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Changing land use in the Horowhenua



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Executive Summary

The Horowhenua District has a vast array of soil types, excellent road and rail access, the climate is mild and pastoral farming is declining and giving way to lifestyle blocks.

Other land use activities that have increased over the last decade (1989 – 1999) are dairy farming, horticulture and forestry ventures.

The Horowhenua District Council under its 'Districts Plan' is protecting the elite Class 1 & 2 soils (cropping and dairying) from over-subdivision. This will ensure that future generations can enjoy the Horowhenua being known as "The Garden of the lower North Island".

Farmers are subdividing because many can go through the process and sell there land in sections and make more money than selling it as a larger unit.

Subdivision does however cost and the Resource Management Act means that the local authority, due to public pressures through the submission and hearing process will not grant all titles.

Horowhenua's population is forecast till year 2012 to grow by up 5%.

Future access by road and rail is seen to be strength and a threat. The upgrading of the commuter train and the Transmission Gully road to and from Wellington could make the Horowhenua boom like the Kapiti Coast is currently. Other potential benefits could include part of the better soil in the district becoming organic to supply fresh 'chemical free' produce to the cities. There is also further potential in the coastal sand area becoming more productive with fertiliser and new pasture species.

On the other hand the Transit Bypass proposals of the two main towns in the District (Levin and Foxton) in the next decade could have a severe impact on the economy?

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Horowhenua District Soil Map

Coastal Sands

River Flats
(Class 1)

FOXTON

SHANNON

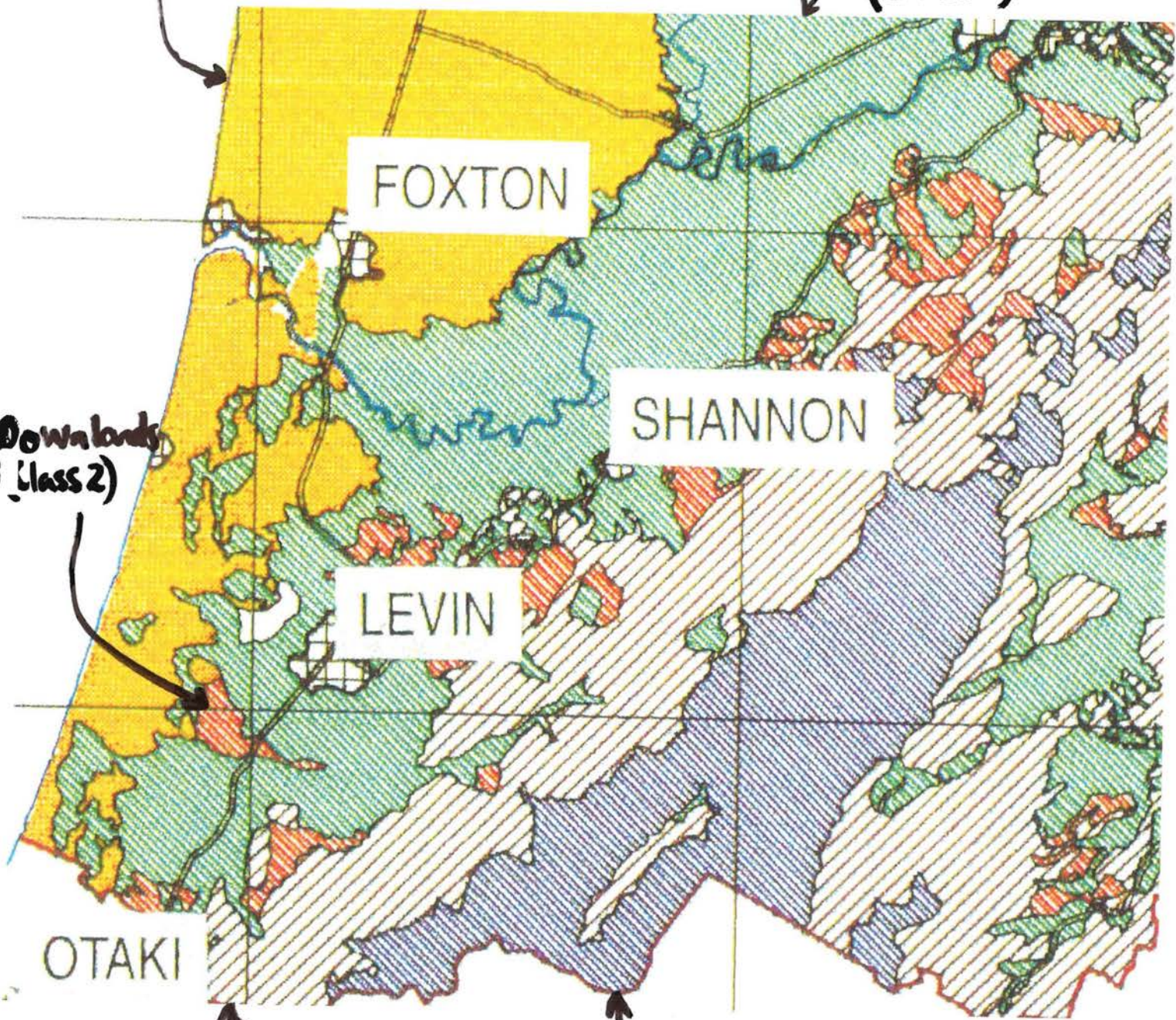
Downlands
(Class 2)

LEVIN

OTAKI

Foot hills
(Kawhatau Soil)

Steep



Introduction

The objectives of my study are;

1. Discover if there is a change in land use happening over the last 10 years from 1989 to 1999.

The reason this period has been chosen is to include post amalgamation of Borough and the County encompassing a new district.

Data collection was felt to be more accurate under the new boundary changes established in 1989.

2. Identify the major impacts and benefits of rural subdivision

Subdivision helps introduce many new people to this district, but that comes at a price that will be explored further in this report.

3. A vision for the future

Once all the data has been gathered it will be important to give a lead for the next decade (2000 – 2010) and what residents may expect to happen over this period.

The Horowhenua District is best described as being rurally diverse. A diverse range of soils, topography, land uses, enterprise and people.

The districts economy is not entirely dependent on any one particular industry or solely the export or domestic market.

Statistics for the district are

106,000 hectares (30,000 covered in native bush)

30,000 people

15,000 ratepayers (3,000 are rural)

Annual rate base is \$ 13.4 million. Not including Regional Council rates collected.

