

Dogs kill Brook Park sheep

A DOG, or dogs, has attacked three sheep in Te Kuiti's Brook Park in recent weeks.

One sheep had to be put down because its injuries were so bad, while the others were mauled to death, their throats ripped out.

Brook Park is owned by Waitomo District Council and leased by Otorohanga farmer Ed Morrow.

The carcasses were found about a third of the way down from the park's summit and some distance above the upper car park and picnic area, two on a southern slope and one on the eastern face almost in the centre of the park.

From the dates the sheep were checked by Mr Morrow, it is thought the heavily in-lamb ewes were killed in three separate attacks.

The first two happened a few days apart, probably in the fourth week of June, and the latest attack possibly on Monday or Tuesday last week.

"This is very worrying," says Mr Morrow.

"The flock is very close to lambing and these were strong, healthy

sheep.

"They had obviously been run down by a dog, or dogs and their throats savaged.

"The poor ewe we found this week also had its belly ripped open."

KEEP DOGS SECURE

He says he has no problem with people bringing their dogs into Brook Park, however, they must be on a leash.

"After what I've seen here, any dog caught in the park on its own will probably have a fairly short lifespan," he says.

"I appeal to the owners of all dogs, especially in the north-west area of the town, to make sure their pets are securely fenced in or tied up - day and night.

"Owners must know where their dogs are at all times.

"And to everyone, if you see a dog, or dogs, without their owners please report it immediately by ringing the Waitomo District Council who will alert the animal control officer.

TO P3



KEEP OUT: Otorohanga farmer Ed Morrow, who leases Brook Park in Te Kuiti, is appealing to the public to keep their dogs, horses and motorbikes out of the park. In recent weeks three in-lamb ewes have been mauled by dogs.

Waitomo mayor's complaint not upheld

WAITOMO mayor Brian Hanna is unfazed that a complaint he made to the Waikato Regional Council has been dismissed.

The complaint was lodged on May 29, after WRC environmental performance committee chairman Clyde Graf posted a video online alleging two cattle died on a Mahoenui farm after ingesting 1080.

The deaths occurred on May 28 when Mr Graf, a well-known anti-1080 campaigner, filmed the cattle carcasses belonging to farmer Chris Barker. Mr Barker blames 1080 for the deaths.

The cattle broke through a gate and entered restricted DOC land where WRC

carries out aerial 1080 drops to control possums.

WRC immediately launched a formal investigation into the incident to establish the cause of death.

COMPLAINT

In his complaint to WRC chief executive Vaughan Payne, Mr Hanna wrote: "Why is a regional councillor who represents the Thames/Coromandel ward, in our district filming such a slanted piece of biased activism, and releasing this in a public forum. I believe this is a huge conflict of interest.

"It is quite clear that Cr Graf is totally

conflicted in this matter.

"I cannot see how he can sit in a governance role as an elected representative on WRC and then produce highly inflammatory material critical of WRC and then release this in such a slanted and inflammatory way to a worldwide audience.

"I ask you to fully investigate this conflict, and what is, in my opinion, a clear breach of the Code of Conduct expected of a regional councillor."

INVESTIGATED

The complaint was independently investigated by Auckland lawyer Linda O'Reilly

of Brookfields Lawyers who found Mr Graf had not breached any of the council's codes of conduct.

"Of the specific constraints that might arguably have been breached, I note that when expressing a personal view in the media a member must not state or imply that they represent council's view, misrepresent a view contrary to a council decision or policy as implying a majority view, or present a personal view in a manner that undermines council's policy," stated Ms O'Reilly.

"There is no evidence that Cr Graf has implied that his views represent those of the council.

TO P3

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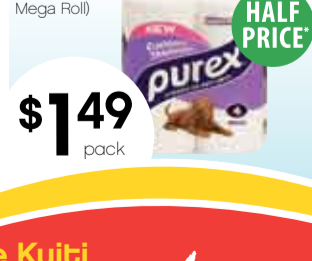
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YOUR LETTERS

Vanuatu experience

I WRITE regarding the young achiever featured in the *Waitomo News*, June 26.

Congratulations Cameron, on your recent success in the world of rugby – well done.

I was interested to read your comments on your adventures in Vanuatu last October, and it was gratifying that the experience has left a lasting impression on you and helped to widen your horizons. I hope Josh Te Awa is also enjoying success.

The idea to provide such an opportunity to all of Te Kuiti youth had been presented via the *Waitomo News* in a letter to the editor on March 7, 2013.

