

OIA18-0184

11 MAY 2018

Andrew Nesham
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Dear Andrew Nesham

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 13 March 2018 relating to information regarding virus RHDV1-K5 and alternatives considered.

The following information is released to you under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

1. *What plans do the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) have for research into more humane pest management tools to control wild rabbits to replace the use of the inhumane RHDV.*

MPI is not planning to undertake further research into rabbit control tools. However, MPI encourages research into pest control tools generally, and commissions it as necessary.

One of the focuses of the Biosecurity Directions Statement is developing a "Toolbox for tomorrow". One of the expected outcomes is the development of a Biosecurity Science Plan, which will highlight the priority areas for investment, including new and improved tools for the control of pests and diseases. More information can be found at the link below:

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/biosecurity/biosecurity-2025/biosecurity-2025/>

If you are not already aware, New Zealand's independent Ministerial advisory committee, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), has a statutory function to identify animal welfare research needs. It also has a role to encourage the development of humane best practice guidance for the hunting and killing of wild animals, which includes pest management. NAWAC has previously recommended a range of research which has been commissioned by MPI.

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Key relevant reports are available here:

Beausoleil NJ, Fisher P, Warburton B, Mellor DJ 2010. *How humane are our pest control tools?* Part 1. Vertebrate toxic agents and kill traps in mammal species. Unpublished report prepared for Biosecurity New Zealand, Project No. 11326. 86 p.

Fisher P, Champion M 2010. *How humane are our pest control tools?* Part 2. In-burrow rabbit control methods. Landcare Research Contract report L0027, 26 p. Prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Wellington, New Zealand.

Fisher P, Champion M, Warburton B, Booth L 2010. *How humane are our pest control tools?* Part 3. Leg-hold traps, rotenone, alphachloralose and DRC-1339. Landcare Research Contract report LC76, 33 p. Prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Wellington, New Zealand.

- <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4009-how-humane-are-our-pest-control-tools>.

A Review of Best Practice Management for Humane and Effective Vertebrate Pest Control Technical Paper No: 2012/28 Prepared for Ministry for Primary Industries by Phil Cowan and Sam Brown, Landcare Research ISBN No: 978-0-478-40084-7 ISSN No: 2253-3923.

- <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4051-a-review-of-best-practice-management-for-humane-and-effective-vertebrate-pest-control>.

MPI encourages and supports research funding for humane pest management and other relevant areas in a number of ways. This includes:

- Investing MPI operational research and other funds, including funding industry applications to the Sustainable Farming Fund;
- Seeking co-funding for research from other agencies and working with stakeholders to identify potential for industry collaborative funding;
- Liaising directly with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to promote the need for sound, New Zealand-based animal welfare research addressing priorities of strategic significance to New Zealand;
- Liaising with New Zealand research providers and identifying international research collaboration opportunities, for instance through official channels including the EC-New Zealand Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum and the OIE Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare Science and Bioethical Analysis, and through informal channels;

2. *Given that MPI invested \$480k + \$260k into RHDV research, how much money does MPI plan to invest in humane pest rabbit control over the next 5 years, year by year?*

Please see the response to question one.

3. *What organisations and/or researchers and/or collaborations have MPI engaged with or who will MPI engage with to research humane pest rabbit controls?*

MPI and other agencies involved in rabbit control have engaged with Manaaki Whenua-Landcare Research in the past to undertake research to develop more efficient and effective methods of pest control using toxins and RHDV.

4. *What humane methods of pest rabbit control are MPI currently investigating and investing in?*

No investment is currently being made. Please see response to question one.

5. *How MPI will eradicate RHDV from the environment as soon as its use is replaced by more humane methods?*

At this time, there are no plans to eradicate RHDV from the New Zealand environment.

I trust this information satisfies your request.

Yours sincerely



Samuel Leske
Acting Director, Readiness and Response Services