Three main towns Levin (15,000 population) Foxton and Shannon

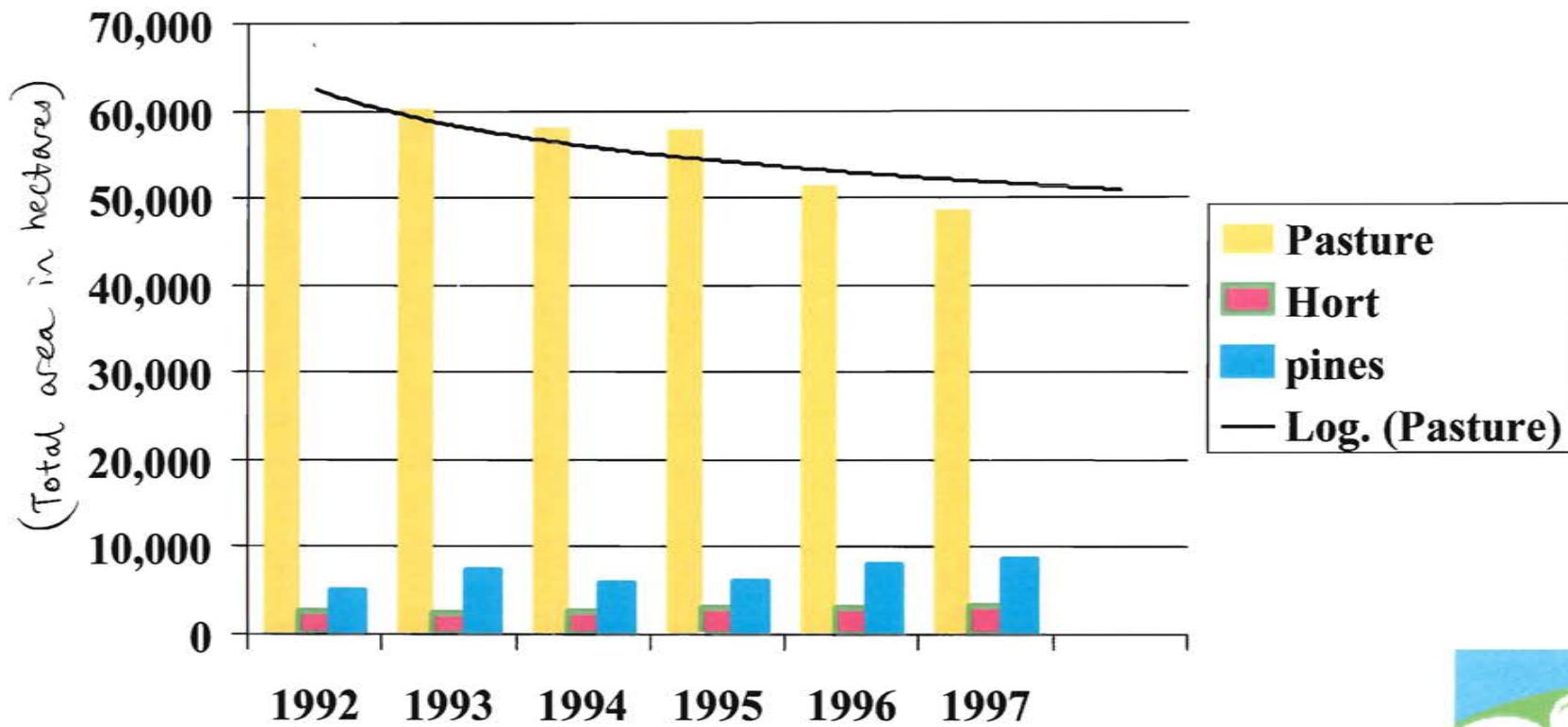
The district is linked to State highway 1 and the main trunk line in the North Island.

Average rainfall is 1100mm per year

Frosts per year average 15.

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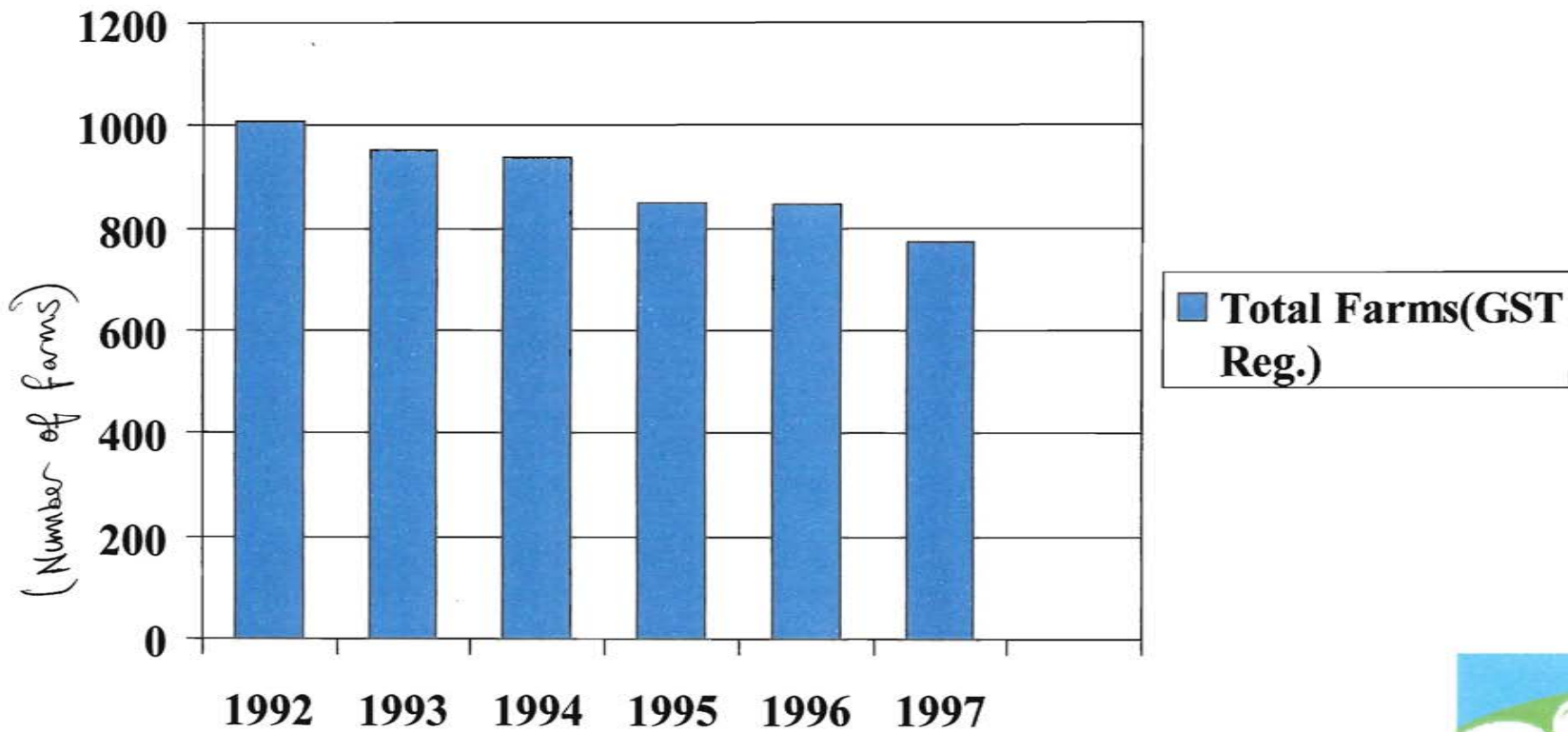
**Meat and Wool New Zealand Economic Service
HOROWHENUA LAND USE TREND(1992-1998)**