Unfortunately, the man behind the enterprise, (my husband) Bruce Fuller, passed away on November 12, just one month after the boys returned in October 2013.

With much effort and dedication he was able to produce a booklet 'Volunteer Vanuatu Experience' recording the whole episode with photos provided by the Ni-vans overlooking the project.

Bruce also wrote a brief background to the venture, including it in the book along with a report from Volunteer Vanuatu that managed the project.

We both attended a presentation of the trip, prepared and given by the boys to the Piopio College pupils and staff on October 29.

The pupils were enthusiastic about the possibility of having a similar experience one day.

According to Bruce's wishes, I presented copies of the booklet to boys and Piopio College as well as the Te Kuiti Library.

The boys made a well-received presentation of their adventure to the Waitomo District Council members on December 9.

Bruce's hope was that someone or some people would be inspired to pick up where he left off and provide similar opportunities to other lads or lasses in the community.

Interested parties may access the book at the library and contact me for further information.

Joan Fuller

Te Kuiti

1080 story

WE write in response to the 1080 article in last week's *North King Country Farmer* (July 8).

Our farm is about to be included in the current 1080 pest control programme in the Pirongia/Otorohanga district and we can't wait for them to get to us.

It is a tragedy – both financial and emotional – if cattle have to be killed due to TB. It is clear the major culprits in the spread of TB are possums.

However, for us more importantly, we cannot just sit back and watch our native birds become extinct. In our lifetime, both the kiwi and kokako have disappeared from our area.

We used to know where the one last kokako was and could call him up

with a tape recorder playing kokako calls. One sad day we went looking for him but there was no response.

We do not want the tui, bellbirds, tomtits and others to follow the same fate.

We last had 1080 used on our place about seven years ago.

Following that operation the bounce back in birdlife was impressive.

We were concerned that morepork (ruru) might be adversely affected (since they may eat poisoned mice or rats) but by the end of the summer following the 1080 operation we had more ruru calling than we have heard anywhere.

We had the most amazing dawn choruses with many ruru, tui and other birds all calling at once.

Since that time we have installed bait stations and put some effort into trying to maintain the low possum and rat numbers.

However, our 60 acres (24 ha) of very steep and difficult bush is not easy for ground control, and over the last two years we have seen a rapid reinvasion of possums.

Bird numbers are declining again and the effect on the forest trees is becoming really evident.

Tawa, kamahi, miro and rata are all being stripped of foliage.

This week we were looking at a miro tree where the keruru (wood pigeons) often seek berries.

It has gone from a thick lush tree to a thin open tree with lots of space between the branches and very much less foliage and fruit than two or three years ago.

We do not like using poisons.

Who does?

However, until we find a better way, it is critical that we "hold the tide" against invasive pests. So far 1080 has been proven effective.

It rapidly decomposes once exposed to moisture in the environment.

The many past operations have shown that it can be used both safely and effectively.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has thoroughly investigated 1080 use and found it to be the best current solution.

We find it somewhat of a strange coincidence that the one day Chris Barker's cattle "broke through a gate" into DOC land just happened to be during a 1080 operation and that the Graf brothers just happened to be there with their cameras at the same time. *See editor's note.*

We look forward to the helicopter drop and a successful breeding season for the birds.

Megan & Errol Balks

Te Awamutu

Editor's note: To Megan and Errol – I wish to clarify one point made in your letter above. The Graf brothers were not on Chris Barker's property the day the cattle died. The aerial drop on DOC land near this property was done on May 17, the cattle were moved on May 19 and two died on May 21.

The Grafs filmed the two dead steers on May 22, after a post mortem examination, and the subsequent video was released on YouTube on May 25. The post mortem result has yet to be released.

Online tool for ratepayers

THE New Zealand Taxpayers' Union has launched 'Ratepayers report', hosted by Stuff.co.nz.

The report builds on the work of local government expert and financial analyst Larry Mitchell and his work in previous years comparing New Zealand's 67 territorial authorities.

The data, pulled together by the Taxpayers' Union and checked independently has been supplied to councils for viewing before its publication.

For the first time New Zealanders now have an interactive online tool to compare their local council to those of the rest of the country.

Executive director of the Taxpayers' Union Jordan Williams says: "Ratepayers can visit (the website) ratepayersreport.co.nz to compare their local council including average rates, debt per ratepayer and even CEO salaries.

"Liabilities per ratepayer for most New Zealand councils continue to increase. The most alarming figure is Auckland at \$15,858, three and a half times the national average of \$4386," says Mr Williams.

Ratepayers' Report also compares, for the first time, average residential rates.

