

3. APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF A CONTROLLED PESTICIDE

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval for the use of a controlled pesticide in an area of Christchurch City in accordance with the provisions of the Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983.

INTRODUCTION

An application has been received from Target Pest Enterprises Ltd seeking permission to apply a controlled pesticide by hand application, as part of an on-going possum and ferret control operation, to Templars Islands, Belfast, Brooklands to Bottle Lake Forest Park areas of North Christchurch. This is the same area as that approved in 2000 for a similar programme. The controlled pesticide to be used will be encapsulated cyanide pellets, although it is also intended to undertake some trapping for monitoring purposes and the use of brodifacoum pellets in certain areas as part of an integrated pest management programme.

The programme is being undertaken on behalf of the Animal Health Board to control possums and ferrets, which are vectors of Bovine Tuberculosis. It is intended to run the programme commencing in February 2002 and continue for 12 working weeks from that date. No poisoning will be undertaken at weekends. It is intended to use bait stations fixed to trees at a height of about two metres above ground level and to use Feratox encapsulated Potassium Cyanide. This is similar to an approval given for the use of this controlled pesticide for the same area in October 2000.

The company will undertake the required advertising, leaflet drops, and advising all schools and educational establishments within the area and within 5 to 6km of the operation.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 replaced the Pesticides Act 1979 in relation to the use of pesticides. It restricts the use of pesticides to approved operators and subject to the conditions of the licence issued by Environmental Risk Management Authority.

The Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983 in regulation 12 provides that no person may use a controlled pesticide in or within 400 metres of the boundaries of a local authority that is a City, unless there is prior approval of the appropriate local authority and the Medical Officer of Health for the area. The applicant must apply to each of these authorities in writing. Regulation 15 provides that the Medical Officer of Health must give his permission, with or without conditions, if he is satisfied that the proposed use of the pesticide will not contravene any of the following Acts or regulations:

- * The Health Act 1956
- * The Poisons Act 1960
- * The Toxic Substances Act 1979
- * The Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983

Regulation 16 provides that the City Council **must** give its permission to the applicant where it is satisfied that the applicant has obtained the permission of the Medical Officer of Health and the proposed use of the pesticide will not harm or inconvenience the public.

The Medical Officer of Health has previously agreed to the use of Feratox Cyanide Bait in the areas subject to a number of conditions relating to advertising and signage.

CONCLUSIONS

It is considered that approval should be provided for the use of Feratox encapsulated Potassium Cyanide, particularly to control possums and ferrets. The requirements for closing the areas to the public and posting notices around the areas being poisoned are required by the regulations and it is normal for public notices to be published setting out the details of the events. In the past, in giving approval to operators the Council has required explanatory notices setting out the details to be provided to residential properties adjacent to the areas being poisoned. These details have specified the times and dates of the poisoning; the specific areas in which the poison is spread; the length of time the area could be considered unsafe; and advice on keeping dogs and other domestic animals under control during the period. These conditions are accepted by Target Pest Enterprise Ltd and are usually additionally included in the conditions of the Medical Officer of Health.

When a proposal to use Feratox encapsulated Potassium Cyanide for possum control in the Port Hills Reserves was considered by the Council in 1998, permission was granted subject to the following two matters being satisfactory. These matters were revisited at the time of the 2000 application for the north-west Christchurch area. It should be noted that there have been no reported incidences of poisoning of other than the targeted animals from the 2000 poisoning programme.

Advice from Mr David Marshall, veterinary adviser to the Canterbury Kennel Club, as to the dangers to dogs of such poisoning programmes. Mr David Marshall advised that he had no concerns about the proposal provided the bait stations were securely tied down in order that dogs could not remove the entire station, as had occurred in one case to his knowledge.

Information provided to the Council on secondary poisoning effects. In a review published in 1994, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment examined poisons used for possum control.¹ In a comparison of the four commonly used poisons: 1080, Cyanide, Phosphorus, and Talon[®], Cyanide was considered clearly the more humane method of dealing with the possum pest than the others and was not persistent or cumulative in the environment on a long term basis.

There is no evidence that secondary poisoning will occur from the use of encapsulated potassium cyanide. This is because of the process by which cyanide works on the particular pest. Once released in the body it leaves no residue such as occurs with poisons such as 1080 and Talon[®]. It is rapidly biodegradable and does not accumulate in the food chain.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in an information sheet, states:

“Though cyanide baits are poisonous to livestock, secondary poisoning of dogs through eating possum carcasses is unlikely. Dogs have been safely fed on the skinned and gutted carcasses of poisoned animals - though, in at least three cases, dogs have been poisoned by licking the paste from around the mouths of possums poisoned with cyanide.”²

Advice was received at the time of the 2000 application that in two years of sales of the Feratox encapsulated potassium cyanide (~ 2.8 million capsules) there have been no reports of secondary poisoning. There were no complaints received about the previous poisoning operation in this area and no problems were reported to either this Council or the Medical Officer of Health.

The Parks and Waterways Manager is aware of this application as it applies to Council-owned land in the area.

Recommendation: That approval be granted for the use of Feratox encapsulated Potassium Cyanide in the areas of North Christchurch as specified, with the application subject to compliance with the provisions of the Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983.

¹ *Possum Management in New Zealand*, Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, May 1994

² *Controlled Pesticides, Sodium & Potassium Cyanide (“Cyanide”) in Pest Control*, MAF Regulatory Authority - Agricultural Compounds Unit, Upper Hutt