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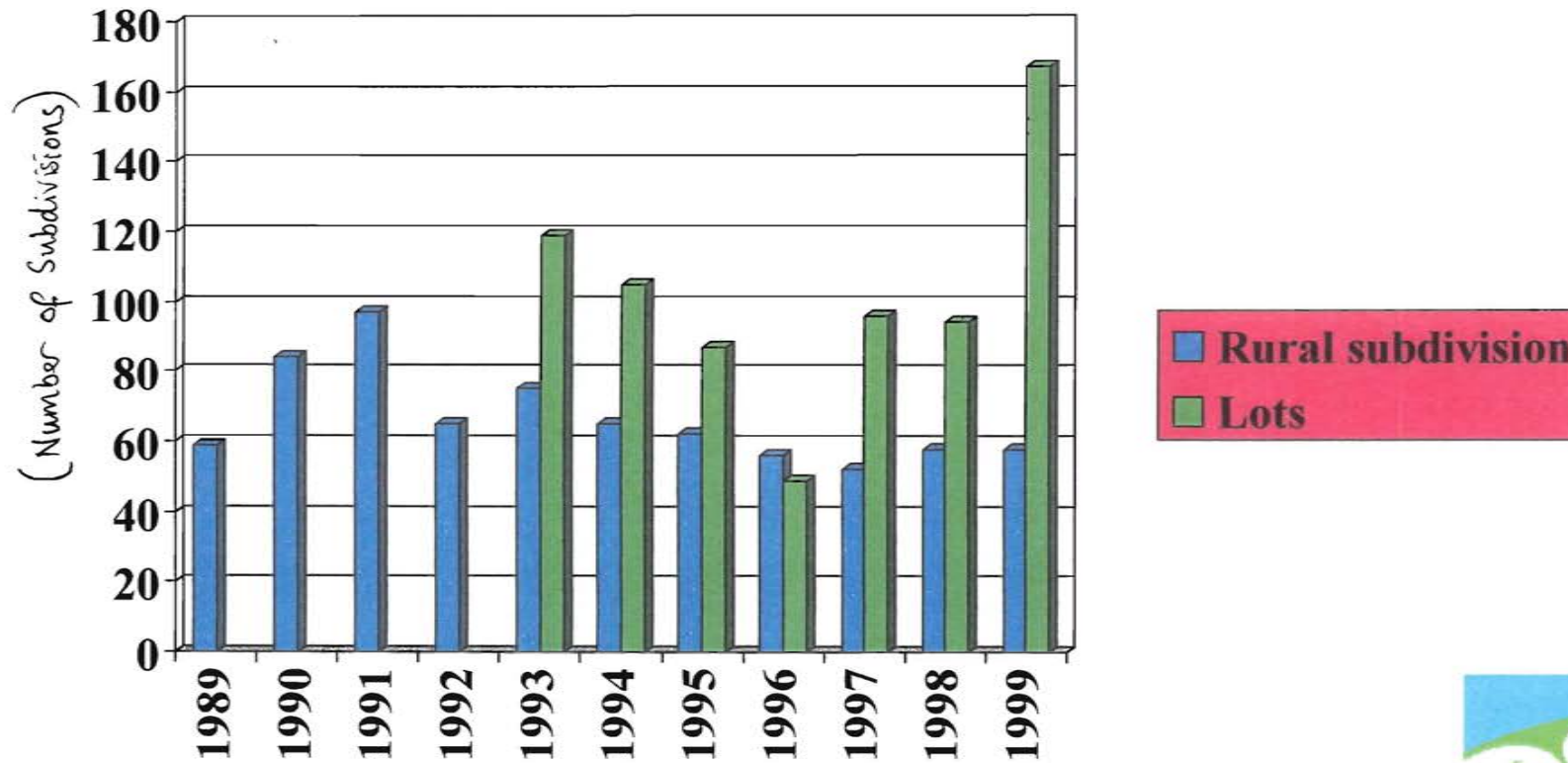
Meat and Wool New Zealand Economic Service HOROWHENUA LAND USE TREND(1992-1998)



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Number of Rural Subdivisions from 1989 - 1999



Graph Analysis

The Horowhenua Land Use Trend (1992 – 1998)

This graph clearly shows a downward trend of **pastoral farming** from 60,064 hectares in 1992 to 48,517 ha in 1997. **(19 % decline)**

If this trend continues pastoral land will be decreasing by close to 2,000 hectares a year!

Horticultural land has slowly been increasing over the same period from 2,620 ha in 1992 to 3,257 in 1997. This represents a growth of 106 hectares going into horticulture per year. **(3 % increase year)**

Forestry planting has risen from 4,840 ha in 1992 to 8,527 ha in 1997. This represents a growth of 614 ha per year or **43 % growth over this period.**

Total Number of Farms in the Horowhenua (1992 – 1998)

This graph (in blue) shows a decline in the number of farms over this six-year period from 1007 to 773 farmers that are registered for G.S.T purposes. This therefore could include lifestyle farmers, but as most of them generate an income off the farm, it is presumed that most of these farms are owner operated. **This decline represents 21% over the 6 years.**

Number of Rural Subdivisions from 1989 to 1999

The average number of rural subdivisions over this ten-year period has averaged 71. It peaked in 1991 at 97 subdivisions for that 12-month period. This was due to concern that the Horowhenua District Council were going to restrict subdivisions of the good soils (Class 1 and 2 soils). This caused many landowners to panic and that's why there is a noticeable peak in 1991.

I was only able to gather records from H.D.C Planning staff on the number of lots created under each subdivision from 1993 to 1999.

This year 1999 – 2,000 has seen a rapid rise in the number of lots created so far at 167. The average for this 7 year period is 77. **That means there is a 53% increase in lot created for the first 6 months of this year!**

Other considerations

Lots Created

All of the lots created may not be for sale, now or in the near future. Landowners don't necessarily subdivide to sell. Other reasons include:

- Risk management – small titles of land can be sold at any time if the need arises
- Borrowing from the bank – the lending institute can then lend money without security over a separate title and not the whole farm. This is a benefit when family members may want to start a venture off the farm and require some capital.
- The District Scheme plan may change and become too restrictive in the future?

Equity Partnerships

Equity partnerships are starting to become common in the Horowhenua District to help young farmers getting started into the dairy industry and older farmers that don't want to sell their land but want to see it farmed properly.

Young Equity Partners

The catalyst is a businessman who buys the land and the skilled Young farmer starts to build up capital so that eventually he or she owns the cows and the land.

Experienced Equity Partner

A businessman purchases or owns a small block of land, builds a large (60 bail rotary) cowshed and incorporates neighbouring farms into a large dairying unit. All land owners still own their land but all the farms are managed as one unit. This could have an effect on the number of farms diminishing in the district when what could have been five farms, now there is only one G.S.T return being filed.

Population Increases

The 1996 census confirmed there are 30,148 residents in the Horowhenua District. The Council has predicted that there will be a 5 % lift in the population by 2012. This would bring the total close to 32,000 which I think will be achieved.

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THE OLD COWSHED.



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Because of the benign climate, a man could start dairy farming with a minimal amount of capital, almost as soon as he cleared the land. He needed a house for himself and family, maybe a shelter for winter feed, some fencing and a simple shed, usually a walk-through type, for milking his cows. This Otaki farmer was a stern disciplinarian to his small herd.



