

RURAL LIVING

A guide to life in the Country.



Rangitikei
UNSPOILT...

DOES EXPECTATION MATCH REALITY?

The answer to this question varies from person to person. The question does however, remind us that many of the rural qualities and characteristics that help to create an alternative living environment can also be problematic from time to time.

Rural Rangitikei is largely a work place for a host of people and activities. As with any workplace there are jobs that need to be done, jobs that don't stop for the weather, time of day or public holiday. Concerns over activities often occur where alternative lifestyles, farming and other rural activities exist in the same area.

This brochure is design to help increase people's awareness of the range of issues that can exist in the rural environment and offers guidance on how issues can be dealt with.

ISSUES IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT INCLUDE...

Noise and odour are just two of many concerns that are commonly raised in the rural environment. The issues include:

Noise – Aerial top dressing aeroplanes and noise from aeroplanes landing and taking off from farm air strips; cattle being weaned; tractors and other machinery; trucks on the road; existing industries e.g. quarries and shooting ranges; chain saws from forestry lots;

Odour – Industry e.g. piggeries; fertiliser and silage; effluent ponds; smoke;

Dust – From ploughed paddocks; from metal roads and tracks;

Spray Drift – Through the application of herbicides and insecticides;

Rural Outlook – Changes in the landscape as buildings are constructed; trees are planted or harvested; building and planning requirements;

Contaminated Sites – Old sheep dip pits; disused farm rubbish dumps; areas used to store farm machinery and chemicals;

Pets & Weeds – Control of noxious plants and pests;

Fencing – Erection and maintenance of fences;

Stock – Control of animals; issues around lambing and calving time;

Access to Rural Amenities – Rights to access land for recreational activities;

Services – Provisions of effluent disposal; water supply;



WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITIES ARE PERMITTED IN THE RURAL AREA?

Some activities in the rural environment are permitted as of right. This means people can expect to carry the activity out as long as they meet certain conditions in the District Plan and Regional Plans. For example; permitted activities within the District Plan include:

- Farming (excluding intensive farming);
- Horticulture;
- Production forestry;
- Effluent ponds for on-farm waste disposal;
- Existing industries on specified sites.

Other activities are generally allowed provided an application for resource consents is made to the District Council and certain conditions in the District Plan are met.

- Garden centres;
- Home occupations;
- Education and early childhood facilities'
- Relocated Dwellings;
- Dependent dwelling units.

I HAVE SOME CONCERNS...

“Woken up at 5am to the neighbour’s dog barking – that ain’t nothing yet. 6am and the stock truck rolls down the road followed closely by a cloud of dust. 6:30am the magpies are making a ruckus, which sets the cattle off – so much for the lie in. 7am and the other neighbour lights a fire to burn off “rubbish” – wish you had brought the washing in the night before!”

“I had stock on the road moving them to another paddock when they took off into the neighbour’s property and helped themselves to the garden greenery. I had asked if I could shut the gate but the neighbours insisted they wanted it left open”

The above scenarios may be unlikely but they do capture a bit of how some people can feel at times when either the day to day occurrences of the rural environment conflict with needs or expectations, or needs and expectations conflict with day to day rural occurrences. What can you do when this happens?

1. Inform yourself- check the District Plan and regional plans and talk to the Council staff;
2. Take a positive view – you are living in a rural environment – make sure your expectations match reality...or make sure you help your neighbours to appreciate your farming requirements;
3. Take action where you can – talk to your neighbour (for example; perhaps the neighbour could call you before spraying.)

WHAT TO DO ABOUT NOISE

Responsibilities: The Resource Management Act 1991 imposes a general duty on every occupier of land to ensure that the emission of noise from land or water does not exceed a reasonable level. The District Plan also has performance conditions for some activities in relation to noise e.g. home occupations and the existing industries identified in the Plan.

There are however, existing activities that create effects (legitimately) that are a component of the rural environment. For example; aerial top dressing aeroplanes fly low and are noisy but they fulfil a very necessary function. Stock noise at certain times of the year (e.g. during weaning) can be considerable but farming is a legitimate rural industry and noise is an unavoidable effect. Truck movements along rural roads associated with legitimately established activity can create “legitimate” noise and dust effects.

Your role: Understand that you have to expect and accept noise will be a component part of living in the rural area. If noise is being generated from a source that is not legitimately established or the noise is excessive and unreasonable (e.g. occurring approach the source of the problem as discussions may result in the parties being able to establish some common found rules. Recognise that some noise may be a result of a productive activity that requires intense and extended hours e.g. during harvest time or weaning and the noise will come and go.

Others roles: The farm, industry or other operator has to meet the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991 and the District Plan. If you are unsure as to whether an activity is being undertaken appropriately/in accord with the District Plan or resource consent that contact the District Council.

SMELL, DUST AND SPRAY DRIFT

Responsibilities: Control of discharges to air and water in terms of odour, dust and of agricultural spray rests with horizons.mw (the Manawatu Wanganui Regional Council). There is some overlap of responsibilities however, with the District Plan controlling dust for some activities e.g. home occupations.

Generally the requirement is that there be no levels of objectionable dust, spray drift and odour beyond the boundary of the site on which the use occurs. Dust from traffic on a road is not an issue that can be controlled unless there is an application for resource consent that may aggravate the problem, Occasionally there may be dust or odour effects that are of short term effect and duration. For example, the neighbour's effluent pond requires some cleaning, or the adjoining paddock has been cultivated and will be planted out in a week or two.

The Regional Air Plan (horizons.mw) provides for the application of agrichemicals as a permitted activity subject to some very specific criteria. There is a requirement that with the widespread application of agrichemicals (i.e. from aerial and land based sources other than using a hand held device of vehicle mounted device for spot spraying) within 50 metres of the property boundary that a "property spray plan" be prepared. You can ask your neighbour for a copy of the "spray plan" and when they are going to spray.

