

ORC Omnibus Plan Change - Plan Change 8

Submission Reference no: 5

William (Bill) Thompson



Submitter Type: Not specified

Source: Email

Clause

Are you a trade competitor?

Position

I am a person who would not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission

Notes

I am not a trade competitor

Clause

If you are a trade competitor, please select one of the options below:

Position

I am not directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of this submission that (a) adversely affects the environment; and (b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

Notes

Clause

What are you submitting on? You can submit on specific parts of Plan Change 8 or the whole plan change.

Position

I am submitting on the whole plan change.

Notes

No position given (email submission)

Clause

What is your view on the Plan Change 8 or the specific parts listed above? Please select one, if you have multiple views state clearly in the notes box below.

Notes

No position given (email submission)

Clause

What decision would you like the Environment Court to make?

Notes

No position given (email submission)

Clause

Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission? All submissions will be considered by the Environment Court. Please indicate if you wish to be heard in support of your submission.

Position

I wish to be heard in support of my submission

Notes

I wish to be heard in support of my submission

Clause

Authority to act:

Position

I confirm I have the authority to sign this submission on behalf of the submitter

Notes

[REDACTED]

From: Bill Thompson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 7 July 2020 6:53 pm
To: ORCplanchanges
Subject: Water Plan Changes 8
Attachments: Submission to ERA.rtf

Please find my submission to the EPA on the above topic.

I have said that I wish to attend the submission hearing in support of my submission.

Yours faithfully,

William J Thompson
Dunedin.

Submission to the Environmental Protection Authority.

Part A

My name is Mr William (Bill) Thompson, retired farmer of the Strath Taieri Valley (nr Middlemarch), Central Otago.

Home/work phone: [REDACTED].

My email address is: [REDACTED]

Postal address is: [REDACTED].

Part B

Submitter Name: William J Thompson, Dip Ag--Lincoln.

Re Water Plan Change 8.

Firstly, I need to explain that I am not a dairy farmer, and never have been.

As stated above I am a former Strath Taieri farmer and my property had about 1.5 km Taieri River frontage. I erected a single wire on waratahs 35 or 40 years ago to keep my angus cows out of the river. That fence worked and allowed sheep and calves to go under the wire, but not the cows.

We hear a lot these days about water quality, and how much of its quality is being damaged by farming. In fact so much has been made of the issue by some political movements and politicians, that many farmers are fed up with all their clap trap.

Farmers are environmentalists, They understand their land and climate, and have a desire to leave their land and farm in a better condition than they received it. Those who are constantly badgering the farmer to "do as I say", should realise that the best way to get change is to speak kindly and encourage change, not to be constantly harassing the farming community.

The carrot is much better than the stick.

Whilst I agree that the water used by the dairy industry must be monitored to ensure effluent from the dairy shed does not reach waterways or contribute to leaching nitrates etc in to and through farmed soil, this should be done by evolution--not revolution.

BUT there is so much more to the issue of degrading our soils and water ways than just monitoring dairy effluent. So, I will now address our soils and soil health.

Back in the late 1940s and early 1950s saw the advent of aerial over sowing and top dressing. We witnessed spectacular results from the application of super phosphate. I can recall clover growing on hill country soils like it was a two year old pasture, and I am talking about 3rd class land with brown top as the predominant grass species.

Unfortunately, this created a mindset in the farming community--and within much of the agricultural scientific/advisory community, that all a farmer needed to do was to apply super phosphate and crops and pastures would flourish. Yes, they did so for some 20 or so years, then production gradually declined. Nothing spectacular, just a gradual decline.

Then comes the start of a major problem. The scientist/advisor then told the farmer he/she must apply the same product, at a greater rate. As one of my farmer friends told me--"he was the moron putting more on". The result being that much of our farmed soils were being applied with an over dose of P (phosphorus) in the form of super phosphate. As the reader will know, super phosphate is produced by a manufacturing process involving sulphuric acid.