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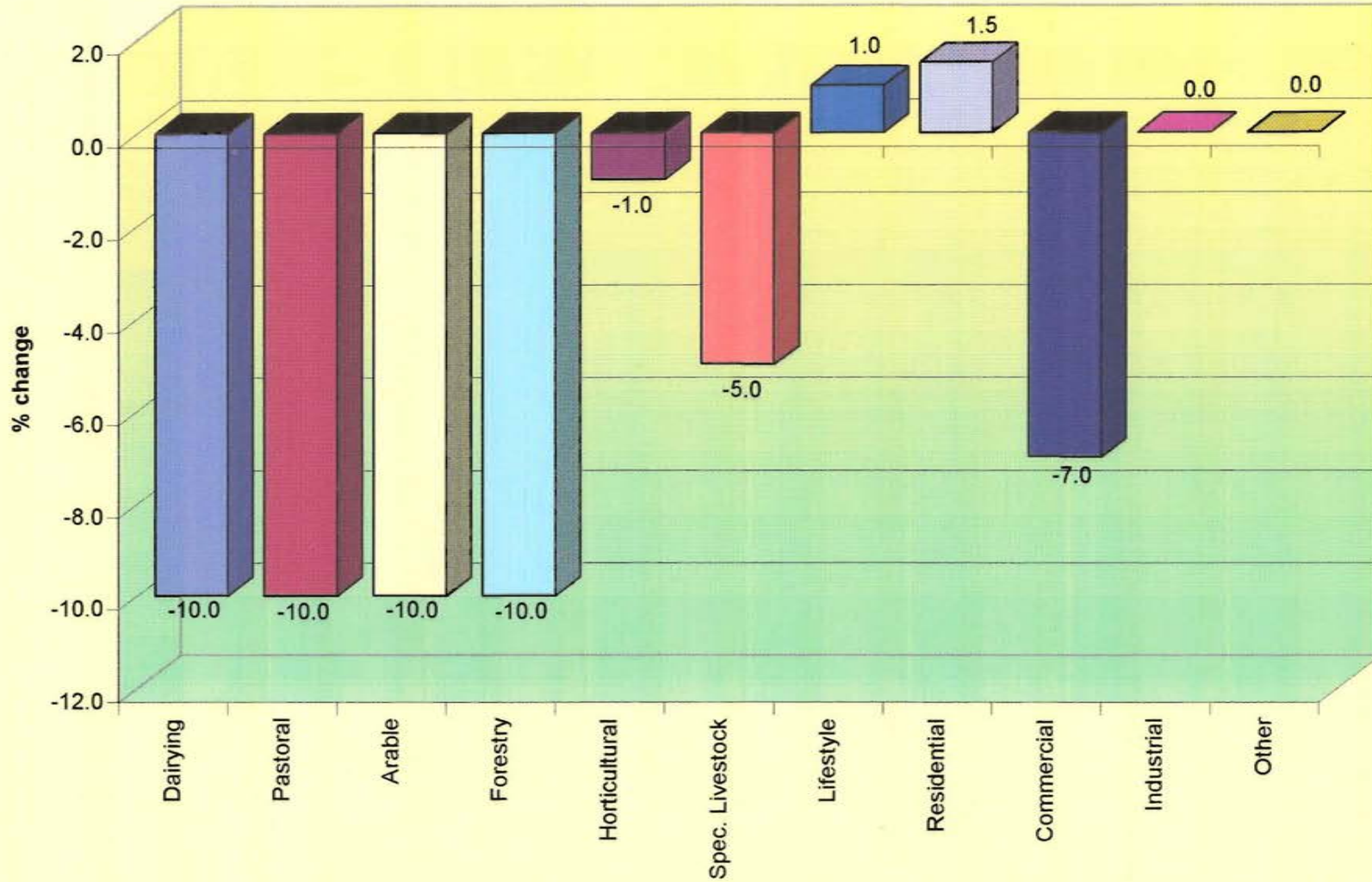
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THE MODERN COWSHED.



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Shifts in Land Value 1996 to 1999



Ron Veltman (Agri-business analysis) was commissioned by the Horowhenua District Council in 1993 to study the Changing Land Use in the Horowhenua.

The Title is **"Past, Present & Future Rural Land Use in the Horowhenua District"**

Mr Veltman concluded that "Horowhenua has a very diverse land use"

"Rural residents have increased dramatically in the last 25 years. The majority of this new occupation has taken place on Horowhenua's most scarce and most valuable silt loam soil."

Mr Veltman recommended that this soil should be protected from over subdivision and that the H.D.C should encourage more subdivision of the sandy soil and the foothills (i.e. Class 3 and above soils).

Footnote: Mr Veltmans recommendations have now taken place in the new Operative District Plan.

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Quotable Value New Zealand

Revaluation address to the Horowhenua District Council, November 1999.

1200 Rural properties (above 4 hectares) include pastoral, dairying, arable, forestry and specialist livestock.

Values, both capital and land, have reduced by 10% on average across the District.

Values in the Northern part of the district have reduced by 15%, the middle part of the District has reduced by 10% and the Southern part remained unchanged by the Wellington/Kapiti market.

1900 Lifestyle and Rural Residential (under 4 hectares) have maintained their values. In some specific locations they have increases by a small margin, such as in the Southern part of the District.

Impacts

There are many impacts that rural subdivision can have on the environment, people and our culture in general. Some of these are

Neighbours and noise – Andrew Yung said “Te Horo is filling with lifestyle blocks and people may object to the dust from my rotary hoeing or my sprays” (Levin Chronicle 7/5/99).

Land values around him are rising and there are only small pockets of good land.

“It would cost me an arm and a leg to expand says Mr Yung”

Roading and Traffic Volumes are a real concern for the local authority when much of the subdivision has taken place on what were once quiet and somewhat narrow back country roads. Money has to be put aside in the Annual Plan round to provide upgrades for some of the roads in this District.

Nitrates in the ground water is another concern for the local authority as test bores around the District are monitored regularly. This is not due to the subdivision of rural land, but present agricultural practises. However land based sewerage systems will have to be monitored to try and reduce this problem

If the rural subdivision is lucky enough to be connected to the town water supply then this is also a major concern as there was not enough water to feed Levin in last years Summer drought. Water restrictions are imperative over the high usage period.

Poor Farming Knowledge (refer over page) is common amongst lifestyle farmers and can result in animal health problems if not monitored closely. Most people want to have animals grazing in the front paddock for the ‘visual relaxing effect’, but either haven’t got the time or skill to look after their livestock.

Green Space is very important for the lifestyle farmers. There are many options if the owner of the land is off the farm on a regular basis. Some of these are

Heifer grazing

Sharefarming

Employing a ‘hands on’ consultant to call the shots at the right time.

Turnover time – of lifestyle blocks is very regular (every 5 years) when he or she decides often that their children have grown up and had enough of their motorbikes or ponies and the land is put on the market. The demand is such that there nearly always seems to be a buyer.

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Hobby farmers targeted

HOBBY farmers are being urged to seek expert advice on animal husbandry after a spate of complaints about the welfare of livestock on lifestyle blocks.

The Agriculture and Forestry Ministry says lifestyle blocks are the subject of a disproportionate number of the complaints it receives.

Spokesman Ross Burnell said it was common for hobby farmers to own several types of stock and they often did not fully understand their

differing needs. Concerns included under- and over-feeding, shelter, drenching and treatment for worms. The onset of winter would bring feeding and shelter issues to the fore.

