



The GRUNT!

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GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL UNDERWAY

With the passing of the Game Animal Council Bill in November last year, we now have a Game Animal Council Act 2013. The first task under this Act is to form the council and to this end, the Minister of Conservation Hon Dr Nick Smith has called for nominations of people with the necessary knowledge and skills to help implement and develop the Game Animal Council into the organization we all want and need it to be.

By the time you read this, nominations will have just closed and very shortly you will have the first organization with a statutory mandate to manage herds of deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs for hunting purposes. The New Zealand Pig Hunting Association has nominated three of the current executive: Steve McFall, Grant Bunting and James Corban. In addition, current committee member Garry Ottmann has been nominated by other organisations.

More 1080 on the way

Recently the Minister of Conservation announced a boost in funding for extra pest control in the wake of an expected beech mast that will fuel rat and other pest numbers. We had all the usual zealots expounding the virtues of the poison and calling for the whole of New Zealand to be awash with 1080. Unfortunately, these loonies see 1080 as the end - not what it really is - just a means of pest control.

Game animals are a cultural, economic and recreational resource that is highly valued by New Zealanders. Game species are susceptible to 1080 poisoning either by design

or as a result of the control of pest species. This poison is currently a widely used tool in pest control; however its use in our environment has become an extremely contentious issue. Issues such as the by-kill of other species, animal welfare, residues and New Zealand's international image need to be addressed.

Much of New Zealand's pig hunting necessitates the use of dogs, which are particularly susceptible to being poisoned with 1080. The New Zealand Pig Hunting Association does not accept the indiscriminate use of 1080 or its use for game animal control, except in extreme circumstances, such as a major disease outbreak and will assess these on a case-by-case basis.

The NZPHA advocates for nationally consistent policies and methodology that minimizes side effects, especially its effect on dogs and game animals and the allocation of significant resources to finding more acceptable alternatives.

It is totally irresponsible for government agencies and eco-fundamentalist lunatics to place the future of pest control in the hands of only one chemical. Let's get real - what they are talking about is lacing our environment with poison not for one year, not for five or even ten years - but forever. Is that the future we want for our country?

What the government should be doing is funding the brightest people both nationally and internationally to find better, more environmentally friendly and more sustainable ways of controlling possums, rats, ferrets, stoats and weasels that are the real enemies of conservation.

