Hawke's Bay 'Growing for good' Workshop, 25 February 2005

Key Take-home Messages

This section lists the key take-home messages from the Hawke's Bay workshop only.

The Importance of Farming to New Zealand's Wealth
- Farmers need to better understand the risk so they can address issues.

Effects of Intensification on Natural Capital
- We are already in the sustainability era
- Need effective soil natural capital monitoring indices in addition to water
- Resource info (a) What have you got (b) How you can use?
- Proactive be real – monitoring – data.

Understanding the Impact of Economic and Social Drivers
- Understanding resources: - land use change, water, nutrients, money.

Drivers – Economic
- Singular focus on production is the main driver – need to broaden to include other outcomes – profitability
- Land values are artificially high which is a key driver
- Consumers/supermarkets are an influential driver.

Drivers – Social
- Incentives to change
- 'X' factors/'feel good' factor
- Economically viable
- Has to be profitable, needs to be sustainable in today's market
- Rewards: Incentives (tax, rates, returns for products). Asset value give recognition
- Marketing: link farming practices to markets.

Performance of Research on Delivering Needs
- Lots more research needed to understand increase
- Access to all new technologies
- Urgent need for soil research (funding)
- Research: markets, soil/sustainable management/impact of fertiliser, Nitrogen fixing species, managing the N cycle.

Understanding Redesign
- Matching land use to increase
- Balance use of resources
- Optimise rather than maximise.

Education Models for Farmers
- Farmers are struggling with information overload
- Information needs to be disseminated to a wider audience
- Need incentives to learn/training

- There is an awareness of sustainability issues but are behaviours changing?
- Champion best practice
- Good examples of things that work very useful
- Need better understanding of how to manage land to reduce the environmental risks
- Extension work gap
- Education/ideas: come from many directions. Learn from success and failure
- Tools and needs
- Causes of problems.

Team New Zealand

Education and Communication
- Educate urban people about importance of farming
- Educate whole community. Buy in. Urban vs rural villains
- Agriculture needs to be promoted more positively – by farmers themselves and others
- Education needs to be for everyone. Urban and rural. Need better understanding /balance
- Education: school curriculum/of community about environment
- Engage the community/understanding/ownership/commitment/Especially youth/idea sharing.

Working Together
- Sharing responsibility: - local and central government, farmer, consumer.

Question of Strategy
- Need national standards with regional variations. Educate
- Need to pay more attention to what's happening overseas
- Clear deliberation between public and private good is needed
- Funding and background research – needs big government input (not intervention)
- Sustainability is driven by market requirements – need to educate the market Brand NZ
- We don't need them as much as they need us. They want our product. We need to take control of our product and our markets and tell them. Value added, not commodity is key to sustainability
- Regulation: res. consents enforce - better research of new ideas / regulations / policies.

Leadership
- Farmers as guardians of land - the key to moving forward
- Local government/regional council
- Industry self regulation
- Sustainability must be industry driven – not regulated
- Need pan-industry/sector forum (e.g. facilitated by Landcare trust).

Hawke's Bay Small Group Discussion Notes

This section lists all points of discussion recorded from the Hawke's Bay workshop small group discussions. The questions used to prompt small group discussion are listed under each of the seven key themes.

The Importance of Farming to New Zealand's Wealth

The PCE talks about the risks of losing important overseas markets if issues like the environmental impact of farming become important to those markets.

1. How much risk do you think there really is? (high, medium, low)
2. What kinds of things do you think would make that risk higher?
3. How immediate do you think that risk is?
4. Do you think farmers and the farming industry have a good understanding of this risk and the impact it might have on their farm income?
5. What are some of the ways farmers and the farming industry can improve their understanding about the risk of losing important overseas markets?

How much risk do you think there really is? (high, medium, low)

- Environmental issues already there: - all ready in forestry
- Yes there is risk: - more external reviews/- external perceptions controls market.

What kinds of things do you think would make that risk higher?

- Non-tariff barriers can still impact on New Zealand.

Do farmers and the farming industry have a good understanding of this risk and the impact it might have on their farm income?

- POV #1Raising awareness needed
- POV #2 Known risks are understood.

Moving Forward

- Pre-empt international pressures with national standards: - project green kiwi green farm sure.