“Most livestock owners mean to care for their animals well but good intentions are not enough for good farming. Inexperienced livestock owners must not risk their animals’ welfare, but must seek advice from an expert if they are unsure of good farming practice,” Mr Burnell said.

Dominion Newspaper 6th June 1999



Benefits

As more subdivision occurs in the District the population will increase (although the most recent Census Survey (1996) hasn't shown an increase). The increase will be shown in the next census as the 1999 boom takes its toll.

Rating Base and School Roles

As the population increases the rating base of the local authority goes up allowing for potentially more development. Other flow on benefits include, the rolls at the rural primary schools increase. This is shown at my local school 'Koputaroa' which has increased from 90 to 160 over the last decade. Part of this increase could however be attributed to 3 mini-vans collecting children district wide.

Jobs

There are many "spin-offs" for the district with increased subdivision, the main one being extra jobs are created. Some of these include Surveyors, Builders, and fencers.

Lifestyle owners are typically professional people that offer a new skill level if they are employed locally.

Levin Livestock Saleyards

Although the number of farms and pastoral land is decreasing, the local saleyards have seen an increase in patronage due to the lifestyle farms intensifying the farming practises. An example of this is the 4 day old calve market, which was buoyant for 2-3 months over the Spring period. Many calves were fetching \$ 100 each due to the rearing demand from the lifestyle owners. They see this form of farming as an easy way to start to 'learn the ropes' and less capital is required to stock their properties.

Local Economy Improves

There has been a huge increase in the number of building consents issued in August of this year. A total of 112 consents were issued for August 1999 compared with less than 100 for July 1999.

The total value of these consents is estimated to be worth \$ 3 million, which is one third more than July at \$ 2 million. July's figure was twice of last year's average and the second highest value in the last 3 years.

(Levin Chronicle 3rd September 1999)

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A sample of the product at a Levin strawberry farm.



A variety of current land use in the Horowhenua



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Organic Farming

Mr Kebbel said “The Horowhenua/Kapiti has been the garden for Wellington for the last 100 years. Its good climate and varied soils is an advantage to organic farming as it can support a variety of common and specialist crops.”

One possibility to help Organic Farmers gets established according to Mr Keble is “for local authorities to drop or reduce rates on agricultural land when growers convert to organic farming”.

“At present the ratepayers foot the cost of cleaning up the pollution by conventional farmers using chemicals and pesticides”.

Mr Kebbel also says that it takes three years to achieve the required standards for international certification and farmers face a drop in production over these first three years”.

(Kapiti Horowhenua Mail, August 15th 1999)

A farmer contemplating selling?

Mr Peter Staples lives in the Southern part of the District at Manakau

He farms 136 hectares of flat to rolling land that has been in the family for over three generations.

Mr Staples says “we really are just very big lifestyle farmers. One block next door recently sold for \$ 15,000 per hectare as a lifestyle block”.

“We can either stay and enjoy the lifestyle or sell up and go elsewhere without the lifestyle aspect, but with higher cashflows”.

What would you be doing with a \$ 2 million dollar investment that could potentially buy Mr Staples a more productive unit elsewhere?

(New Zealand Farmer, 4th November 1999)

Conclusion

- Lifestyle blocks will continue to increase in the Horowhenua District. Further increases are likely to occur on the sand soils and foothills of the Tararua mountain range.
- Pastoral land will continue to decline in the future, but less than 2,000 hectares per year (as has happened in the past) due to the Horowhenua District Plan (i.e. protecting Class 1 and 2 soils from over subdivision).
- Horticultural developments (including flowers) will continue to grow at 3% per year, like it has been happening in the last decade.
- Forestry will ease back from the average 7% growth per year, due to land in this District becoming too valuable, influenced by the lifestyle market. The land that is already planted in pine trees is likely to be replanted once harvesting is completed.
- Population growth in the District is likely increase by 5% over the next 12 years as predicted by the Horowhenua District Council.
- Part of the Horowhenua District will follow the Organic Farming principal, to supply a neiche market in the cities.
- Equity Partnerships will continue to be a major initiative in the Horowhenua and offer young and older farmers many options, thanks to a very successful individual businessman with a vision.
- The Resource Management Act will continue to give the public 'a voice' through the submission process if the subdivision is outside the Councils District Plan.
- Transmission Gully roading proposal (a link road more direct to Wellington) and the upgraded commuter train will continue to be well supported by the residents of Horowhenua. A proposed Transit Roding Bypass of Levin and Foxton could prove to be a major threat over the next decade?

Recommendations

1. The Horowhenua District Council should adhere to their Operative District Plan and only in exceptional circumstances should further subdivision of those elite soils (Class 1 & 2) be allowed.
2. Organic farming has a place in the Horowhenua District. I would have concerns if the organic farmers were allowed rate dispensation to carry out their activities however. If this was allowed then it could well set a precedent for other growers/farmers to approach the Council for rate relief for different activities?
3. The Horowhenua District Council should continue to promote subdivision on the sand and hill soils that are less productive.

References and Appendices

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PAST HISTORY.



Flax

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Growers coping with Change. (1999, May 18) Levin Chronicle.p8.

Organic farmers seek help to grow.(1999, August 15) Levin Chronicle.

Building activity soars in region. (1999, September 3) Levin Chronicle.

Organic farmers seek help to grow

by K Gurunathan

Fifty organic farmers in the Kapiti/Horowhenua area are looking to local authorities for a helping hand to protect and develop a multimillion-dollar industry.

Jim Kebbel, spokesman for the Central District Organic Growers Association, which met at Te Horo, says the organisation is hoping to meet the relevant committees of the Horowhenua and Kapiti district councils. The association has 50 members.

One possibility is for local authorities to drop or reduce rates on agricultural land that growers are converting to organic farming to encourage more growers to convert.

Kapiti Coast Mayor Iride McCloy told The Mail she is very keen to facilitate any positive move to give the district a commercial and environmental cutting edge. "I will speak directly with Mr Kebbel to explore the possibilities and if we can help we will be pro-active," she said.

In Europe, including Britain, local and state governments provide soft loans and direct subsidies per acre of land converted to organic farming. "National and international demand for organic produce is expanding at a phenomenal rate of 20 percent a year. The world simply can't get enough of it," says Mr Kebbel, a Te Horo resident and director of Te Horo-based organic farm Consensus Properties Ltd.

"It takes three years to convert and achieve the required standards for international certification and farmers face a drop in production during this period."

Mr Kebbel is chairman of Bio-Gro New Zealand, the national standards and certification body. Bio-Gro is affiliated to the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Association. He has 25 years experience in organic farming and has a grocery outlet for organic produce in Wellington.

Mr Kebbel would also like to see council sponsorship of local seminars to promote the idea. Any presentation to council is also expected to see an appeal to council for symbolic support for a genetic engineering-free zone.

"We are not against genetic engineering in controlled laboratories. But genetic engineering in open fields poses a high risk to the organic farm industry through contamination. Such risk will have a negative bearing on our ability to maintain standards and secure international certification," he says.

"Conversion costs and aggressive promotion and education are two areas local authorities can get involved to help the industry."

