

PROTECTING OUR BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT



NEW ZEALAND'S WORLD



Curriculum Areas: Levels 3-4

Social Sciences:

Place and Environment

- Understanding why we as a society need to make rules and develop practices that protect our environment and explore the contribution that detector dogs and dog handlers make.

Science:

Living World

- Investigating the needs, care, and training necessary to produce successful, healthy and happy detector dogs.

English:

- Using research techniques to gather knowledge and information and presenting these ideas in written and visual forms.

Links to Technology and Health.

WHY WE PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT: REVISION

- Pose the questions: 'What is biosecurity?' 'Why do we have biosecurity?' Have students discuss in groups and report back. Divide and record responses into two categories:
 - *what do we know?*
 - *what do we need to find out?*
- Remind students that MAF Biosecurity New Zealand has the task to ensure that New Zealand stays free from harmful pests and diseases. Speculate on how harmful pests and diseases could be brought into our country.
- What biosecurity issues are the students aware of? **eg**
 - *do they know about didymo and how it affects our freshwater environment?*
 - *are they aware of historical importation of plant and animal pests such as gorse, possums, and rabbits and the long term detrimental effects on our environment?*
 - *did they know about the aerial programme in Auckland and Hamilton to eradicate the painted apple moth?*
- Download the painted apple moth fact sheet at: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/faq/term/911 Photocopy and distribute to students. As a shared reading exercise, read through the fact sheet with the students to find out:
 - *what would be the consequences for NZ if it became established here?*
 - *how did it probably arrive?*
 - *what actions were taken to eradicate it from NZ*
- Tell students that this has been a success story so far but if the painted apple moth came here once it could come in again so we all must keep a sharp lookout for this pest.

INTRODUCING DETECTOR DOGS

- Have any students coming back from a holiday overseas seen the beagle dogs sniffing the luggage at the airport? Tell students that these are known as 'detector dogs' and are trained to search baggage for undeclared or forgotten agricultural products and food that could bring a pest or disease into New Zealand. Can students suggest reasons why MAFBNZ would use dogs rather than search all the luggage by hand?
- Can students think of any other ways that unwanted animals, animal products could enter New Zealand? **eg**
 - *by mail*
 - *cruise ship passenger luggage*
 - *cargo ship containers.*



DETECTOR DOG RESEARCH PROJECT

<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/detector-dog>

This page contains six links for students to find out about the detector dog programme and about the life and care of detector dogs. Divide students into groups for online research or print out the six sections for group or class study.

FAMOUS DETECTOR DOG PROGRAMME



STUDENT RESEARCH TOPICS

Detector Dogs – History section

- When the Mexican government used large dogs to search luggage, why were these searches conducted out-of-sight of passengers?
- Discuss the importance of introducing the concept of passive searching and using smaller dogs. Why was this a major breakthrough? Why was passive search in the public eye chosen rather than an active search? Discuss differences between search types, **eg**, the reactions that people could have to larger dogs conducting active searches in baggage retrieval areas of an airport.
- Have students visit: www.dogbreedinfo.com/beagle.htm and list characteristics of the beagle that make it a particularly good choice for a passive search dog.
- What technique was used to further motivate the beagles?
- What programme was introduced and how has this helped produce many extremely successful working dogs?
- Where are active dogs used and where do they combine both active and passive dog teams?

Detector Dogs – Frequently asked questions section

- What are the dogs trained to find and where do they work?
- Discuss the meaning of 'temperament testing'. What special characteristics must a dog possess before they are even considered for the job? How do trainers/handlers find this out?
- About what percentage of dogs meet the temperament and medical requirements?
- Discuss the difference between the ways that active and passive dogs respond when they find an item and the different ways they are rewarded.
- What happens to dogs who fail the training course or retire from being a working dog?

Detector Dogs – How to become a puppy walker

- What special measures are taken by the puppy development team before a puppy is placed in a home?
- Discuss the important roles that 'puppy walkers' provide for the young dogs. Why do students think it is so important to check up on their progress every month?
- What characteristics do students think that successful puppy walkers should have? How would they feel about giving the puppy up to begin its thirteen weeks of training?

Detector Dogs – How to become a handler

- Where do detector dog handlers work?
- Discuss the skills, knowledge and experience it is necessary to have if you want to become a dog handler. Have students give reasons for the importance of each skill listed.
- Can they suggest possible everyday work situations where each skill would be useful?

Detector Dogs – a day in the life

- What activities are provided during work time and time off work to ensure the dogs are kept at peak fitness?
- Can students suggest reasons why the dogs are dressed in black MAFBNZ branded jackets?
- The detector dogs can work long hours during their working day. How do you think handlers would keep their dogs happy and motivated and ensure they enjoy their work each day?

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Write/design a newspaper advertisement for:
 - recruiting families to become puppy walkers
 - recruiting people to become MAFBNZ detector dog handlers
- You are a reporter assigned to a detector dog handler at an international airport. Write a newspaper column or file a radio report detailing the events of the day.
- In groups, brainstorm and make a list of further questions you would like answered about:
 - detector dogs and dog handlers
 - training programme for detector dogs
 - the puppy walking programmeand email your questions to the Customer Services Officer at: info.biosecurity@maf.govt.nz Record answers on a group wall chart.
- In groups, script and enact a play/drama about:
 - training a detector dog
 - a day in the life of a detector dog and handler
- Tell students that most visitors arrive in New Zealand by air. Have them visit the *Arriving by Air* section of www.biosecurity.govt.nz (download Declare it pdf) and research the items that we do not allow into New Zealand. Have students match some of these items the dogs might find with the reasons for not allowing these items into New Zealand. Visit: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/faq/ for this information. Using this information, prepare a 'Declare It for New Zealand' Poster and/or brochure reminder to get these important messages out to family.