Effects of Intensification on Natural Capital

Research in New Zealand and overseas has demonstrated that intensification of farming can lead to pollution of surface and ground fresh water. Some farmers have responded by building bridges, fencing off waterways, and riparian planting.

1. Is this enough to fix the problem? If no – what more needs to happen?
2. Can farms in New Zealand survive with less synthetic fertiliser?
3. How does a farmer know that his/her farm is sustainable?
4. What kinds of information does a farmer need to know that his/her farm is sustainable or unsustainable?
5. Is this information readily available to farmers at the moment? Is this enough?
6. How well do we understand the impact of nitrogen on our natural capital?
7. How well do we understand the impact of irrigation on our natural capital?

General

- Loss of land/soils to other uses a concern.

What kinds of information does a farmer need to know that his/her farm is sustainable or unsustainable?

- Need indicators to know if redesign necessary or working
- Need to spread more good examples around, valuable for making progress.

Nitrogen

- Application levels high
- Excessive application needs to be penalised publicly and financially traceability
- Focus on N is an over-simplification. Need to look at regions – e.g. P in Hawke's Bay
- N is a requirement on some farms – no biological fixation (or inadequate). Govt needs to act quickly and help in areas it can (e.g. introduction of biological controls).

Can Farms in New Zealand Survive with Less Synthetic Fertiliser?

- Apply only enough fertiliser that the plants need. Less cost of production.

Water

- Highest – best use of water – how do we know what that is? Who is the best use for? The individual, the nation?

Understanding the Impact of Economic and Social Drivers

1. What are the key drivers behind the intensification of farming in New Zealand?
2. Do we have enough understanding of these drivers?
3. Are too many of our farming/food business models incompatible with long-term maintenance of our natural capital?
4. What are some of the ways these drivers can be addressed?
5. What will it take for farmers to become 'price makers', rather than 'price takers'?

What Are The Key Drivers Behind The Intensification Of Farming In New Zealand?

Economics

- Different drivers e.g. decrease in global markets
- As long as we are a price taker: e.g. 12 month supply, low prices - difficult to change: whole supply chain issue
- Drivers from overseas demand
- Variability of income from year to year-
- Finances: - shareholders
- Balance of returns to impacts needs readjusting
- Economic thinking coming first
- Farming is productivity gains focused rather than profitability focused
- Fine line between environmental 'purity' and returns from market
- Horticultural growers – huge investment in changes but not reflected in returns
- Who pays for wider benefits?
- Economic
- Low returns – intensify.

Land Values

- Change of ownership: - new drivers
- Difficulty of getting into farming
- High land prices
- Land prices increasing, all sectors.

Markets

- Range of standards and markets
  - non commodity
  - commodity
  - not all applicable to New Zealand agriculture
  - not all high environmental standards
  - marketing issue
- Customer requirements: - customer information of impacts
- Market–driven (expectation of future market forces, pro-active)
- Market influences are too important (fear, social pressure of losing market access)
- Already driven by consumer: driven by overseas demand/- e.g. dairy: - high prices products: - turn from risk to opportunity: marketing issues
- Profits driven by o/s markets
- Drivers of change can be doing all the right things, but need the market.

Costs of Production

- Consultants
- Increased costs, produce more, increase profits
- Farm advisors, products sales, push products.

Social Drivers

- Personal level – a sense of pride
- Many changing on own accord.

Food Industry

- Supermarkets
- Supermarkets, transfer environmental impacts to other countries - almost like trade barriers, decrease food prices, particularly so for horticulture and milk but not necessarily other products.

Moving Forward: Economic

- Benefits include overseas view of NZ produce (Green/clean).

Moving Forward: Social/Education

- Need a better understand of the process / effects and the limitations of retirement
- Extension 1.1 advisory.

Moving Forward: Markets

- If we change practices – market this to get an advantage:
- Increase value of products – a solution to the problem
- Special products for specialist markets – niche markets - high returns, kiwifruit (?), keeping our IP important
- Not hard to equate $ with environment.

Do We Have Enough Understanding Of These Drivers?

- At farm scale – there is more understanding of the drivers. At a wider scale, there is less knowledge.

Performance of Research on Delivering Needs

"Soil is one area where there are a number of issues which require better understanding if soils are to continue to have the capacity to support farming" *Growing for good* pg 184.

General Comments

- Comment on education and science – not co-ordinated, 'the blind leading the blind'.