Council involvement is important not only for commercial and employment reasons but also because organic farming has long-term benefits to the environment. At present, ratepayers foot the cost of cleaning up the

pollution caused by conventional farmers using chemicals and pesticides, he says.

Timely investment by conventional growers with local, regional and central government support will mean the ability of local growers to tap into a multi-billion dollar international export market, says Mr Kebbel.

The association has been operating for 10 years and aims to persuade 10 percent of local growers to go organic. Within 10 years, it says, the district will be reaping exceptional financial returns.

"We would like to see more growers take advantage of this sunrise industry and we will share technical know how and management expertise to achieve this," said Mr Kebbel.

Te Horo already has an active group called Te Horo Organic Growers while Otaki also is planning a promotion.

"We are in the process of getting local organic growers to form a strategic planning group to promote Otaki as a "Double O Brand" (Organic Otaki). We will be the first township in the country to promote itself thus," said Otaki Community Board chair Ann Chapman.

Mr Kebbel said: "I am very optimistic. The Kapiti/Horowhenua has been the garden for Wellington for a 100 years. Its good climate and varied soils is an advantage to organic farming as it can support a variety of common and specialist crops."

Kapiti Horowhenua Mail
15 August 1999

	Tokomaru	Wirikino	Te Horo	Shannon	Waitarere	Waikanae
1988	5	25	54	2	22	115
1989	5	28	48	1	17	123

Year	Total New Dwellings	Rural Dwellings	
1989	57	17	
1990	177	44	
1991	167	49	
1992	152	57	
1993	131	54	
1994	112	46	
1995	63	25	
1996	29	58	
1997	68	31	
1998	70	31	

Subdivisions 1989 – 1998

Rural (Horowhenua District)

1989	59
1990	84
1991	97
1992	65
1993	75
1994	65
1995	62
1996	56 > Proposed DP notified
1997	52
1998	58

99

58 at October

- (2) The rules from the Transitional District Plan (1980s – 1997) has changed where it was more restricted rather than what the Operative District Plan (1996) allows. Although it is harder to subdivide on Class 1 or 2 soils, the rules for other classes of soil is more flexible now. The statistics above show that prior to the Proposed District Plan in 1996 there were more subdivision than at present. Although there is a lower number after 1996, the adjustment period is still there and with the District Plan been operative this might change.
- (3) Subdivisions south of Levin will depend on soil classification and under the new rules this might be more difficult as the area has class 1 and 2 classification.

2,000 m²
1/2 ac.

19 RULES: Rural Zone

19.4 Controlled Matters and Conditions

The matters over which the Council may reserve its control and the required conditions are detailed below for each controlled activity:

19.4.1 Road-Side Sales Activities

Controlled Matters

The matters over which Council may reserve its control are:

- The location of buildings.
- The location of entrance and exit lanes and the configuration and dimensions of access driveways and vehicle parking and turning areas.
- The location and design of any advertising sign.

Conditions

Maximum floor area: The maximum gross floor area of premises used for retail sales shall not exceed 50 square metres.

Other: In all other respects, road-side sales activities shall comply with the relevant conditions for permitted activities.

19.4.2 Subdivision of Land


Controlled Matters

Council reserves its control over the following matters:

- (i) The provision of:
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Access;
 - Water supply;
 - Sewage disposal;
 - Surface water disposal;
 - Lighting of Vehicle Access Ways and Roads;
 - Electricity supply and telecommunication connections;

to the subdivision, within the subdivision, and to other land in the vicinity which is expected to be developed in the future.

- (ii) The disturbance of land and effects of earthworks on Lake Horowhenua and Hokio Stream catchments.



19 RULES: Rural Zone

- (iii) The degree to which the allotment/s are subject to, or likely to be subject to, material damage by erosion, falling debris, subsidence, slippage, or inundation and seismic events.
- (iv) The degree to which the subdivision and subsequent development of the land is likely to adversely affect any land or feature having significant natural values, vegetation, natural landscape, buildings or sites of historic archaeological cultural or other significance, or wildlife habitats, whether identified in this Plan or not.
- (v) Access to and protection of riparian margins of waterways
- (vi) The size or shape of any allotment having regard to:
- The maximisation of the usable area of Land Use Capability (LUC) Class 1 & 2 for primary production purposes and
 - The consolidation into usable shapes and areas the distribution of (LUC) Class 1 and 2 available within any allotment; and
 - The minimisation of areas to accommodate any buildings, vehicle access, and associated household gardens and features; and
 - The avoidance of close-density urban residential patterns of subdivision; and
 - Retention of sufficient land to ensure the disposal of sewage wastes from any existing or anticipated future dwelling house.
 - The location of existing intensive farming activities.
 - The location of existing effluent storage, treatment and disposal activities.
 - The ability to construct a future dwelling on any allotment to comply with 19.2.4.
 - The relationship of the subdivision to existing transmission lines, and the degree to which the design ensures that there will be no need to erect residential buildings within 20 metres of the centre line on each side of high voltage transmission lines.

19.4.2.2 Conditions

Numbers of Allotments Permitted in Areas of Highly Versatile Soils

(Being land of Class 1 or 2 as shown in Landcare Research NZ Ltd, Land Use Capability Sheets S24 and S25 and Planning Maps.)

★ **For certificates of title created before 1 August 1983**

- (a) Having an area less than 4 hectares, a rule shall permit the subdivision and alteration of boundaries provided no additional certificates of title are thereby created.

Banks' views differ over economic activity

by Veronica Harrod

The Reserve Bank's reported 0.3 percent shrink of the economy in the June quarter is vastly at odds with a National Bank announcement that there has been a 3.3 percent increase in economic activity in the Manawatu-Wanganui region.

When asked for a comment to explain the discrepancy, National Bank economist Steve Edwards said: "The official data is quite screwy. We are at a loss to describe how they got their figure."

Two weeks ago The Mail had a lead story on how Horowhenua is contributing to the economic boom in the Manawatu-Wanganui region.

Mr Edwards said usually both economic indicators would "trend closely," even though there are differences between how the gross domestic product and National Bank figures are arrived at.

"We look at things not included in the gdp figure such as business and consumer confidence, the unemployment rate and economic growth.

According to the recently released Work and Income New Zealand (Winz) business plan for the central region, which includes Horowhenua, job growth in the next year is expected in the caring, horticulture and forestry industries.

The caring industry refers to caregivers working in the retirement home sector.

There is growth in this area locally, however a full-time caregiver typically earns between \$9 and \$11 an hour and gets on average about \$240 in the hand a week; a 30-32 hour week is considered full-time in the caring industry.

The Winz plan also says tourism growth will provide expansion in hospitality, support services and arts and craft.

There is no evidence of growth in the tourism industry but Horowhenua's marketing officer Bill Rushworth and Massey University lecturer in tourism and management Jo Cheyne says individual tourism operations, like Owlcatraz in Shannon, are doing very well.

Mr Rushworth: "The new Tourism Minister

Lockwood Smith has allocated money for research on tourism numbers but the research hasn't been done and isn't likely to be done for a while yet."

He also said research hasn't established that a growth in tourism numbers equates to an expansion in hospitality, support services, arts and crafts.

Ms Cheyne said strength in tourism is always measured in domestic numbers, "but no research has been done on domestic tourism since 1989".

