brenstrum, *Contractor*

Sherman Smith, *Ministry for Primary Industries*

Euan Kennedy, *Department of Conservation*

National Coordinator: Maurice Kennedy

FROM THE CHAIR: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we get ready for our 2012 AGM, it is timely to remember that this time last year we were preparing to vote on some major membership changes to NPCA's constitution, which led to the Rules being changed at a Special General Meeting in June this year. The changes will help NPCA to prepare for the future.

Just what that future will look like will be influenced by the outcomes of the Toolbox project being led by the Ministry for Primary Industries. Future options on how to establish and deliver best practice in the pest management sector are being considered currently (see page 2). This very much impacts NPCA, given that much of its work is around best practice guidance in vertebrate pest management.



At a recent meeting, the management committee agreed that NPCA would need to change and grow if it were to have any significant role in the future toolbox. There is no doubting that NPCA has developed some tried and proven processes in best practice, in project management and in publishing for the pest industry. Its role transcends all agencies and interest groups and that has been fundamental to its well-respected reputation and potential to widen its scope. Bringing NPCA's tested processes to the plant pest sector would, for instance, gain early wins for the toolbox project.

I have been heartened by the growing support for NPCA, particularly from community groups, and we look forward to increasing our service and value to our members and to the public.

Bill Martyn

NPCA Chairperson

NOTICE OF AGM — DECEMBER 7TH

Hear about NPCA's work in the past year and have a say on plans for the 2013 year.

When? 11.00 am - 1.00 pm, Friday 7 December 2012.

Where? Board Room, Animal Health Board, Level 9, Guardian Trust House, 15 Willeston Street, Wellington

RSVP: So we can confirm numbers for lunch after the meeting, please RSVP [npca@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nzca@xtra.co.nz) by Friday 30 November, 2012.

Business: Minutes of 2011 AGM, reports, membership fees, programme of work, elect two management committee members, general business.

MEMBERSHIP RULES UPDATED

At a special general meeting on 22 June 2012, NPCA members voted to change its membership rules, in particular:

- four membership categories: principal, organisation, ordinary and employee:
- rules to deal with situations where there is no consensus, although consensus remains preferred.

The changes were made to better align NPCA's membership, voting and funding rules with its wider role in New Zealand's vertebrate pest control sector, which has evolved over the years.

In particular, the changes addressed principal membership and funding of NPCA's administration. Principal members under the new rules have ten votes each. At present there are two principal members, AHB and Local Government. The Department of Conservation now contributes governance and technical advice.

"The gate is left open for any organisation to become a principal member in the future," says NPCA Chair, Bill Martyn. "The measures are a transitional step towards the resolution of NPCA's role within the Ministry for Primary Industries 'toolbox' initiatives.

PEST MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX PROJECT

A working party is investigating the benefits and costs of setting up an industry-wide toolbox of pest management information and best practice guidance.



The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is leading the project, as part of its implementation of the 'Pest Management National Plan of Action' which was launched in March 2011. The toolbox would be a central repository available for all agencies, community groups and the general public to use.

The working party, representing MPI, Local Government New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, the Animal Health Board, Iwi and Weedbusters has been working on options and will put these to an Establishment Group, which will decide on what, if anything, is implemented.

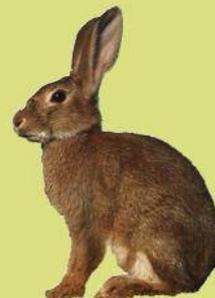
Amongst the decisions yet to be made is whether the toolbox will be merely an information portal or whether it will have a manager and team that will review and create best practice guidelines. Funding is also a big question.

It is hoped that most of these fundamental questions will be answered by the end of this year.

UPDATE ON RABBITS

MODIFIED MCLEAN SCALE

Members of the Rabbit Control Group (RCG) agreed at their October 2012 meeting to standardise the wording of the Modified McLean Scale.



The scale is the tool councils use to determine rabbit abundance in their regulatory role of ensuring landowners control rabbit numbers to required levels.