Research Areas

- Soil (monitor soil the key resource)
- Healthy animals
- Good structure
- Soil life
- Need research into this.

Understanding Redesign

1. How necessary do you think it is to redesign New Zealand farms?
2. Do some farm types need to be redesigned more than others?
3. What kinds of things make it difficult to redesign a farming system?
4. What kinds of information or assistance would help farmers redesign their farms?
5. Is it necessary for the whole system (refer to diagram below) to be redesigned to achieve sustainable agriculture in New Zealand?
6. What changes are essential to achieve sustainable agriculture?

General Comment

- Need to understand elements working – rainfall/soil/topography
- There is always going to be some negative impact: minimise negatives, can't eliminate them
- Don't change the principles. Problem is the focus: - have to know the big picture
- Doing things which are 'less bad' is not good enough – mind shift needed
- Parma-culture: positive example
- Needs to be economic
- Sheep and beef farmers have more time to change / control effects
- Do we need to re-design farming?
- Is redesign necessary?

Constraints to Redesign:

- Problem – we are a country of individuals
- Corporate farms less likely to change.

What makes it difficult to redesign?

- Not recognising a problem
- Government regulations slow down / inhibit major changes (a problem)

- Differing goals within the industry – difficult to agree
- Look of consistency between councils' rules / processes but different environments need different approaches.

Enabling Redesign: Big Picture
- Time may force us to change. Need to bring communities together motivated by better returns
- Sense of belonging
- Education increase knowledge about environment / ecosystem
- Economic results / profit margins
- Regulation
- Farmers need to 'buy in' - understanding
- Profits
- Long-term e.g. carbon credits.

Ideas for Redesign
- Organics are an 'ideal' form of sustainability but not realistic
- Need better budgeting to ensure there is no wastage
- Remove the clover root weevil (breeding)
- Organic
- Get rid of sprays
- Financial reward
- Good for mind and soul / results
- Dairying – issues e.g. silage pits
- Soil types – N, waterway management, fertiliser apply rates
- Education needed
- Natural fertiliser useful.

Education Models for Farmers: Are They Leading To Change?

1. What kinds of farmer extension/education programmes are happening in your area?
2. What is the main purpose of these programmes? (e.g. increasing production, addressing sustainability issues, animal health)
3. What kinds of things are farmers changing as a result of these programmes?
4. What kinds of learning opportunities would help farmers to redesign their farms? (e.g. Monitor farms? Field days? Web sites?)
5. What kinds of things encourage farmers to adopt new ideas about sustainable farming practices that will not necessarily increase their income or save them money?

General Comment
- Creating Change: education: children (parent pressure)
- Change is age-dependent (tradition)
- Pastoral changes have been massive over last couple of generations – due to education
- Indoctrination or education?
- View of $ driver
- All basically educational
- Trying to raise bottom line
- Can't focus purely on environment (cost involved).

Types Of Extension Models

- Monitor farms
- SSF (land wise)
- Major regional initiating
- QE2: partnership/biodiversity
- Farm discussion groups
- Environmental awards: excellence
- Ag courses @ Eastern Institute
- Websites: general information
- Environmental awards are Important: - regional council newsletters - Hawke's Bay media very good. Heartland page, websites, pamphlets
- Whole range of farmer-of-the-year awards
- Forest farming
- Farmer driven discussion groups
- Education on fertiliser and cropping
- Monitor farm programmes
- On farm research – farmers
- Who is doing the education?
    - Farmers educating farmers
    - Fertiliser companies
    - Does it matter?
    - Who's co-ordinating it all?
    - Do you want it all coordinated?
    - Need a bit of chaos.

What Is Working With Current Extension Models?

- Lifestyle block field days and websites doing a good job
- Some programmes are making a difference e.g. minimum strip tool - SFF – happening for a couple of years
- Landwise – profitability and sustainability.

What Is Not Working With Current Extension Models?

- Results need to be disseminated widely (tend to hit only a small number of people).

Enabling Change

- Editors of newspapers need to be educated: - but media has its own agenda
- Education: - results of sustainable farming practices are actually known and understood - hand onto future generations
- Papers need provide a practical point of view - editors need to be trained as well
- Demonstration / monitor farms
- Practical solutions need to be seen (demonstration)
- Ability to harness tech (e.g. GE)
- Role of educators needs to be clarified – co-ordinate centrally or allow some chaos
- Listen to the grassroots
- Scholarships e.g. Nuffield
- People going on holiday (e.g. overseas)
- Make linkage between education and selling markets
- Woolshed meetings
- Education – rewards e.g. recognition, raise standards through targets.

