

*Address to ERMA review panel, Hamilton, 23/5/07.
Dean Maisey,
For ESPC Group.*

(Partially abridged due to speaking time constraints at the end of the day.)

Intro:
Good afternoon panel members my name is Dean Maisey, I am Vice President of the NZDA BOP Branch in Tauranga, and I am speaking in support of the ESPC submission as a whole, but in particular sections 9, 11 and 13 which I was mainly involved with.
I would like to speak briefly on restrictions on hunting activity, cruelty to animals, unplanned accidents despite controls, and the effects 1080 has on peoples lives, their aspirations, and beliefs.

Restrictions on hunting activity.

Hunters must avoid areas of poisoning campaigns for the safety of not only themselves, but their hunting dogs if they are present as well. The panel should now be fully aware of the ways in which humans and dogs can become contaminated by 1080 or fluorocitrate residues in carcasses or water supplies. What is of concern to hunters and other park users are the long stand-down periods. The usual 3 to 4 month periods are not adequate. – Hunters dogs have succumbed to the traces of 1080/fluorocitrate residue in the bone marrow of skeletal possum remains, over 12 months after poison drops. For this reason hunters will totally avoid hunting these poisoned areas, sometimes for years, if they care about their own safety or that of their dogs. The risk also of catching a deer or pig which may have some poison residue in the meat or the offal is simply not worth taking. They will inevitably head elsewhere.
This however applies to only those hunters who have received recent hunting permits and pesticide use summaries, or who know the area well. Hunters not familiar with an area, or whom neglect to apply for hunting permits may well end up entering into and hunting areas that have been poisoned without their knowledge.

Dogs.

The toxicity of 1080 to dogs is well known and we don't need to go over that again right now. However, suffice it to say that hunters often have a close bond with their dogs, and to lose one or more to poison such as 1080 is a traumatic and harrowing experience.

Water supplies.

Streams, ponds, and water tank storage areas can become contaminated with either the poison baits themselves, or the rotting carcasses of the poisoned animals. The example in section 9.2.9 is a classic example of how 1080 poison can contaminate a small (hut) tank water supply at dangerous levels of concentration. Hunters and trampers filling their water bottles closer to contaminated areas are at greater risk.

What makes hunting unique in NZ?

NZ is one of the few developed countries in the world where you can go deer, pig, or goat hunting all year round, and virtually at no or minimal cost. Compare this with many other countries in the world where hunting seasons for game animals are sometimes severely restricted, and often there is a fee of some type attached.

In the 19th century the acclimatisation societies successfully introduced deer, tahr, chamois, trout, salmon and game-birds to NZ. The societies wanted to avoid the land-owning gentry's ownership of game animals, as it was for the English aristocracy, where hunting was reserved for the well-heeled. Instead they wanted to make hunting and fishing available for all citizens. This act was a significant foundation for making NZ for what it is today – one of the best examples of an egalitarian and meritocratic society in the world.

In many countries overseas hunting and fishing are still the preserve of the rich, while in NZ the average kiwi bloke, poor or rich, has the same opportunity to hunt or fish. And for many on low incomes this is a necessity of life.

1080, and other poisons, pose a significant risk to these people and NZ in general if the selfish people who want to attempt to rid NZ of all exotic wildlife get their way. Some of the more outspoken people from organizations such as Forest & Bird, claim that hunters just want the bush over-run with deer and pigs to indulge their hunting sport. This is completely false on both counts. Hunters care about the environment too, and do not want to see a population of game animals beyond the carrying capacity of the environment. And secondly, I personally object to hunting being described as a sport. It is not a sport. It is a valid, traditional recreational pursuit, and a means of providing food for many people in this country of ours. It is our way of life, and is a part of who we are as New Zealanders.

We care about our bush and do not want to see it turned into a toxic wasteland in the wake of these large scale poison operations. It is absolutely disgusting, and a disgrace, that anyone could consider this practice acceptable.

The Waione watershed in the south-west corner of the Whirinaki forest is a classic example of this. This area is scheduled to be aerial 1080'd yet again later this year. That will be the 4th time in seven years!!!! If 1080 is so effective then why is this necessary?

There are now virtually no moreporks in this area, and it is an area I will probably never enter again.