Slight differences in wording had evolved in various regions but these have now been resolved and a single national standard agreed that provides consistent guidance. For citing purposes, it will be known as the Modified McLean Scale (2012).

The changes include a reduction from ten to eight levels of rabbit abundance as well as amended definitions of the levels — in particular, levels 3 to 5, the levels where regulators and landowners most need to make judgments about compliance and the need to take rabbit control action.

The Modified McLean Scale (2012) will soon be incorporated into an updated edition of the NPCA best practice guideline publication *A5, Pest Rabbits Monitoring and Control*. In the meantime it can be downloaded from the NPCA home page at (www.npca.org.nz).

RABBIT WEBSITE

The RCG also agreed to progress the concept of a dedicated rabbit control website. The intention is to bring all rabbit-related technical and research data into one site and develop it as an operation and resource tool for property owners, regulators and researchers.

One feature will be to include a calendar of operations that end users can use to check timelines and technical detail.

NPCA is negotiating with the Ministry for Primary Industries on providing services for the development and ongoing maintenance of the rabbit website.

The website will be developed in stages under the RCG umbrella with the aim of getting a basic website up and running quickly. A steering group will provide oversight and governance and subsequent stages will be developed as appropriate to RCG and user group need and for integration with social media.

JOINT NETS2012 WELL LAUNCHED

NETS2012 (National Education and Training Seminars) was the first where NPCA and the NZ Biosecurity Institute combined forces — and it was a success.

“It was particularly pleasing to see registrations, at a total of 230, up 30% on what had been planned,” says Maurice Kennedy, NPCA National Co-ordinator.

“A number of agencies said that having a one-stop shop covering aquatic, weed and animal pests made it easier to decide which staff to send, as evidenced by the increase in numbers. It affirms last year’s decision to combine NPCA’s long-running technology transfer conferences with the NETS training seminars.”

The expanded vertebrate pest content in the NETS2012 programme, together with field trips and workshops on new toxins and monitoring, attracted good numbers of animal pest control practitioners. Delegate evaluations confirmed high levels of participant satisfaction.



New Zealand Biosecurity Institute President, Pedro Jenson, left, and National Pest Control Agencies Chair, Bill Martyn, welcome participants to NETS2012.

NETS2013

The precedent has now been set for NETS events to be the comprehensive annual event for practitioners involved with *all* aspects of animal, aquatic and terrestrial plant pest management.

Planning for the NETS2013, which will be held in Shantytown on the West Coast, is already underway. NPCA committee members are attending the planning meetings to build upon this year’s event and ensure that the animal pest component will be interesting and relevant to practitioners.



Keith Broome receives the 2012 Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy from Peter Nelson’s wife, Sheryl Gregory, at the NETS2012 dinner. The Trophy is awarded annually for achievement in vertebrate pest management within New Zealand. Keith is a Technical Advisor Threats in the Hamilton office of the Department of Conservation.

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME TO SNAP A STOAT!



Don Lang, a biology teacher and keen wildlife photographer, snapped this stoat at a fleeting chance encounter near Porirua in 2009.

“I was out that day with binoculars and a couple of cameras around my neck watching for sea/harbour birds and noticed something quickly disappear under the bank of the Horokiri stream off Gray’s Rd as I crossed the foot bridge. I stopped and raised the camera just in case; a few seconds later the stoat burst across the stream - and was gone.”

The image has been well used since for education and pest control advocacy by DOC, Forest & Bird and for student resources at Te Kura (the Correspondence School) where Don teaches.

MACHINE HYGIENE FORUM ESTABLISHED

FORUM'S FIRST MEETING

NPCA facilitated the establishment of the Machine Hygiene Forum through a meeting held in Palmerston North on 4th September.

NPCA Chairman, Bill Martyn, said several councils and the Ministry for Primary Industries had already undertaken a good deal of work.