So we now have advisors telling the farmer, (myself included) to apply ever more phosphorus--and some acid to the soil.

For the past 60 or 70 years this has been the normal means of fertilising our soil. Thankfully it is starting to change, but not necessarily in quite the direction it should, because there are still some advisors at large who refuse to understand what the overuse, of P has done to these soils, and more importantly, what the acid and resultant imbalance to soil nutrition has done to the biological populations in that soil.

As one who has worked in the soil science field since selling my property nearly 30 years ago, I have seen the dramatic changes to many soils, by changing the product applied, so that the biology is not effected. Then by applying products to feed and stimulate the biological populations, so that they thrive, and in so doing make available to the plant, the minerals and trace elements necessary for the production of healthy soil--healthy plants--healthy animals--healthy HUMANS.

Minerals and trace elements can only gain access to the plant after having being processed by bacteria or fungi. (Similar to the bacterial process occurring in your gut as you read this).

The soil is the stomach for every living plant or animal.

In recent years, a lot of research has been done by some, on the use of biological feeders, and there are two or three of these. The most recent research has been into the use of humate as both a fertiliser, a biological feeder and a product to arrest leaching of applied products through the soil. This research has accumulated some 6 or 7 years of information and has even been published in the most prestigious world wide scientific journal--the name of which escapes me--but there is much to be learned from all this. We cannot bury our head in the sand and assume that existing science is always correct. It is not.

I am explaining this because it is vital that the biological processes are fully understood, and the various means of arresting the leaching of P and nitrates are known about, and fully appreciated. Our water quality is subject to degradation from more than just dairy effluent.

It is certain that the future health of New Zealanders will depend on the health of our soils, and it seems that we cannot depend on the traditional agricultural scientist to provide the lead needed.

I wish to raise a further subject for your consideration. I have listened to lectures on two separate occasions by an American scientist and practising Medical Practitioner by the name of Dr Arden Andersen. He is adamant that Roundup, when it gets down to the soil becomes formaldehyde (Formalin). It should not take the brain power of a rocket scientist to appreciate just how damaging this must be to the soil microbes.

Six or seven years ago when visiting a farmer in South Canterbury I observed his excellent young pasture that was being fed by a soil feeder--fish hydrolysate. This was a high production young pasture. He then said--- pointing to a paddock close by, which was sprayed with the same fish hydrolysate, why is this paddock almost a complete failure. And it was a virtual write off.

I asked the farmer how many times had that paddock been sprayed with Roundup? His answer--about 4 or 5 times, to which I could only reply--that may well be the problem, too much Roundup, too much formaldehyde.

New Zealand farmers have taken the word of Monsanto/Bayer, that Roundup is harmless when it gets to the soil. I have my doubts about this and I think it is well past the time for science to establish--independently--if it does, or does not become formaldehyde. The health of our soils MUST be of the greatest importance.

There is much more I could add, but I will spare you that for the time being. I have to say though, that I think the EPA & ORC must get up to speed with these topics if it is really devoted to improving our wonderful environment. The EPA & ORC, and other such councils, must have knowledge and understanding of this vitally important subject, if it is to really influence the direction of the rural environment

As stated above, Healthy Soil--Healthy Plants--Healthy Animals--Healthy Humans.

I believe--"Where all think alike-no one is thinking very much".

Finally: I am not a trade competitor. In the past I was a major shareholder in a company I was involved in from start up, namely Healthy Soils Ltd. Unfortunately, the company was torpedoed from within by a couple of trusted employees who did not abide by a Board decision, and committed the company to contracts that were not sustainable. As a result, I have a lot of knowledge--but no axe to grind.

My concern is to know that this knowledge is finally put to good use for the benefit of future generations of New Zealanders. **THUS THIS SUBMISSION COVERS THE WHOLE PLAN CHANGE. AND THE FUTURE OF FARMING IN N Z.**

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

W J (Bill) Thompson (Dip Ag, Lincoln)

7th July, 2020