Your role: Recognise that some of these effects may be one off or short term issues that really are to be expected. Any ongoing problems then contact

horizons.mw. If you live next to an organised farm then discuss any specific requirements with the farmer before spraying.

Others role: There is a general requirement to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects as well as a need to comply with specific requirements in regional plans and the District Plan. Check the requirements of both horizons.mw and the District Council before undertaking any activity that may create dust, odour or spray drift issues.

SMOKE

Responsibilities: Make sure that when you are burning rubbish you check what you are burning and where the smoke goes. Open burning of vegetable matter including plant pests, agricultural, horticultural or domestic garden waste, cardboard, paper, non PVC plastic, untreated timber or forestry waste is permitted as long as there is no objectionable smoke or odour at the boundary of the property. Do not burn PVC plastic, treated timber, rubber products (including tyres), waste oils or dead animals.

Your role: Check the requirements for both horizons.mw and the District Council before undertaking any activity that may create a smoke nuisance.

CONTAMINATION ISSUES

Responsibilities: Where land contains “known” areas of contamination e.g. disused sheep and cattle dips and storage areas for diesel then that information needs to be passed on to the prospective purchaser. Always ask the vendor whether there are any contaminated areas on the land you are considering buying.

Your role: Make sure you check your responsibilities with horizons.mw before you discharge any contaminant into or onto land, air or water and discharge water into water. Before purchasing a property check all known sources of information regarding likely contamination issues and if you are uncertain as to what questions to ask then contact horizons.mw.

Others role: The Ministry for the Environment is addressing the issues associated with the cleanup of contaminated sites at a national level. The District Council has a database of “known” contaminated sites, but not all potential sites are on the database because not all rural areas have been surveyed. Horizons.mw may also be able to assist with further information.

RURAL OUTLOOK – VISUAL AND LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Responsibilities: The Fencing Act sets out landowners' responsibilities regarding fencing and procedures for settling disputes between neighbours. If a fence is damaged or destroyed by a sudden accident that requires immediate work, then either adjoining owner can do the work and recover half the cost from the other occupier. There will be times where stock are moved along a road and be aware that any of your nicely planted front verge/garden that is not fences may end up being trampled or eaten!

Rural land is largely in private ownership and as such anyone entering a property is trespassing (unless invited of course). There are situations where access can be gained e.g. if there is an esplanade strip or access strip which provides access to a river, although there may be agreements in place that allow the areas to be closed at certain times i.e. during lambing. Do not assume you can gain access – check with the landowner or ask the Council for information on walkways with the District.

It is both the landowner's and horizons.mw's responsibility to control noxious weeds on your property. Horizons.mw provide useful information on plants that are identified as noxious and who is responsible for controlling certain plants. It is the landowner's responsibility to control rabbits, possums, goats, ferrets, stoats and weasels. Horizons.mw will assist with possum control on properties with identified native ecosystems. Magpies are not protected and can be controlled – horizons.mw can assist with advice and with Larsen live capture traps. Pukeko can be a nuisance but they are protected outside of the duck shooting season.

The District Plan requires setbacks from property boundaries for dwellings, building and plantation forestry. There are also specific controls on relocated dwellings. Generally anyone can construct a dwelling/building in whatever materials and style they choose. – so do not expect a dwelling to match or mirror the style of your own. In design any house consideration should be given to the placement of the house to reflect the nature of the land to minimise visual and environmental impact and effects on sensitive environments e.g. bush remnants.

Practical issues to consider include costs of services and location of sewage systems. The District Council and horizons.mw have rules for the supply of potable water and disposal of effluent/stormwater. If your sewage system discharges to land the discharge must comply with certain rules. Different soil types will require different effluent disposal systems – talk to horizons.mw.

Nothing is static in the rural environment. What exists one day may not the next – stock move, trees are removed or planted, another house is built, land is ploughed and crops harvested. There are issues associated with constructing a house or other buildings close to established forestry lots. Fire within a forest poses a risk to your house and also your activities potentially pose an increased risk in terms of fire starting within the forest.

Your role: Recognise that as a landowner within the rural area you are responsible for managing your land and livestock.

Take particular care when siting your house in terms of:

- Proximity to existing forestry lots;
- Likely visual effects;
- Issues associated with stability of the land;
- Provision of water and sewage disposal;
- Any areas that may be sensitive environments e.g. waterways and bush remnants;
- Setback requirements.

In siting you house discuss any issues with the District Council. Check the District Plan requirements and subdivision potential of land adjacent – you may end up with more houses next door than you thought. Also the District Plan can change so rules in the future may provide for different possibilities that the current provisions – discuss this with the District Council prior to purchasing a property.



WHAT IF I WANT TO START AN ACTIVITY – WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Before you think of starting an activity it pays to check things out with both the District Council and horizons.mw. There are rules and bylaws that control the following (amongst other matters):

- Location and height of buildings/dwellings e.g. distances from property boundaries;
- Separation distances requirements for production forestry and duration of operations for portable sawmills;
- Number of employees (for the likes of home occupations);
- Disposal of sewage including the siting of effluent ponds and a requirement for ongoing maintenance;
- Supply of water;
- Discharges to ground, air and water;
- Noise and hours of operation;
- Cultural and natural heritage issues;
- Earthwork requirements;
- Access and parking requirements;
- Floodable areas.



This pamphlet is one in a series published by the Rangitikei District. It is intended to provide general information only. It is not intended as a legal document and may not be applicable to all circumstance. For specific details on any consent application, please contact:

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