

Rural News July 24

Health fears stop 1080 drop

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BY ROSS ANNABELL

HUTT VALLEY Medical Officer of Health Stephen Palmer has stopped a planned airdrop of 1080 pellets over part of Tararua Forest Park which includes the water supply for the town of Featherston.

His move follows allegations by two South Wairarapa doctors that there have been unexplained "peaks" in the number of human miscarriages in the area following previous 1080 airdrops in the late 1970s, and in 1993 and 1994.

Palmer told *Rural News* he has withdrawn approval for the operation pending receipt of further information from Wellington Regional Council, which is carrying out the drop to control possums in Tararua Forest Park.

Boar Bush Gully stream, which supplies part of the town water supply, is within the drop zone.

Wellington Regional Council has already postponed the drop of 1080-treated, pellet-based baits for several weeks, because of bad weather.

The area is mostly heavy bush in the Tararua Ranges, but includes a one kilometre wide strip of private land adjoining the forest edge, in an endemic TB area.

Palmer's sudden move to stop the programme surprised the regional council's biosecurity manager, Wayne O'Donnell.

O'Donnell said the action has serious implications for the regional council's anti-TB programme,

which is funded by the Department of Conservation and the Animal Health Board (AHB).

The aborted air drop was to be the final operation in a large scale control programme involving farmers, DOC, Wellington Regional Council and the AHB.

The drop was approved on the basis that the Boar Bush Gully supply would be turned off, and the helicopter would use a high-tech navigation system to ensure no baits were dropped within 20m of the stream.

Palmer said it will take some time to check miscarriage evidence, because official information is difficult to access.

Stillbirths are notifiable to the Department of Justice, but information on miscarriages is less accessible and depends on whether women are admitted to hospitals.

The Featherston cases involve miscarriages between 10 and 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Palmer said he has no idea at this stage how long approval for the airdrop will be withheld.

He said there appears to be very little available research information on human exposure to 1080, although there is a lot relating to birds, animals and insects.

He believes there have been cases of people poisoned while working with 1080, but the risk seems from the evidence to be extremely low from either contaminated drinking water or meat.

From: ..
Posted At: Monday, 5 February 2007 12:15 p.m.
Conversation: reply to your email.
Posted To: 1080 Mailbox
Subject: reply to your email.

Re my application, HREO5002.

I want to inform you that I want my submission, which I sent to you accepted. I prefer not to speak on my submission if it is not necessary, as it is not always easy for me to get time off work. Especialy if it means travelling to wellington. Should it be necessary to speak about it. Then please accept this email as my authority to speak oo my submission

Yours faithfully,

Monday 5th February 2007.