

1080 drops anger local farmer

FROM P1

“So I’m not pointing the finger at anyone but there must be an alternative.”

CUSTODIANS

Mr Barker says for the money the regional council spends on aerial drops they could hire trappers instead.

“We have to remember that we’re not just landowners, we’re custodians of the land and stewards of the land.

“This farm is an area where local children regularly come to camp so we can’t just keep on piling poison onto our land and expect that nothing will happen down the line.

“In my lifetime we’ve had DDT, 245T, Diazinon, organophosphates which were all deemed safe by the powers that be, and are all now banned – this is just another one.

“So for people to say the science of using 1080 is proven I think that is crap, because that is what they all said about the other now-banned poisons.

“It’s mind-numbingly dumb to continue using it and I’m confident that

time will prove them all wrong.”

Mr Barker says the next aerial 1080 drop at Whareorino is planned for 2017.

MAYOR’S COMMENTS

He is also upset at recent comments in the media last week.

“For Brian Hanna (Waitomo mayor) to say 95% of all farmers in the area support the use of 1080 is ludicrous.

“What planet is he on? Of the five farmers up this road 100% are anti-1080 and virulently so.

“So I think we as a community need to have more say in how we control pests in the bush because the risk is too great both socially and spiritually to continue dumping poison across ‘clean green’ New Zealand.

“We really need to take stand on this issue.”

SERIOUS ISSUE

WRC councillor Stuart Kneebone says WRC are taking Mr Barker’s cattle death issue very seriously and the formal investigation is ongoing.

“These cattle have unfortunately somehow gained access to an area that they were not supposed to be in



TAKING A STAND: Mahoenui sheep and beef farmer Chris Barker, who allegedly lost two cattle to 1080 poisoning on May 28, says it is time to find a better alternative.

but it is important that this investigation is allowed to run its course so we can establish the true facts regarding what has happened.

“We take great care to ensure that our aerial 1080 operations are strictly controlled to avoid

harm to non-target animals.

“I’m confident that our pre-operation consultation procedures are robust and all adjoining landowners are consulted and advised to ensure their stock is kept out of treatment areas.”

Mayor lodges complaint with WRC

BY TODD WARD

WAITOMO mayor Brian Hanna has lodged a formal complaint with the Waikato Regional Council to prevent the spread of “propaganda”.

The complaint made last week to WRC chief executive Vaughan Payne came after regional councillor Clyde Graf released a video alleging cattle were killed by 1080 poisoning.

The two deaths occurred on a farm which neighbours the Whareorino priority possum control area, south of Piopio, where WRC use aerial 1080 drops.

It is believed the cattle that died forced their way through a gate into the treatment area.

Mr Hanna says the video is “totally biased” as when it was released there was no evidence the cattle in the video were killed by ingesting 1080.

“It’s far too premature for a regional councillor, who is the

chair of the regional council’s environmental committee, to be behaving in that way.

“To rush into releasing a video alleging the cattle have died from 1080 poisoning without waiting for the autopsy report is totally inappropriate.

“Since I lodged the complaint, I’ve had a huge number of phone calls and emails from farmers saying ‘good on you’ and ‘it’s about time someone stood up against this propaganda’.”

Mr Hanna says his complaint was also lodged on behalf of local farmers.

“My issue is that 1080 is the only tool we have on our rugged hill country for controlling possums.

“I lived in Mahoenui (south of Piopio) for a long time and went through two TB outbreaks, now many sheep and beef farmers in our district have dairy grazing components in their systems and if there is another TB outbreak that vanishes.

“So I’m standing up for our farmers because 25% of our district is bush and we need to protect the ability to control the pests and prevent further outbreaks of TB.”

Mr Hanna says the science behind the use of 1080 is “well proven”.

“The clear message is when Forest and Bird (Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand) come out and condone the use of 1080 then we’ve got to listen to them rather than the radical views of the few.

“I want to draw attention to this and say that the majority of farmers actually value the regional council’s pest control programme and in this situation (Mr Graf’s video) it is yet to be proven that 1080 was the cause of death.”

WRC launched a formal investigation last week into the cattle deaths which will focus on establishing the cause of death of the stock and confirming whether the possum control operation was compliant with conditions.

It is expected to take several weeks.



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