Motivating Farmers

- People need incentives to attend courses for training: - subsidies – concession, free courses, rates relief
- If it hits the pocket, people turn up: - e.g. farm safe/OSH: lots of people attending
- Make practices 'sexy' – e.g. protectors of native bush 'trendy', 'feel good', X factor fancy
- Beer and sausages, STEAK, hospitality
- Field days: people see on the ground what is happening
- Farmers do take notice of certain people who write articles
- Sustainable farming practices: - used as a marketing tool/- demanded by international markets: - this will encourage farmers
- Landwise started with soil erosion. Being an issue (wind blowing) – action by people to address this.

Barriers to Change

- Cost e.g. fencing - $10 a metre
- Problem: people not attending courses in training/sustainability – no demand for graduates: fewer graduates
- Farmers overloaded with positive/negative information
- Media sometimes slow to respond or won't profile articles at all.

Moving Forward: Making the Transition from the Production to the Sustainability Era

How important do you think it is to move from the production to the sustainability era?

- Sustainability era is already happening already. There are a few cowboys though
- We are there already – one view
- There is more awareness of sustainability, but is there a change of behaviour? Yes - this can be regionally specific e.g. Gisborne after Bola (accentuated issues), Taupo
- Different sectors have different sustainability issues
- How stop mining natural capital and still be profitable? The key question
- Sustainability is being driven by the farmers/horticultural/rural people. Love for the land and attempt to use it as carefully as possible. But economic constraints
- Industry-driven focus groups and 'rules' already happening (especially horticultural) – learn from this and draw on same models.

Are we being strategic enough in our development of our farming systems – pulling together as 'team NZ'?

- "Team New Zealand" – a nice romantic idea. Would be great if it could happen.

Problems with Strategy

- Farmer at bottom of chain → roads → processor → markets → plates. So many people in the chain: - fragmented groups, no-one comes together
- How to encourage farmers to change, when not increase income? Not govt actions that are hard on farmers – retrench
- Kyoto Accord – landowners (farm foresters) have planted and get nothing for it (no credits). Is it fair?
- Farmers are currently being bombarded with so many issues. Threatened, squeezed by central govt (e.g. Kyoto, access, etc) Lack of support from govt, just more rules. Retrenchment.

Moving Forward: Strategy

- Need integration of knowledge/- knowledge sharing
- Reduces faith in central govt
- Needs to remove the disincentives to be doing environmental work (e.g. compliance costs for wetland enhancement. the compliance costs more than the work who benefits?)
- Look at existing successful sustainability schemes and transfer elements. Who does it? E.g. grape industry – market driven – focus farms – pro-active
- Farmers want to be driving / controlling.

Is there enough understanding of growing urban/rural tensions, re environmental expectations, in our politically urban dominated society?

- Social issues (urban – rural relationships) e.g. with water. Not just farming, but urban water use is a problem
- Urban – rural tension is focused on loss of prime agricultural/horticultural land to urban use
- Farmers don't need to be educated: - urban people do
- Urban people need to learn about the importance of agriculture and where food comes from: - don't understand about ordinary farming practices
- Town-country relationships have never been better: no subsidies, better communication, local governments - might be specific to Hawke's Bay though
- Need more balance – too much criticism of farmers. What about urban actions – rubbish, sewerage. We all need to clean up
- Balance – public access to rivers closed off in some areas (rubbish dumping, vandalism etc)
- Education models need to be for everyone, not just farmers
- Community protection of urban waterways (adopt a water plan?).

Working Together

- Catchment – the level to work at but need a change agent to get people to work together (example trading elements)
- ICM is hard to do, it's resource hungry
- Can't afford urban subsidisation like Europe.

Pan Sector Organisation

- Fraser Basin 'FORUM' a better phrase: - yes we need one
- Needs an overarching body - not govt
- Needs to be grassroots, industry driven (and then govt support it $ - not regulation)
- Got to be national (NZ is small)
- Need to get people together from all sectors: E.g. NZ Landcare Trust
- Discussion, inputs etc should be from the custodians, not from central govt (not rules).

