



# Climate change consultation generates its own temperature rise

By Bruce Bulloch on behalf of Environment Network Manawatu

Many people will be aware of the current round of consultation on the government's Plan of Action for "Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change". The consultation meeting for our region was held in the Convention Centre on February 28, and generated its own rise in temperature, if not (arguably) greenhouse gas.

It is now generally accepted that industrialisation is causing increasing levels of "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere. These gases in turn are causing a world-wide trend of rising temperatures and potentially more variable and extreme climate - in short, climate change.

Superficially it might seem be nice to be warmer, but consequent melting of glaciers and ice caps will cause sea levels to rise and inundate coastal cities. Drier parts of the country will tend to become drier, and wetter parts wetter, and rainfall will arrive less often but in higher intensity events.

New Zealand is especially vulnerable to climate change because much of our land mass is geologically young and prone to erosion, and much of our economic activity is based on production from the land. Also, in exploiting the productive capacity of our land, we have changed much of its vegetation cover from more stable





forest to more erodible pasture.

New Zealand is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, an international convention for addressing climate change via a trading system for carbon credits and liabilities during Commitment Periods, the first being 2008-12. Its objective is to impose costs on emitting greenhouse gases, and to reward reducing emissions or absorbing carbon.

The consultation document has four themes or "Pillars". Pillar 1 looks at adapting to climate change; Pillar 2 at reducing emissions and taking carbon out of the atmosphere; Pillar 3 at exploiting business opportunities from technological innovation; and Pillar 4 at setting up an enduring working relationship with the primary sectors - addressing climate change represents a long haul.

Major land use sectors of farming and forestry have radically different carbon cycle profiles. Forestry takes carbon

out of the atmosphere, and thus while new forests are growing forestry will accumulate carbon credits for the nation. Farming on the other hand tends to emit greenhouse gases, and so future management will be focused at changing practices and new technologies to reduce emissions.

Sections of the forestry industry are aggrieved that in order to manage the transition to a climate change economy, the government is nationalising the carbon credits accruing on new forests planted between 1990 and 2007. (Under Kyoto rules forests planted before 1990 do not qualify for credits.) The government is also seeking to limit conversion of forested land to

farming. On the other hand, farmers can see that the options for managing emissions from farming activities will add new costs and compliance requirements.

One thing is certain for all of us: opting out of climate change is not an option.

You can request copies of the consultation document "Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change" from Policy Publications, MAF Policy, P O Box 2526, Wellington, phone (04) 894 0599, email policy.publications@maf.govt.nz, or you may download it from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry website [www.maf.govt.nz](http://www.maf.govt.nz)  
Submission close on March 30.



ABOVE: The Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change consultation document.

Thursday, 08 March 2007, p. 3