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**Committee** Rural Services Wairarapa Committee  
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## Amendments to the Proposed Bovine Tb Vector Control Programme 2004/05 - 2006/07

### 1. Purpose

To update the Committee on significant amendments to the vector control programme following national prioritisation by the Animal Health Board.

### 2. Background

Report 04.130 presented to the March Committee meeting highlighted an anticipated \$2.1M increase in vector control activities in the 2004/05 financial year. This significant increase followed an intensive analysis of vector control requirements (including wildlife surveys) in the Region by the Animal Health Board's National Disease Control Manager, Agri-Quality (as Regional Disease Managers) and Greater Wellington staff (as Regional Vector Control Managers). The purpose of this analysis was to ensure that future vector control works would place the region on a pathway towards Tb eradication by 2012/13, the main objective of the National Pest Management Strategy.

The Local Control Programme Plan, which contained the detailed strategy for the next three years, was forwarded to the Animal Health Board at the end of February 2004. This Plan, which was the second version forwarded since September, included the following programmes (in hectares) –

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
<b>Possum control</b>	401,989	361,938	408,421
<b>Ferret control</b>	35,461	35,461	30,030
<b>Surveys</b>	<u>165,357</u>	<u>189,865</u>	<u>276,197</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>602,807</b>	<b>587,264</b>	<b>714,648</b>

### 3. AHB Response

The Board's National Disease Control Manager contacted Greater Wellington in late March and advised that the proposed collective national total exceeded the available budget by \$14M. As a result, we were requested to reduce the proposed programme by approximately \$620,000. These changes were achieved by reducing the number and cost of new wildlife surveys. Staff believe that vector control should always take precedence over wildlife surveys to ensure that programme integrity is maintained.

In early April, the Animal Health Board again requested that further cuts be made to the proposed 2004/05 programme. The initial request was to reduce vector control in Stage 3, SE Wairarapa by two-thirds. Staff did not support this request as it was considered that Stage 3 remained a crucial operation in advancing Tb reduction in the Wellington region. A counter proposal was made which included the removal of the Greytown and Carterton Flats, and Moores Valley initial operations, and a number of surveys in the Western Zone. This proposal resulted in a further \$630,000 reduction to the 2004/05 programme and was accepted by the National Disease Control Manager.

Changes to the 2004/05 programme have also impacted on the following two years. Initial operations have been rescheduled and a number of new surveys postponed to avoid further budgetary issues.

### 4. Revised Programme

The changes described above are highlighted below –

	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>
<b>Possum control</b>	349,767	409,326	388,815
<b>Ferret control</b>	35,441	35,461	30,030
<b>Surveys</b>	<u>89,668</u>	<u>189,865</u>	<u>276,197</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>474,876</b>	<b>634,652</b>	<b>695,042</b>

Impacts on the total cost are provided below –

	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>
<b>Original</b>	\$8,051,093	\$8,081,016	\$8,097,053
<b>Revised</b>	\$6,803,337	\$7,988,738	\$8,614,033
<b>Variation</b>	<b>-\$1,247,756</b>	<b>+\$92,278</b>	<b>-\$516,980</b>

Given that the AHB have a set annual budget with the Crown, it is highly likely that severe cuts will also be made to the 2005/06 and 2006/07 programmes in the future, unless significant savings can be made elsewhere in New Zealand.

## 5. Timing

The timing of these amendments has been very unfortunate indeed. The Council has already commenced the Annual Plan notification process with the original budget totals included. The consultation document specifically mentions the original \$2M increase and the need to secure an additional \$250,000 regional share.

Staff have also been involved in preparing a Regional Animal Health Committee newsletter at the request of the RAHC Committee with the lead story being an overview of the anticipated increase in vector control. The story was requesting farmer support for the increased regional share contribution via rates. Distribution was to coincide with the Annual Plan submission period. This story now needs to be rewritten with consequent delays to the distribution timetable.

Clearly, there needs to be changes to the Animal Health Board planning timetable to enable reasonably accurate budgets to be included in the Council's Proposed Annual Plans. This has been an issue for many years with all Council's involved with Bovine Tb. The Animal Health Board needs to recognise that Councils have to comply with legislative requirements when setting their annual budgets.

## 6. Communications

Changes to the proposed 2004/05 vector control programme will need to be communicated to ratepayers as part of the Annual Plan notification/submission process. Staff will work with the Communications Department on appropriate mechanisms to achieve this.

## 7. Recommendations

- 1. That the report be received and the information noted.*
- 2. That staff be requested to communicate the Council's concerns to the Animal Health Board regarding the major decrease in the proposed 2004/05 vector control programme.*
- 3. That staff be requested to liaise with the Animal Health Board regarding the future timing of the vector control programme development process.*

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