"The forum enabled the major stakeholders to get together early to agree on some standards to develop a nationally consistent approach. The meeting was a good opportunity to put all the ideas together and cherry-pick the best."

The project's success will depend on machinery users such as contractors, and especially farmers and growers, accepting and applying it. It will start small with the voluntary code initially targeted at agricultural contractors for testing and development before being adapted for other industry groups.

"The code is to be a high level document that states what should be done (outcomes) but not how to do it," Bill says. "We are not trying to tell people how to clean their equipment; they know that best. We simply state to what standard it should be cleaned and when."

Educational promotion will also be planned - perhaps along the lines of "the farm gate is your Biosecurity Border".

NPCA will manage the project, publish the code and help develop an accreditation scheme to support its implementation. Meanwhile, contractor/researcher Diederik Meenken has already completed a first draft.

Federated Farmers, an important stakeholder in the forum, is already advocating recognition of the need for machine hygiene, as the following editorial by Mark Ross shows.

SLOWING PEST SPREAD

By Mark Ross, Federated Farmers



A key part of New Zealand's biosecurity relies on domestic pathway management - slowing down or restricting the spread of pests to other parts of the country.

When moving from one place to another, a number of "hitch-hikers" can come along for the ride, on cars, machinery, sports equipment or even clothes.

To find measures to decrease pests being transported on large machinery, the National Pest Control Association (NPCA) has established the "Machine Hygiene Forum".

This group involves regional council biosecurity managers, the Ministry for Primary Industries, rural contractors and Federated Farmers targeting rural contractors and large machine operators moving from region to region.

A recent study showed a contaminated machine is likely to have at least one hitch-hiker pest on board at any given time. Soil on one bulldozer in Canterbury contained seeds from 73 different weed species.

Prevention is the best medicine. Simple hygiene steps, such as removing visible soil or plant material before sending machines to new locations, go a long way to solving the problem.

The didymo project is a prime example. The simple message of "check, clean, dry" successfully raised the profile of didymo and minimised spread.

Federated Farmers has emphasised the importance of keeping any rules voluntary, with the industry self-managing implementation. The intention is to initially test the model in one industry, then extend to others.

[First printed in *The Northern Advocate*, 19.12.2012]



NZQA REVIEW: PEST MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATIONS

A small stakeholder group has been working to progress the New Zealand Qualifications Authority review of pest control qualifications. Chaired by Steve Ellis (Taranaki Regional Council) the group has included DoC, AHB and Regional Councils.

A draft overall structure has been produced (see Figure 1 below), which has grouped the national qualifications for pest management training into three levels covering vertebrate pests, plant pests and general skills required for all pest control work.

Provision has been made to allow for small changes / updates in training course content to be made, through