On job growth Winz's plan says the outlook for the farming sector remains weak.

"Falling world prices, particularly for meat and wool, has undermined farm returns. This has been compounded by two successive seasons of drought, which have forced many farmers in the region to drastically reduce their stock levels and productive capacities.

"An unfortunate consequence of this has been the recent closure of the Richmond Otaki beef works, with the subsequent loss of permanent and seasonal positions," the plan says.

Building

Plus
Ken

activity soars in region

Levin Chronicle
3rd Sept. 1999

By Paul Williams

Horowhenua builders have been increasingly industrious in the last month, with a huge increase in permits recorded.

The Horowhenua District Council reported a marked increase of building consents issued for August 1999. A total of 112 consents were issued last month, compared with less than 100 for July 1999.

The total estimated value of building consents for August was \$3,109,620, more than one third more than the July estimated value of \$2,068,761 - twice the value for last years average, and the second highest value in the last three years.

The value of building consents granted last month was the highest since January 1998, when a value of almost \$5,000,000 was recorded.

But that was a freak recording, because the following months figure dropped to less than \$1,000,000, the lowest value in the last three years.

In Levin, seven new houses were to be built over August at an estimated value of \$1,000,000, while five new dwellings each were to be erected rurally and in Foxton Beach, worth an estimated \$220,000 and \$730,000 respectively.

A total of 51 additions, and

alteration work was carried out at a value of \$319,600, and 17 new commercial, industrial and farm buildings were granted consent last month, at a value of \$634,500.

Homestead Builders of Levin said business in the Horowhenua/kapiti had gone crazy this year, with many houses selling before they were built. The current boom was the best they had seen in 24 years.

Presently the firm was building eight houses that had already been sold, that had to go up before Christmas.

Mayor Tom Robinson said the economic growth rate for the whole region was the fastest in the country, which indicated a local growth focus.

"No one is pretending everything is rosy. We have along way to go but the signs are there...because local people want to fight back and make progress," he said.

Statistics New Zealand said the recent housing boom was a nationwide trend, with an estimated 2,462 new dwellings authorised for construction. In 1998 monthly totals were below 1,700.

But in 1997, most monthly building totals were above 2,000, and activity in 1998 appeared to have been affected by a depressed economy, Statistics New Zealand said.

However, low interest rates and an increase in confidence had reversed that trend.

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ECONOMIC GROUP 64 4 4712173
Meat and Wool Economic Service of New Zealand
Box 5179, Wellington
Phone: (04) 472 2178 Fax: (04) 471 2173
Email: info@nzmeat-wool.co.nz

NO. 587 P. 1/3



To:	Nathan Guy
Company:	Fanm, Horowhenua
Fax:	06 368 3127
From:	Rob Danism
Date:	10 Nov 1999
Pages:	3

Hi,

Two tables follow.

1. Horowhenua stock numbers
2. Land Use.

Note these data are sourced to Statistics NZ Agricultural Census and Survey data.

Districts started in 1991-92 and do not line-up easily with the previous counties for land areas.

The last published Stats NZ data was for 30 June 1996. The next census is at 30 June 1999 and will be published in Jan - March 2000.

All the best with your kellog course.

Kind regards Rob Danism

NZM

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10 NOV 1999

MEAT AND WOOL ECONOMIC SERVICE OF NEW ZEALAND

Horowhenua District Land Trend

Size

Year	Total No of Farms	Total Pasture Area ha?	Total Hort. Area	Total Plantation Area	Total Other Area	Total Land Area	Average Occupied Area Per Holding
1990-91							
1991-92	1,007	60,064	2,620	4,840	10,725	78,249	62
1992-93	952	60,117	2,387	7,295	7,050	76,849	66
1993-94	940	57,960	2,509	5,889	7,078	73,436	64
1994-95	851	57,782	2,911	6,105	7,069	73,867	71
1995-96	848	51,369	3,018	7,942	12,805	75,134	64
1996-97	773	48,517	3,257	8,527	12,910	73,211	67
1997-98							
1998-99							
1999-00							
2000-01							
2001-02							

?

Source: Statistics New Zealand
Meat and Wool Economic Service of New Zealand

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10 NOV 1999

MEAT AND WOOL ECONOMIC SERVICE OF NEW ZEALAND

Horowhenua District Land Trend

Year	Sheep (000s)	Total.. Beef (000s)	Total.. Dairy (000s)	Total.. Deer (000s)	Total.. Goats (000s)	Total SU (000s)
1990-91	137	37	53	8	3	656
1991-92	130	38	52	9	3	633
1992-93	118	39	50	8	1	632
1993-94	98	37	49	6	1	586
1994-95	111	40	54	6		648
1995-96	105	43	54	6	1	664
1996-97	103	36	52			598
1997-98						
1998-99						
1999-00						
2000-01						
2001-02						

Source: Statistics New Zealand
Meat and Wool Economic Service of New Zealand

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guaranteed market. His other houses have been converted to other specialised crops.

The directions taken by vegetable growers in the area can be summed up in two words "expansion and specialisation". Growers specialising and growing larger areas of one or two products are pushing out the small mixed growers in a market now completely dominated by the large supermarkets. Few growers are into speculative growing: they make sure the market is there before the crop is planted.

Andrew Yung, for instance, grows lettuce, celery and broccoli at Te Horo (just south of Otaki), and plans to specialise even further.

As prices per unit of produce fall," he says, "growers have to increase the volumes they produce."

Andrew also emphasises the importance of maintaining a consistent supply of produce of a consistently high quality.

"Markets will use small growers when produce is scarce but don't want to know them if there is plenty available."

Growers' risks are increased when they grow fewer crops but Andrew says the customer is more reliable as long as the quality is consistent.

plans to select the best performing ones and to specialise in these.

He will increase the areas of the selected crops he grows and look for ways he can add further value to these.

He sees added value as the way of the future.

"Vegetables are increasingly leaving the producer ready for the supermarket shelf, ready packed in a saleable container," he says.

He gives the example of a local potato grower who used to send his crop to a wholesaler straight from the paddock in three-bushel bags.

Now his potatoes go in bulk to a packhouse which in turn sends them to supermarkets washed and packed ready for sale.

John predicts tomatoes will be the next product to follow this trend.

"The greater the shelf-life a product has, the greater the potential for adding value," he says.

Leaf vegetables are more difficult but even with these there is a move into prepared salad packs.

But there is one other group of growers who continue to operate in the old "market garden" mould. These small growers have found an outlet for their produce in flea markets, particularly the Porirua market.

Success in these markets

Another threat is the pressure on land.

High local body rates have forced growers out of the Otaki town area. Andrew Yung has moved south to Te Horo but admits he could be forced out again. Te Horo is rapidly filling with lifestyle blocks.

"People may object to the dust from my rotary hoeing, or to my sprays," he says.

Land values around him are rising and there are only small pockets of good land.

"It would cost me an arm and a leg to expand," says Andrew.

And there is the spectre of larger growers, corporates and large private businesses in other parts of the country.

These have chosen the best districts for the crops they want to produce: Auckland, Gisborne, Invercargill.

Because it is now economically feasible to transport fresh vegetables all around the country, these large producers have been able to develop nationwide markets.

