

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand Future of Pest Management Project

1. What is the Future of Pest Management Project?

The purpose of the Future of Pest Management Project is to improve pest management systems to meet New Zealand's needs over next 25 years.

The scope of the project includes all systems of management for pests established on New Zealand lands, in lakes, rivers and streams, and in the sea to 12 nautical miles.

The work looks at the management systems themselves to identify the critical changes needed for the challenges of the future, rather than trying to solve the issues surrounding particular pests. The review does not include border biosecurity or incursion response, but does consider the interaction of border management with that of established pests. Where it makes sense for solutions to apply across the biosecurity system, rather than specifically for pest management, the plan of action recommends that this happens.

2. What is it trying to do?

While New Zealand's pest management systems stack up well compared with other jurisdictions, further improvements are needed to position the pest management sector to meet future challenges.

The overall purpose of the project is to find ways to solve five critical issues in pest management:

- Lack of clarity in overall roles and accountabilities for pest management.
- Crown obligations as a "good neighbour" landowner do not match those of other parties.
- The legislation underpinning pest management activities is outdated.
- Physical control and pest management monitoring tools are insufficient for future needs.
- Collective action and participation in pest management is insufficient.

The project addresses complex issues, will impact on many stakeholders, and must produce results within a tight timeframe.

The project is committed to an inclusive stakeholder engagement process, including public consultation, which will result in a national plan of action.

3. Who is involved?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is leading the Future of Pest Management Project on behalf of New Zealand. Senior executives of central and regional government, industry and Māori have committed to working together, and providing leadership. They want the project to achieve results.

Organisations with a significant interest in pest management were represented on the project working groups and are already informed and engaged with the process. In addition MAF has identified key individuals and influencers that have a high interest in the work, and more than 100 stakeholder groups that have an interest in the work.

4. When will people get a chance to comment?

Formal public consultation on the plan of action will be held from 21 June to 19 July 2010.

5. What is the timetable?

Past attempts to improve pest management systems have become bogged down as people debated but did not resolve complex issues. This project seeks to be different. A draft national plan of action, along with proposed changes to Biosecurity Act 1993 (policy proposals), was considered by Cabinet in June 2010.

A revised Plan of Action will be reported back to Cabinet in September.

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6. Who decides?

Final decisions on the plan will be made by Cabinet. The revised plan will be considered by agency chief executives before it goes to Cabinet, and they could decide on some operational details at that stage. Where Cabinet agrees that law changes are desirable, these proposals will be included in a Bill being prepared for the Minister of Biosecurity to take to Parliament late in 2010.

7. How does the plan of action connect with the Biosecurity Act review?

The Biosecurity Act 1993 is being reviewed to strengthen border management. The Minister for Biosecurity has agreed that changes required to give effect to the plan of action for pest management can be included in the resulting Bill. This sets the timetable for policy decisions on law changes.

8. How does all this relate to Government Industry Agreements?

Government is developing processes to boost biosecurity readiness and strengthen partnerships with industry for border protection. The Government Industry Agreement (GIA) is a key component of this programme. This approach gives an ability for primary industries and Government to engage in joint decision making and cost sharing agreements. The approach has potential for application to established pests. The proposed plan of action suggests that this is explored once experience with the approach has developed in preparedness and response management.

9. What ideas are there about how to make things better?

Key solutions emerging from the project are:

- Purpose and functions specified in law, including clear national and regional leadership roles for MAF and Councils.
- Minister for Biosecurity to determine jurisdiction in complex cases.
- Interim policy for default roles for pest management in the marine environment.

Immediate Biosecurity Act amendments, including:

- A requirement for Crown land managing agencies to meet good neighbour obligations under regional pest management strategies.
- Purpose and functions pest management and central and regional government.
- More flexible pest management strategies.
- A new regulatory tool for managing domestic pathways.
- A more comprehensive legal review to follow.
- Integrated toolbox management.
- Measuring performance of pest programmes and overall system.
- A Māori advisory committee.

These solutions would be implemented through amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993, cooperative efforts to develop and apply best practice, shared policy to ensure that roles are clear and action coordinated and enhanced practices to collective effort and engagement with affected parties.

10. Have any decisions already been taken?

The Government has already made two key decisions that are not being consulted on further. These decisions are: requiring Crown landowners to meet good neighbour obligations in regional pest management strategies, and providing for the development of national policy direction. Although these decisions are discussed in the plan of action, we are seeking comments only on the content of the national policy direction.

Further information is available at: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/surv-mgmt/mgmt/future-project>, or by contacting Jane.Bowden@maf.govt.nz at MAFBNZ.

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