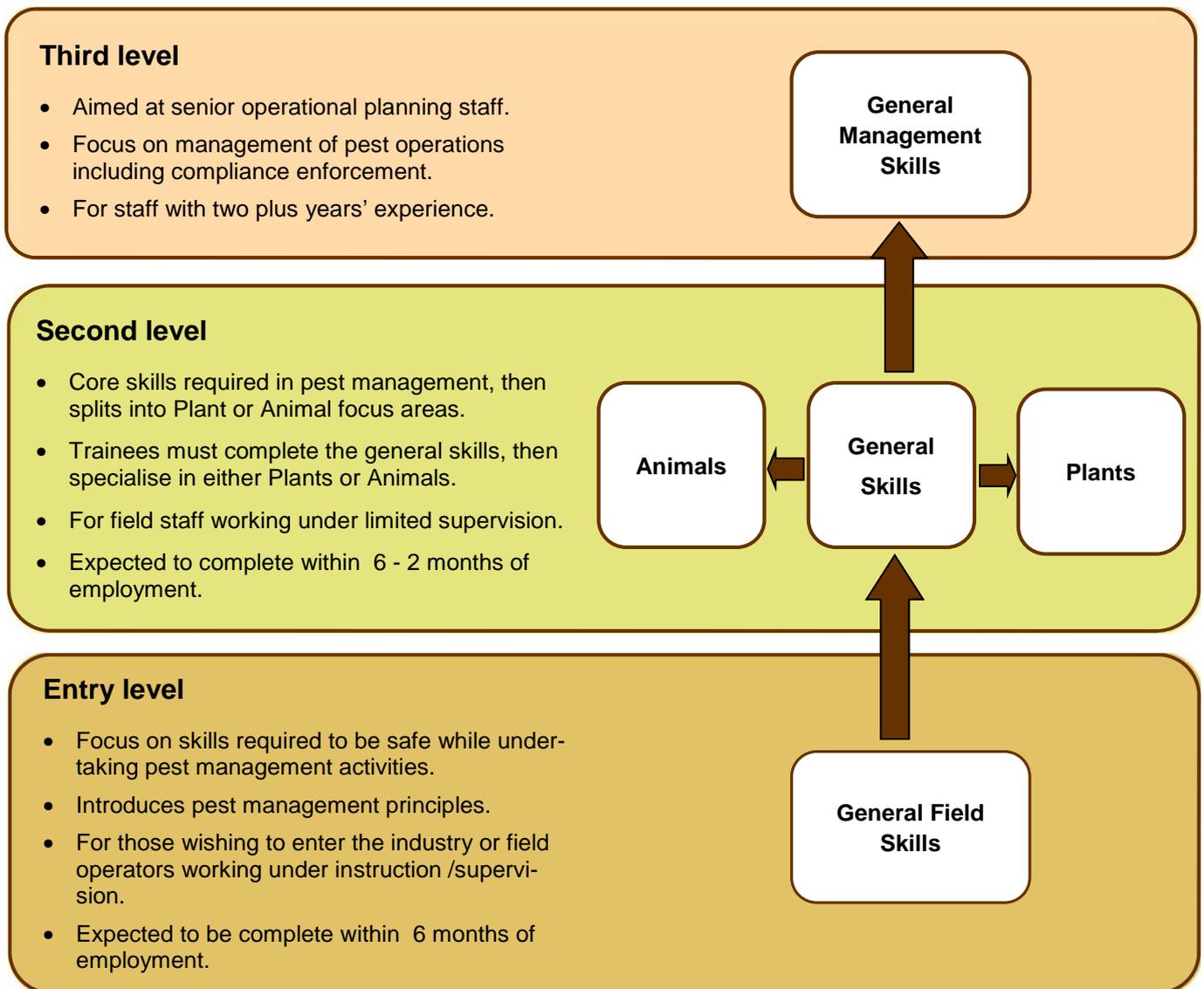
NZQA, without having to change the qualification itself, as previously.

Next, is to get agreement on the overall approach from all industry stakeholder groups, before NZQA approval and preparation of the course detail and graduate outcome statements for each of the qualifications.

The qualifications will be administered by the Primary Industry Training Organisation (PITO) (formerly AgITO and Hort ITO).

Figure 1: Simplified proposed New Zealand Certificate in Pest Management (Plants) or (Animals)

CORRECTION: this newsletter was originally sent out with the second level diagram showing 'plants' only instead of 'animals' and 'plants'. This edition is a correction of that error.



RESPONSE ABOUT BIOSECURITY FROM THE MINISTER OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute (NZBI) has raised its concerns with the Minister of Primary Industries, Hon David Carter, about the loss of 'Biosecurity New Zealand' branding in the formation of the 'super' Ministry in April this year. The Institute felt that the brand was strong and was gaining momentum in such areas as social marketing. The Minister's response, as first published in the NZBI magazine, *Protect*, is reprinted here.

“ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS”

Biosecurity has had its fair share of attention this year, from its key role in the merger of New Zealand's primary sector agencies, to being at the sharp end of a number of media stories.

This highlights one thing - biosecurity is a very important issue. I often say it is my biggest priority as Minister, and it's why I want to talk about it in this issue of *Protect*. I particularly want to focus on my Ministry's vision of 'growing and protecting' New Zealand.

