

Winter Grazing Taskforce ACTION NOTES 23 AUGUST 2019

Date:	Friday 23 August 2019
Time:	9.15am – 12.40pm (<i>tea and coffee from 8.45am</i>)
Location:	MPI Te Uru Rākau 1 The Terrace, Wellington Totara Boardroom (Level 1, room 6)

Attendees

John Hellström
Arnja Dale
Helen Beattie
Stephen Hopkinson
Angus Robson
Ross Monaghan
Elaine Cook
Dave Harrison
Pania King
Kate Littin (MPI)
Penny Timmer-Arends (MPI)

Apologies

Ewen Mathieson

Guests

Minister O'Connor (9.30am – 9.45am)
Karen Adair (9.30am – 9.45am)
Chris Rodwell (9.30am – 9.45am)
Martin Workman (11.40am-11.50am)

1. Welcome and Introduction

No actions arising.

2. Minister's expectations

Minister O'Connor joined the meeting at 9.30am, and began by thanking the taskforce members for their commitment & willingness to come together in such a short space of time. The Minister outlined his expectations of the Taskforce. He acknowledged that practice change would be a challenge, and that farmers are feeling under pressure. While the timelines are tight, this is to allow expectations can be laid out as soon as possible to support change and reduce uncertainty. The Minister's office will work with MPI on communication about the work of the Taskforce. Members discussed that this was a social licence issue, even though views may differ on the animal welfare impacts. It was also discussed that this was a complex technical issue, but the Taskforce was encouraged to focus on practical, achievable recommendations.

ACTION MPI to support communications requirements for the Taskforce through the Minister's office.

3. Review draft terms of reference (TOR)

The Taskforce discussed and agreed Terms of Reference. One point of discussion related to the inclusion of economic considerations when making recommendations. The taskforce agreed that animal welfare should be the primary consideration. Members discussed that that the recommended solutions must be pragmatic & achievable. Conflicts of interest were also discussed. The Terms of Reference were amended to reflect the discussion.

ACTION Circulate conflict of interest forms.

ACTION Circulate finalised Terms of Reference amended on basis of discussion.

4. Expectations of the taskforce members

Members outlined expectations and concerns regarding winter grazing. Proposals for future actions and possible solutions were recorded for discussion by the Taskforce as it develops its recommendations.

Some key points raised included the need to identify whether current penalties, regulations and standards are effective, including against a Five Domains of animal welfare framework; to review innovations that might lead to improvement; that there is an array of health and welfare issues that arise from winter management systems and we need clear metrics to assess animal welfare performance; and to strive for incremental and meaningful welfare improvement. The Taskforce was encouraged to identify the ideal future and consider what could be done to accelerate that. It was also suggested that the system should be set up so that everyone has the same expectations and these are clearly communicated across the whole sector; good farmers should be celebrated not just poor farmers/farming singled out; and that ultimately this is a One Welfare issue – human, animal and environmental health and welfare are interconnected, and the end goal is less stress on humans, animals and the environment.

ACTION: MPI to circulate 2017 AgResearch project looking at portable stand-off options to be used alongside crop.

5. Agree objectives of wintering task force: ref summary A3

The summary A3 circulated prior to the meeting was reflective of the draft Terms of Reference, with some additional information about the timing of winter crop sowing and grazing. The taskforce agreed that it be updated to reflect the changes agreed to earlier in the meeting, under agenda item 3.

ACTION: Amend objectives on the summary A3 to those that are in the TOR.

6. Update from the Ministry for the Environment on freshwater

Members were updated on timing for proposals for regulation over freshwater management, and the development process. Consultation is expected week beginning 2 September 2019, and will run for six weeks. Members asked to be well linked in with the groups advising MfE, and for any further information on the proposals. At a Ministry level, the animal welfare and environmental teams are working hard to ensure there is an understanding of each other's activities.

ACTION: Taskforce to seek advice from Minister O'Connor on whether a pre-consultation copy of the proposals for water management is available.

ACTION: MPI to ensure Taskforce is linked to working groups under Ministry for the Environment

7. Agree next steps

There was a wide-ranging discussion about good management practice, animal welfare requirements, the people other than farmers who are involved in the cropping / winter grazing process, and what the barriers to change might be. The process map approach that has previously been used by MPI-industry working groups, should assist in pulling these strands together, and highlighting any gaps.

Actions arising:

Process map

ACTION: MPI to draft process map for Taskforce, week beginning 26 Aug. Process map to contain facts & figures if possible to give an idea of proportion of farming land affected, numbers of animals involved and what types.

Stocktake

ACTION: MPI to circulate stocktake of currently available guidance information & initiatives to improve wintering practices week beginning 26 August. Initial stocktake to include information and education/training/support/extension services currently being delivered.

ACTION: Members to provide relevant information to MPI to support the above stocktake and mapping process.

ACTION: MPI to supply available literature reviews and summaries on science that underpins animal welfare impacts of livestock in winter cropping.

ACTION: Elaine Cook to circulate relevant scientific work commissioned by DairyNZ.

ACTION: Stephen Hopkinson to provide MPI with list of welfare issues associated with winter grazing (complete).

Action plan

The Taskforce discussed how best to engage with different groups. It was agreed that input from affected farmers and experts was required in the short-term to inform the work of the Taskforce. Any recommended long-term changes to standards will include a period of public consultation.

ACTION Whole day meeting with invited speakers in Wellington; whole day meeting with invited speakers in Invercargill. Taskforce members to suggest speakers.

Report back to Minister August

ACTION MPI to circulate draft report back to Minister.

Action plan & actions update report back to Minister September

This was noted as a deadline. No actions arising.

8. Meeting wrap-up and close

The Chair thanked the members for their contribution, and called the meeting to a close at 12.40pm.

Members were invited to stay for lunch after the meeting.