



the GRUNT!



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NEW PLAYING FIELD FOR PIG HUNTERS

We have a new playing field entirely with a new Government that has new policies and a new Minister of Conservation Hon Eugenie Sage from the Green Party that we are sure will have her own objectives for the management of public conservation land.

The Green Party conservation policy includes:

- Improve DOC Funding.
- Develop DOC's core capacity.
- Protect Threatened Indigenous Species.
- Ensure there is a connected network of protected areas with all ecosystem types represented; this means conserving the areas we have already protected and providing greater protections to new areas.
- Ensure all threatened species have a recovery plan in place.
- Establish new, larger 'mainland islands' for intensive pest management.

- Reduce Pest Threats to Biodiversity.
- Develop and fund national pest management strategies.
- Significantly increase funding for pest eradication and control.
- Support replacing poisons with humane and safe biological and physical animal pest controls wherever practical.
- Public Access.
- Support walking right of access along waterways.
- Ensure paper roads remain open and adequately marked.
- Ensure that DOC has sufficient resources to protect and maintain back country huts and bivvies.



Under the previous government we have seen a significant increase in funding for pest control which has presented its challenges in terms of the Battle for our Birds program, and under this new government we expect this funding to increase further. So, it is vital that we make sure that our hunting resources are not casualties along the way. Of interest in the Greens policy is their support for replacing poisons with more safe and humane methods (albeit with the caveat of whenever practical). This is also something NZ First supports so the Pig Hunting Association will be pushing for some action on this.

We also have a new objective for Bovine TB. Just as we thought we might be nearing the objective of controlling TB to very low levels, the bar has been raised and now the objective is to eradicate the disease entirely. There has been much said about this program and the Pig Hunting Association and other organisations have been to the forefront again to ensure that hunting resources are safeguarded from the pest control operations that are the mainstay of the eradication program.

However, all this good work can be overshadowed when things happen such as an illegal release of sika deer in the Taranaki. Irrespective of who did it and why they did it, the fact that Sika deer are involved brings the hunting community into the picture. Pig Hunters have been much maligned over the release of pigs and we have to admit that some of this criticism is justified. Pig Hunters have worked hard to establish legal release programs and occurrences such as the release of deer or any pig releases for that matter brings any release program in to focus. Pig numbers are certainly not an issue over New Zealand as a whole and we all know that when left alone they breed all too well.

We will be keeping tabs on what new funding is made available and most importantly where it is going to be spent. Hopefully by the next issue the picture will be clearer.

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