I would also like to take this opportunity to refute claims from the Tauranga Forest & Bird that there is massive canopy damage due to possum browse, etc., in the Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park. This is absolute nonsense. I represent a club of over 150 members who know the park well for it's thick vegetation, and it makes for some very difficult hunting as a result. There are only a few areas of restricted hunting access where possum and pest numbers could be considered moderate to high. There are also numerous private possum hunters working in the KMFP at present, and there is absolutely no need for aerial 1080 there despite the claims from a few obsessed advocates.

Unplanned accidents and incidents despite controls.

Due to time constraints I will just suggest you re-read the summary for section 9 of our ESPC submission. In our 385 page submission there are numerous examples of the dangers, misapplication, and accidents of/with pest control poisons that we could list within our limited timeframe for submissions.

However, I will take this opportunity to raise another recent incident involving an aerial overfly of poison baits at Maungatautari Ecological Reserve which was made public last week. These poison baits of brodifacoum landed on farmland, which has led to the poisoning of livestock. Over 500 animals (sheep, and 95 steers) are at risk.

This is a poignant reminder that despite advances in technology, and the use of GPS, these incidents do still occur and pose a major threat to agriculture. Anyone who is familiar with Maungatautari knows it is a hilltop bush reserve surrounded by farmland. You don't even need GPS to tell where the boundary is, but we still have this situation on our hands to deal with now.

Human aspects, values and beliefs.

In section 9.2.13 Graham Sturgeon describes how, after a severe rainstorm and flooding at Te Puru on the Thames coast, a lot of poisoned possum carcasses were washed down from the hills and ended up on the beach. Many dogs belonging to regular urban-dwelling folk died from this incident. How many seabirds were also poisoned after they came into contact with the carcasses? Some were also washed up into peoples backyards.

This is a classic example of the dangers of poisons like 1080. Once you release it into the environment you have no control over where it goes. And sometimes where it does end up comes as a complete surprise to many, especially the naive or biased who still claim it to be a “safe” poison.

I believe that the principles of the UN Rio declaration of 1992 should apply to NZ, after all we are a signatory to it! (ESPC section 11.2.6) This basically states that all peoples of the land/country should have the right to enjoy their traditional and lifestyle activities without fear of harm or health risks. While purporting to be a so-called “clean green nation” we should be encompassing those principles wholeheartedly.

The use of poisons like 1080 and brodifacoum, and the way they are applied currently, are in direct conflict with some of those principles.

We have shown that there are much safer, environmentally friendly and cost effective alternatives to the 1080 poison (gravy train) industry.

With public surveys such as the Frazer 2001 Landcare Research survey showing only 4% considered deer solely a pest (ESPC section 11.2.2) compared with 82% for possum, it seems obvious that many people value deer as an addition to the NZ backcountry. They should not be poisoned to waste in aerial poison operations, supposedly targeting possums.

It is my belief that there is definitely a place in NZ for deer and other game animals as they have been here for over 100 years. People have a right to be here too!

It is true that with the benefit of hindsight the introduction of rabbits and possums, but more importantly stoats and ferrets, was unwise. However, attempting to remove all introduced species with massive poison campaigns is an expensive and dangerous folly, which is doomed to fail. You simply cannot turn the clock back 200 years. This needs to be acknowledged by Forest & Bird, and those who fund and support their political lobbying.

Control of pests with commercial assistance and proper management of game animals is what is required.

1080 use in NZ should have been phased out in the 1980's. I'm sure that at the hearings other people must have pointed out that 1080 has been used here for over 40 years, and guess what – we still have possums! It is not the ‘quick fix’ or ‘saviour’ that it has been portrayed by some to be. The continued use of this cruel and dangerous poison is an embarrassment to us and the agencies involved in it's application here today. There are alternatives.

In following precautionary principle, you must consider that a substance or practice is unsafe until proven conclusively otherwise.

Therefore, I ask that you find that 1080 use in NZ be immediately banned, or suspended from all use forthwith.

Cruelty.

A small 3 minute section of the 'A shadow of doubt' DVD documentary was shown to the panel and audience. (Countercheck 14:00 to 17:20) (Dog section 21:20 to 23:10 was not shown)

Hand over speaking to Clyde Graf then for him to elaborate on cruelty to animal aspects of 1080 and other bits and pieces of their time filming in the 1080 poison 'drop zone' in the southern Ureweras, winter 2006. (Once again, fairly brief due to time constraints). Clyde also indicated they would be prepared to film again in areas of any future drops to illustrate the indiscriminate nature of the poison kills, and examples of mass wastage of game animal resource.

Ends.