Comments from Hawke's Bay Evaluation Sheets

This section lists regional-specific comments gathered through workshop evaluation sheets.

Positive

- A valuable starting point to highlight the issues
- Thank you for this workshop. Well done
- Was a very good report
- This has lifted the awareness of the issue and considerably added to the debate
- Very worthwhile
- It has put some future thought about farming
- Constructive, challenging, well informed, realistic
- A good start
- Very productive workshop
- Very well organised. Focused, succinct, yet covered a lot of material
- The workshop was interesting and an opportunity for me to hear the issues / themes within the New Zealand perspective. Being a researcher / catchment management scientist from overseas, it was refreshing to see the differences; particularly the vitalisation of natural resources - keep it up as we can never be idle
- A timely alarm bell. We are on an unsustainable path and we have to change our worldview of farming (fishing and other primary production). Recognising our shortcomings and being prepared to change is not a sign of weakness but of strength. Thank you for organising the event
- A useful platform / context for future activities
- An important document to help change the land/water management culture. The tone is positive but the message is serious and alarming. Even in NZ we need to start living off nature's interest and not nature's capital. God's Own Country cannot rely on God and the free market forever
- Usefully added to the debate
- Provided an opportunity to hear from the horses mouth and understand the PCE position
- Made other people aware of the issues "water quality"
- Learn of regional views and opinions on sustainability.

Feedback on Process/Workshop

- More volume of speakers - hard to hear!

Challenges

- Once again farming is the easy target: what about forestry, urban sprawl, highway expansion, airport expansion etc?
- Will my grandchildren make a living of the farm!
- How do you get all farming sections to recognise where they need to change (for whatever reason) and then take up the knowledge to carry out the change?
- Lots of ideas - but how can it actually go out on the farm and do something?

Moving Forward

- It needs to be complemented with a deeper understanding of what redesign means in a practical sense and thorough study of what is already happening around NZ and what is driving positive change
- Water allocation being bid for - will go to the bidder. Need for a follow-up workshop next year. Need for regional councils to have trigger levels for water quality. Need for research in plant uptake of nitrogen so no excess is applied

- I hope Landcare Trust will facilitate a 'pan industry forum' to work on key sustainability drivers and workable model. Must be industry driven not govt regulated
- The issue now needs to move from debate and discussion to strategies and action
- What about urban sector? I think they need more education about agriculture. Do not change the principles of farming, change the systems i.e. reduce stocking rates - feed stock better, reduce inputs, increase outputs, increase profitability = happy, well-fed cows, happy people urban /rural
- N leach into ground H2O. Shallow well areas. Tighten up on R/consent for irrigation. Test bores. Larger dairy herds monitor non-point discharge to H2O. Overseas grain growing areas spoiled crops produce pork and chicken cheaply. Our farms produce milk, cheese and dairy - beef, burger mince. Many farmers are exotic cattle producers good to see good cuts. Higher market: sheep lambs better cuts
- Urban rural liaison
- If taken up by the right people in the right way, this report should become a ? for agriculture in New Zealand. It is up to the intensity to drive the change in direction - God help us if politicians and bureaucrats get hold of it!
- Anything that can assist farmers in improving farming must be good business but, local and regional councils and central govt must be more prudent in assisting farmers improve profit that can sustain NZ economy e.g. water and soil research, education and community partnerships
- Develop solutions from the ground up - not Wellington down!
- Any change going forward will need farmer buy in and continuing input in the process for it to be successful
- It appears that some/several farmers remain defensive of activity and the buying in of their leaders is critical
- Science needs to be co-ordinated
- Closer urban/rural liaison.

Feedback on Report

- Narrow focus on farming land use and water quality / N reduces value of the report, other land use sectors also have been covered
- I have a feeling that practices at present are not fully appreciated. Most farmers operate on a very sustainable system (I am a hill country farmer) which is not being recognised
- Summarised the report but provided little opportunity for in-depth discussion. Another Landcare Trust sanitisation exercise.

Other

- A pity that some of the newspaper headlines were not related and put a better message out to get better buy-in from those effected
- Soil health and grass manages animal health
- Opened my eyes to how uniformed the general public is to the value of agriculture
- Many farmers are in denial that their practices are unsustainable
- Identified how diverse people’s opinions are on the subject.