Rotorua Farms Research Field Day May 15, 2008

Workshop Results

To gain a clearer picture of what people know about nutrient reduction, we asked a range of questions to farmers, agency and industry representatives, science providers and the other interested parties who attended the Field Day. We've summarised the results below from the 50 or so participants. Thank you all for sharing your knowledge, thoughts, frustrations and ideas with us.

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What nutrient reduction techniques do you know of?

General comments

- OVERSEER
- Nutrient management plans
- Enhancing soil biology - pasture health and improving rooting depth; carbon sequestration; extra liming
- Modifying effluent management and application rates
- Wetlands, in-stream attenuation
- Erosion control - fencing; retention dams
- Land retirement - riparian management (fencing and planting); wintering off; grass hedges; dug out silt traps; managing ephemeral gullies
- Improved town planning/replacing the town plan!

What are the main barriers for adopting nutrient reduction/ mitigation techniques?

Farmers' feedback

- Money!
- Does it fit into my whole farm system? Or will I need to modify it?
- Being given a good idea from research and finding that it didn't work - shows that the research may have been rushed and without proper testing
- Research driven from the wrong direction gives outputs that don't work - more farmer driven research needed
- Security of investment. What are the risks of using a new technique?
- Politically driven motives for land use change; regulatory regimes. Rotorua and Taupo have demolition orders on property therefore the farmers aren't going to invest in their land
- Community not looking for the common value proposition
- Locked into chemical farming methods, DCDs etc. Is there not a better route?

Agencies, industry, science provider and others

- It is the responsibility of individual landowners to reduce N output and the amount of N reduction required within the catchment
- The lack of recognition of previous initiatives. Although many landowners have previously reduced their N footprint through various methods e.g. fencing, wetland plantings (though there is little/no way of calculating this amount)
- Lack of a clear and equitable benchmark that takes into consideration individual circumstances of landowners
- Communication between industry and landowners. Industry is science focused whereas landowners are focused on practical solutions and there was an obvious communication gap between the two. Landowners are seen to be cautious on how industry ideas/initiatives work and the science behind the idea. There needs to be a 'one on one' approach by industry to build trust and to show the effectiveness and reasoning of the idea.
- Regulations
- Costs of undertaking new ideas/many small steps make up the larger picture

What would encourage the adoption of nutrient reduction/ mitigation techniques?

Farmers' feedback

- Research
- Demonstrable profit
- Improving the nutritional value of products - market driven
- Demonstration from authorities that there is true cooperation - needs to be a change in the regulatory framework to ensure there is no suffering party
- Re-do the RMA - compensation clause is missing
- Funding
- True value proposition for land, socially and culturally
- Closing the rural/urban divide

Agencies, industry, science provider and others

- Techniques need to be practical, cost effective and timely
- Encourage other landowners to set personal benchmarks exceeding regulatory standards while working within their own guidelines. Goal: landowners have personal responsibility in N reduction and to identify their own solutions for lowering output. Landowners have to be aware that they are contributing towards the problem before solutions can be rectified
- Rating system on the brand (e.g. product with 5 star rating system) indicating the amount of N reduction by the landowners in order to encourage landowners to reach the N benchmark and also encourage the consumer to buy the product
- Celebrating previous successes of N reduction; forums in which to share these successes
- Economic benefits e.g. tax relief or a cash incentive

What further research do you think needs to be carried out into sustainable land management?

General comments

- Soils - carbon sequestration; improve biological health; soil that has greater retention ability
- Nutrient management - modifying day to day practice
- Grass/crop efficiency
- Urine patch distribution
- Climate change
- Impacts on water quality
- Alternative systems - organics; vermicast (worm casts); buffer zones
- Wetlands and natural filters
- Adopting Maori traditional methods
- Matrix to evaluate environmental/social/economic effects
- ICM (Integrated Catchment Management)
- Pasture management
- Animal biology

Farmers' feedback

- 'Whole Systems Approach' - all research should be brought together and applied to the whole farm system. Science de-links components in order to investigate certain issues, but a farm works together as a whole system
- Trials are often compromised by scientists not listening to the advice of farmers. You need practical experience combined with science for effective research

Agencies, industry, science provider and others

- Move from a more of a planning approach to an action approach
- Government funded versus industry funded
- What type of research? Conduct the same research you will get the same results

Any comments? Please contact Monica Peters **monica.peters@landcare.org.nz** (07) 859 3725 or Katie Waaka **katie@rotorualand.co.nz** (07) 348 8887

ROTORUA LAKES & LAND TRUST

Ngati Whakaue Tribal Lands

Sustainable Farming Fund
www.maf.govt.nz/sff

Ministry for the Environment
Manatu Mo Te Taiao
Sustainable Management Fund

NZ Landcare Trust
landcare action on the ground