The figure has been calculated using a methodology developed within the local government sector to compare average residential rates.

Only Kaipara District Council was unwilling to provide the Taxpayers' Union with the average residential rates information.

IN BRIEF

Fatal Otorohanga accident

HAMILTON Police Serious Crash Unit officers are investigating a fatal accident on July 4 that claimed the life of Otorohanga man **Jonathon Fullerton** (48). He was killed after a tractor he was driving, rolled while he was spraying on a Barbara Rd farm. Emergency services were called after he was found by a fellow employee the next morning.

Kiwis win butchers' contest

NEW Zealand's Pure South Sharp Blacks have won the Tri-Nations Butchers' Challenge after taking out Australia and Great Britain in Yorkshire, England on July 11. The top six Kiwi butchers won the title and trophy for the second year in a row after turning a side of beef and a whole lamb into more than 50 products fit for a top shelf butcher's display and value-added meals, in two hours. The team, chosen from applicants around the country, is managed by Hellers' founder Todd Heller.

THUMBS UP/DOWN



THUMBS UP to the Piopio Volunteer Fire Brigade.

I had a callout on Monday (July 7) as a First Responder to an accident with a passenger needing to be cut from a vehicle. The guys from Piopio arrived; they were calm, efficient, adaptable and knew what they were doing. It made me realise how lucky we are in a small community to have people who willingly give up their spare time to train and provide such a vital service, you were awesome.

Cheryl Richardson

Mapiu

THUMBS DOWN to the horses that leave their droppings on the footpaths – it was by the information centre two weeks ago, on the footpath across from Bernie's in Carroll St a week ago, and now the same place on Thursday. You aren't allowed to keep cows in town, but can keep horses. They even go on the grass across from the shops in the main street where people have lunch.

Fran Turnward

Te Kuiti

Dog owners face very stiff penalties

OWNERS of dogs found attacking sheep in Te Kuiti's Brook Park face prosecution and stiff fines of up to \$3000.

Waitomo District Council regulatory services manager John Moran says the Dog Control Act 1996, requires dogs to be under control at all times.

"Clearly a dog attacking sheep in Brook Park – or even running free without its owner in or near the park – is not under control at all times," he says.

His warning comes after three sheep were killed in alleged dog attacks.

The penalty if convicted of having a dog carrying out an attack of this sort is a fine of up to \$3000.

There is also the opportunity for the council, if the prosecution is successful, to seek an order to have the dog destroyed.

"We have a bylaw that says dogs in public places must be on a lead at all times unless they are in a designated dog exercise area," says Mr Moran.

"Brook Park is not a dog exercise

area, but a working farm effectively, and there are similar fines for breaking that bylaw.

"We are aware of the recent attacks and I have asked our new dog control officer Lucas Koroheke who joined our staff last week, to make random patrols through and around the park to try and catch this dog, or dogs.

"We also hope anyone who sees dogs roaming near the park will contact council as quickly as they can because we need to get our staff up there straight away.

"It's no good telling us about it a day later."

A description of the dog, its location and the direction it was heading, is always helpful too.

DOGS IMPOUNDED

WDC pound manager Mark Ammon has two dogs at the facility which were caught mauling sheep on a property near New World Te Kuiti on July 5.

He believes the dogs, a young pitbull

female and an older pitbull-cross bitch, come from Gadsby Rd, but their owner has not come forward to claim them.

"Sadly, their time at the pound is running out," says Mr Ammon.

"If people kept their dogs at home, temptation wouldn't get in their way.

"In term of animal control, 95% of the problem is people.

"Many don't look after their dogs as responsible dog owners."

He says the biggest thing owners can do is ensure their dog remains on their property at all times.

"People make a song and dance about registration, but at the end of the day, it's more important your dog stays on your property so it can't get into mischief," he says.

"That's the single biggest problem in this district . . . people don't keep their dogs fenced in or tied up."

To report a problem dog, or contact the dog control officer phone (07) 878 0800 24/7 or 0800 WDCHELP 24/7.



HANGING OUT: Traffic was held up for brief periods on Friday as two industrial abseilers worked up a steep cliff face beside SH3, one kilometre south of the Hangatiki intersection. Transfield Services manager Gareth Bellamy says specialist industrial abseilers were hired to chip away loose overhanging sandstone which could potentially fall onto the highway. "It's just routine SH3 maintenance as far as Transfield is concerned." The experts from Hamilton company Avalon Abseiling removed two truckloads of sandstone from the steep cutting. Traffic control was provided by Inframax staff to enable the abseilers to work safely and give trucks access to the site.

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