Andrew Yung believes that Otaki and Horowhenua growers can compete against these larger players on quality but admits there are economies of scale.

At the same price per unit, he says, "large growers can make money while smaller growers just survive".

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Levin Chronicle
7/5/99

er dispute

Price fall forces family to go it alone

AUDHRY

South Suffolk helps bonny lambs

By **DUNCAN STEANS**

UTILISING the early maturing and superior carcase attributes of the South Suffolk has provided Manawatu farmer Peter Staples with a reliable early lamb bonus.

In an area now dominated by dairy farms and lifestyle blocks Peter is one of only two farmers that have stuck with sheep.

As the farm is dominated by a light soil type he has a hard job growing his breeding stock out to their full potential, resulting in a smaller type Romney ewe.

To achieve a quality early prime lamb he is using a South Suffolk terminal sire over half of the ewe flock. He has been using South Suffolks for the last 20 years.

"We go for a big single lamb, with all the South Suffolk lambs away by the end of January," he says.

Only half of the flock are mated to the terminal sire, because the other half of the ewes are required to produce enough Romney lambs to source replacements.

All the male South Suffolk-cross lambs are docked as cryptorchids, with the first draft away in late October.

"The South Suffolk produce a good, big early lamb that grade well, up to 17kg carcase weight by then."

The black points of the South Suffolk also allow for easy identification of terminal sired lambs.

The ram goes out in late February for lambing to start early August. With an average to low lambing percentage Peter has not scanned the ewes in the past, but is intending to next year in a move to boost the fertility of his flock.

Instead of scanning, the ewes are run through the drafting race in late July with the early

CRITICAL FACTORS

- **Farmers:** Peter and Margaret Staples.
- **Farm Name:** Olympus.
- **Location:** Manakau, 12km south of Levin, Horowhenua.
- **Duration:** Fourth generation, property cleared late 1800s.
- **Size:** 136ha.
- **Soils:** KIWATEA silt loam.
- **Contour:** Third flat, third rolling, third coastal hill country.
- **Rainfall:** 1200mm.
- **Altitude:** Sea level to coastal hill country.
- **Stock Numbers:** 850 ewes, 200 hoggets, 45 breeding cows, 25 yearling bulls, 20 yearling heifers, 8 two-year heifers.
- **Stock breeds:** Sheep Romney, half mated to South Suffolk, recorded Hereford cattle.
- **Lambing:** 110-115% average.
- **Supplements:** Hay and baleage made on the farm.

The early ewes are breakfed on the flats and the Romney mated ewes set-stocked on the hill country.

At drafting all ewes are administered a ewe guard vaccine.

On the flats the ewes are checked every couple of days for any bearing problems and shed off as the paddocks become too full.

Shedding off the ewes in lamb age groups also simplifies docking and later drafting.

If possible a draft of lambs are taken off in late October, before weaning in mid-November.

All drafting is done by Chris McKay, former Waitotara agent, now Richmond. Peter is full of praise for the ability of Chris,



EARLY LAMB BONUS: "The South Suffolk produce a good, big early lamb that grade well, up to 17kg carcase weight by late October," says Peter Staples.

as he marks lambs that have gone too far, prime lambs he takes, and lambs that are nearly ready.

This enables Peter to better manage the pasture he has available, pushing the lambs that are nearly ready and holding back the lambs that have gone too far.

Last year the first draft of South Suffolk lambs was on November 17, 73 weighing 15-16kg for a return of \$48. The following drafts were also at 15-16kg carcase weight — 103 on December 14, 99 on January 5, 62 on February 1 and the final 70 in early March.

Because of the black fibre on the points of the South Suffolk lambs they are not shorn.

As the South Suffolk lambs leave the farm, and the Romney lambs are eased on to the better pasture.

As the Romney lambs don't have the growth attributes of the terminal sire lambs, Peter prefers to hold them longer and to heavier weights if possible.

Last year the first draft of Romney lambs was taken in April, at 17kg.

Holding the Romney lambs longer also allows for them to be shorn and dipped.



SOUTH SUFFOLKS

Early lamb plan

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Levin battles on with FE menace

PETER and Margaret Staples farm in an area near Levin known for its problems with facial eczema, hence they are only one of two sheep farmers remaining in the district.

As were many other experienced farmers, Peter was caught out with facial eczema last year.

He didn't realise just how badly until lambing this season. He wouldn't disclose this year's lambing percentage.

Although he did run a ram with the 250 ewe hoggets for the first time, resulting in about 70 lambs he would not normally have.

"This year was shocking, a number of the ewes were slipping lambs in mid-pregnancy and were are still getting ewes with clinical eczema. The lambs from the hoggets are a good bonus," he says.

The flats were sprayed with a product called Benlate, to prevent facial eczema, although not for long enough it now seems.

It is slightly easier to prevent eczema in the cattle as zinc can be administered through the trough water system.

As he has been farming sheep in a eczema prone area Peter says he has some tolerance bred in to the ewe flock but is looking to increase this by buying facial eczema-tolerant tested sires.

FE is a critical limiting factor on the production of this farm.

"I would rather mate all the ewes to the South Suffolk, have the lambs off early and buy in replacement ewes but I doubt the replacements would survive in this eczema hot environment.

As the land use in the Horowhenua area has changed dramatically in recent years, Peter says they are now considering their future farming the family property.

"We are really are just very big lifestyle farmers," says Peter.

Since being caved out of the bush early this century as sheep and cattle farms many have now been converted to dairy operations and other are being divided up as lifestyle blocks.

One block next door recently sold for \$15,000 a hectare as a lifestyle block.

"We can either stay and enjoy the lifestyle or sell up and go elsewhere with out the lifestyle aspect but with higher cash flows," says Peter.

Peter also runs a unregistered but recorded Hereford stud. The stud, Pukehou, was started by his late father but Peter has since decided to carry it on as a registered stud since.



By using SOUTH SUFFOLK rams you can

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Good length - grows into heavier carcasses without over-fats

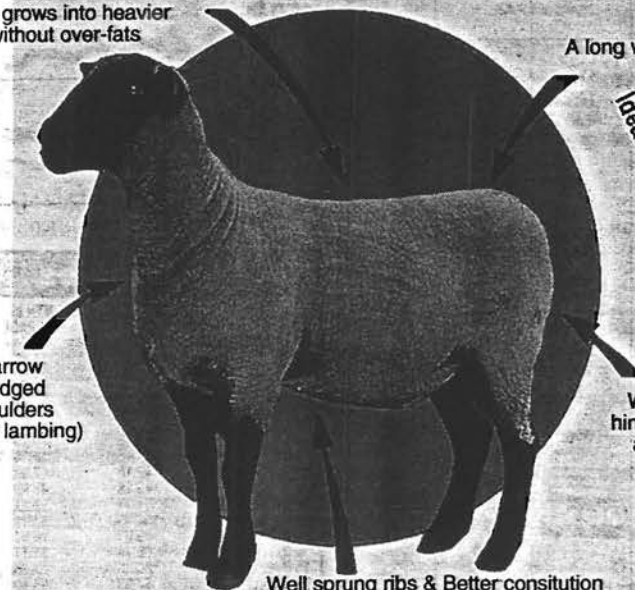
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