I am aware of concerns raised by the Biosecurity Institute about the loss of the 'MAF Biosecurity New Zealand' brand as a result of the formation of the Ministry for Primary Industries.

I want to allay these concerns. The loss of the biosecurity 'name' in the new Ministry's branding does not in any way lessen the Government's focus on biosecurity, or the role biosecurity has in protecting New Zealand's primary industries.

New Zealand has a great biosecurity system, among the best in the world, and one that we can justifiably be proud of. The Government has a clear role in managing our biosecurity system, but every New Zealander has an important role, too.

It's in all our interests to work together to protect the economic contribution of our primary industries, and to protect the unique environments and way of life that we

all value.

The importance of the whole primary sector to our economy was behind the decision to rename the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry earlier this year. The merger of MAF, Biosecurity New Zealand, the Ministry of Fisheries and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority into one entity – the Ministry for Primary Industries – brought all government work across the agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry and food sectors, animal welfare and, importantly, biosecurity, under one umbrella.

To create a new name, specifically listing all these, was simply impossible.

Instead, I believe Ministry for Primary Industries is logical. It recognises the broad role the Ministry has of growing and protecting the primary sector, the powerhouse of New Zealand's economy.

It in no way lessens the important role of each area. While I can understand the concerns raised about the "loss" of Biosecurity New Zealand, this is about the important functions of the Ministry, not about its name.

I want to reassure you all that biosecurity is, and will remain, my number one priority. And I expect the same of the Ministry's leadership.

David Carter, Minister for Primary Industries



Deputation to the Minister, (left to right): Trevor James, AgResearch Scientist; Pedro Jensen, NZBI President; Hon David Carter, Minister for Primary Industries; John Sanson, MPI National Coordination Team Manager; and Bill Martyn, NPCA Chairman

UPDATE ON BIOSECURITY MANAGEMENT GROUPS AND FORUMS

It can be hard to keep up with developments amongst those groups and forums in the biosecurity management field who are working to address and resolve issues affecting the sector . A brief update on who is doing what follows.

BioManagers Group

NPCA members will be aware that Regional Councils recently formed a 'BioManagers' group tasked with providing a conduit between Regional Chief Executives and the various other groups 'working in' the biosecurity and biodiversity space.

The BioManager Group aims to tease out the key issues for the sector / industry and make recommendations to the wider Regional Chief Executives forum.

To help this process along the Chief Executives have elected a subcommittee to work with the BioManagers. Michael McCartney (Horizons Regional Council), Basil Chamberlain (Taranaki Regional Council) and Bill Bayfield (Environment Canterbury) are the current members.

Biosecurity Managers Group and Biodiversity Forum

The Biosecurity Managers Group (BMG) and the Biodiversity Forum are the two important forums that the BioManagers tap into. NPCA members will understand the role of these groups and where NPCA fits into the arrangement.

The BMG and Biodiversity Forum, along with the likes of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), DoC and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), are grappling with a number of issues affecting the sector and working through a number of projects with the aim of coming up with a number of sector-based and sector-endorsed solutions.

The BioManagers Group was originally Chaired by Rob

Phillips (now Chief Executive of Environment Southland) and is currently Chaired by Craig Mitchell from Horizons Regional Council. Craig takes up the role having spent eleven years in the biosecurity, biodiversity, land and freshwater space at Horizons Regional Council. In the earlier part of his career at Horizons, he was Manager of Council's pest control business unit.

The group itself is made up with representation from all Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities and the likes of MfE, DoC, Local Government and MPI as required. The 2nd and 3rd tier biosecurity, biodiversity and policy managers on the Group will be familiar to many members, including NPCA's current Chair, Bill Martyn.

Issues on the table and of interest to the NPCA include:

- "The Future of Pest Management" including:
 - the outcomes of the Biosecurity Act amendments,
 - the "Crown as a good neighbour"
- Councils' role in biodiversity
- Toolbox (tools and methods to deliver regional outcomes).