

Tax Working Group Public Submissions Information Release

Release Document

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Key to sections of the Official Information Act 1982 under which information has been withheld.

Certain information in this document has been withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- [1] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people;
- [2] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

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In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

30-04-2018

The Environmental aspect and Agriculture:

Farmers are NZ's greatest asset when referring to the potential gains that can be made in the environment through both carbon sequestration and proactive land stewardship.

Farmers are also NZ's greatest asset when referring to the potential financial gains that can be made through exported goods.

The minister's pre-emptive approach to explore the possibility for agriculture's inclusion in the NZ ETS is already taking us down the wrong path, it also doesn't make any sense.

The further proposals to investigate Land Tax, and Capital Gains Tax (If farms are included in this?) will only serve to damage our agricultural industry.

It is in our governments best interest to support not pressure NZ's Farmers.

I would suggest taking a drive through rural NZ, and pay attention to how many "for sale" signs are already stamped on farm gates there. How would NZ cope if it were completely reliant on a service economy? How would NZ cope if we had nothing to export?

The reality of this confronted me while driving out in the countryside in New York State a few years ago. The reality for the younger generation was that farming became too hard. We stayed in a district there where just 5 farms were still operating. The rest had been left to go fallow because nobody wanted to work the land.

How would NZ cope if this became our reality?

My wife and I milk 220 happy cows on a 100ha farm among thousands and thousands of trees, grasses and other wildlife that we the farmers have nurtured. The biodiversity on this farm and many others like it is not just being used for commercial gain; we orchestrate the farm in such a way that actually increases biodiversity, soil depth, and all of the aesthetic "clean-green" images that go with it. We differentiate this "clean-green" practice in the marketplace via Organic Certification.

Would the Paris agreement be satisfied if all NZ farmers planted 10000 trees, sowed biodiverse pastures increasing soil biology which filters the water that runs into our rivers and grows the topsoil storing thousands of tonnes of carbon that we in-turn draw a financial profit from?

The minister should be aware that many Farmers across NZ are already doing this.

I would strongly suggest our government show support for these farmers by staying out of their way, and recognize that environmental solutions are already taking place.

Sincerely yours,

Grant Ridings - 3rd generation Organic Farmer and Productive Ecologist

Examples of a commercially active
and biodiverse farm

