



Grower FAQs and comments on Waikato Plan Change 1 – June 2020

1. *There are too many unknowns and not enough clarity in the proposed PC1 policy.*
That is the case, but here is what we do know:
 - **There is a tailored approach to commercial vegetable production (CVP). Almost every previous regime proved unworkable without a tailored approach**
 - **There is a pathway (as asked for by growers) to continue rotation across multiple parcels as a controlled activity, at a scale similar to existing use**
 - **There is some limited scope for growth – although not ideal. There is also limited scope for growth in other activities including dairy.**

2. *The proposed rules around who owns the consent is resulting in perverse outcomes. Land that has been growing vegetables for 60 plus years could all of a sudden not be allowed to continue to do so, if the grower sells that block of land or doesn't renew the lease. That's assuming the grower owns the consent to grow himself.*
 - **If the grower sells it as a commercial vegetable farm, an application can be made to transfer a proportion of the entitlement. If a grower does not renew the lease, it does not prevent another grower with consent, utilizing the land for CVP.**

3. *We don't see any actual environmental benefits arising from getting all growers to apply for consents and essentially be registered. All we can see is an increase in bureaucracy and costs, which we growers will have to pay for.*
 - **A consent is targeted at benefiting growers, by securing for a certain period, the right to undertake commercial vegetable production beyond the next plan change or national change happening.**
 - **There is increased bureaucracy and cost and there is also greater certainty that the grower has rights and interests that have been squarely allocated to the grower. The rights are like water consents in some respects.**
 - **The environmental benefits are predicted by research already undertaken and will be seen in years to come in water quality.**

4. *Because of the aforementioned reasons, we believe that growing fresh vegetables should remain a permitted activity.*
 - **Vegetable growing as a permitted activity will simply no longer be possible. Research leading into PC1 showed very high leaching. Further research underway now is providing lower results, but not enough to safely argue for a permitted activity regime. Hort NZ went all the way to High Court seeking permitted activity under the One Plan and lost.**

5. *We have been consulted throughout this long and drawn out process, but feel we have been groomed to accept the pre-determined policy from council. As an industry we need to grow a backbone and start pushing for what growers believe and want.*
 - **The policy was not predetermined by Council, it was the result of Treaty Settlement and national legislation. The only scope as an industry, was to work out how we were regulated; Hort NZ and PNZ endeavored to achieve workable regulation within those bounds.**

6. *Before we can get a consent we need a farm plan.*
 - **Correct. A farm plan will be required by most farmers under national legislation and is already required in many other plans.**

7. *How long does a consent last for?*
 - **The term has not been determined. Consents can go from a year to 35 years. Water consents tend to be granted for 10-15 years in Waikato. We are yet to see what term will be applied to the CVP consents.**

8. *Who owns the consent, the land owner or the grower?*
 - **This is still an active question. The rules are for hybrid land use and discharge. A land-use consent runs with the land. Discharge rules run with the consent holder, so potentially the right to discharge could be the grower right, with the land retaining the right to be utilised for CVP by any other party with appropriate discharge consent.**
 - **The consent application could be for all land within a larger prescribed area. For the existing farm; this would be at the scale in area conducted prior to the plan being notified.**
 - **For an increase in activity; consent is required**
 - **A new consent would cover all CVP existing and proposed.**
 - **Allocation for growth is limited within sub-catchments and this is a key problem to resolve.**
 - **The discharge component will relate to the scale of CVP being conducted; existing or new.**

9. *We are worried about the cost of consent.*
 - **Costs will relate to the Farm Plan (FEP); consent processing fees (like a water consent) and Council time in reviewing the application.**
 - **The cost of consent will vary from grower to grower, and a collective application will significantly reduce costs and bureaucracy.**

10. *Who audits the consent and at what timeframe can a grower have an answer back?*
 - **NZ GAP audits the FEP**
 - **Council audits the consent.**
 - **The consent relates to the actions agreed in the FEP.**

11. *Less than 4 hectares does not need a farm plan or consent. If there are 10 life style blocks in a sub-catchment that is already over allocated for N leaching, why should other growers have to cut back when these are not accounted for?*
 - **Protecting the existing footprint ensures growers do not have to “cut back”. The activities are accounted for by the science and are assumed to be at a scale of impact acceptable as a permitted activity.**

12. *Hort NZ are mainly thinking about domestic production. What about export? We were told to double our export receipts by 2025.*
 - **Government ratified a Treaty Settlement for the Waikato River and PC1 was the result of that Government decision.**
 - **We agree that Hort NZ does not account for growth in area for potato growers, which will affect export.**
 - **PNZ do have a strategic goal of growth.**

- This is the only point of difference between Hort NZ and PNZ's approach to Plan Changes; Hort NZ supports intensive growing, PNZ supports extensive growing.
 - PNZ believe it is important to have some diversity of ideas in the room when appealing to regulators, to enable development of a nuanced change.
13. *Most Growers have increased production area since 2016. What are we supposed to do with the extra land, if it is deemed to be in a sub-catchment that is already over allocated?*
- **We are uncertain how this would be addressed. Industry could pilot a consent application as a trial, with that component in it.**
14. *Some of the catchments are already in the danger zone according to Waikato Council. Growers are concerned that includes a lot of production land from Bombay through to Tuakau.*
- **Yes, there are 18 catchments in Waikato which will need FEPs by April 2021. A FEP will be required by most farmers under national legislation and is already required in many other plans.**
15. *Is vegetable cropping going to become prescriptive where we will only be allowed to put on x number of nitrogen? What happens if bad weather frost damage or hail damage occur and we need to apply more Nitrogen?*
- **Having a tailored approach to resource consent allows for applications that are variable.**
16. *The 2020 pandemic crisis has highlighted that vegetable production is essential for feeding the population. In the future and if our population is greater, will we be able to supply enough produce?*
- **Let's see if the Government recommends any changes to the NPS for Highly Productive Land. Ability to continue to grow and expansion of growing area, is the goal for PNZ.**
 - **PNZ will be undertaking 3 case studies in Pukekohe for FEPs and consent process. These case studies will determine the technical difficulties inherent in PC1 and influence the appeal led by Hort NZ and possibly PNZ (PNZ appeal TBC).**
 - **If PC1 can accommodate the technical characteristics of potato growing, then the industry will be able to grow enough produce in the future.**