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Farmer cut off in milk dispute

Cathie Bell

Fonterra has stopped taking milk from a Marlborough dairy farmer embroiled in multiple court cases relating to environmental breaches at his farms.

The *Express* understands the only farmer in such a situation in Marlborough is Philip Woolley.

Fonterra director of milk supply Lisa Payne said the company did not usually discuss issues relating to individual farmers but she could confirm Fonterra was not collecting milk from one of its farmers in the region. This was down to breaches in Fonterra's supply terms and conditions and environmental compliance issues.

"Fonterra will continue to work with the council and the farmer to resolve the outstanding issues. Fonterra will need to be satisfied that all the requirements are met before milk collections resume."

Woolley has two farms in Marlborough. He was not able to milk cows at his Tuamarina farm because of a court order, and had been milking his cows at his Wairau Valley farm. Because the milk is not being collected, it is being disposed of there, either by being sprayed on the paddocks or being stored in effluent ponds.

Marlborough District Council environmental protection officer Shelley Lines said the farm was being monitored regularly to ensure it did not breach its consents.

Woolley was not home yesterday and could not be contacted.

Council monitoring of the district's dairy industry showed "disappointingly slow progress" on meeting environmental performance standards, council environment committee chairman Peter Jerram said.

The 2013-2014 dairymed effluent and stream crossing survey showed that of Marlborough's 60 dairy farms housing about 18,000 cows, six had wastewater systems too close to waterways and 10 did not have contingency measures in place to store effluent so it did not contaminate water.

Despite rules that "high priority" stream crossings would be eliminated by 2009, there were still four left on three farms, the survey said.

"Resource consent to eliminate the four high priority stream

crossings have been received by council following enforcement action."

The survey said all low priority stream crossings were to have been eliminated to coincide with Fonterra's condition of supply which required all stream crossings to be eliminated and fencing completed by the end of December last year.

"The dairy survey findings were that there are still 45 low priority stream crossings remaining and the fencing of waterways to exclude stock have not been completed."

Rural representative on the environment committee Ross Beech said the level of progress on non-compliant farms over the past year had been disappointing, particularly given the strength of the dairy industry in recent years and the conciliatory stance taken by the council.

Jerram said it was important those who had not complied did so very soon.

"Council has shown a high degree of patience for many years, but it is now time to act to get those crossings completed. Council has in the past given the required resource consents free to those farmers to ease the process as a gesture of encouragement and goodwill."

There had been "disappointingly slow progress" even though the council had "bent over backwards" to work with the industry for several years now, he said.

"We have a group of local leaders in the industry who have shown the way, and it would be great to see more of their colleagues pick up on their examples."

Councillors were told that some dairy farmers had been hesitating to make improvements while the council's new plans were still being drafted as they were waiting to see exactly what the new rules would require.

They agreed that the next dairy audit should have a major focus on stream crossings and enforcement action should be taken where necessary.

The Dairymed Effluent & Stream Crossing Survey 2013-14 is available on the council website. A copy will also be sent to all Marlborough dairy farmers.

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Alpine rescue: Marlborough skier Pete Oswald rescues a 40kg sheep stranded high up the Hector Mountains, in Otago.

Photo: DAN POWER

Mountain photo shoot turns into woolly rescue mission

Heather Simpson

A snowballing sheep will become the stuff of legend for semi-professional skier Pete Oswald.

The Marlborough man carried out one of the world's few sheep rescues on skis after an exhausted ewe slid into his life.

He was high in the Hector Mountains, Otago, on a photo shoot for *Snow Action Magazine* with Southern Lakes Heliski when the woolly story unfolded.

Oswald, 29, and photographer Dan Power were on the last run of the day setting up for a shoot when a piece of snow fell from the slope and hit Oswald's ski boot, causing him to take a backward glance at the slopes.



"It was trying to walk but was totally exhausted. It wouldn't have survived if I had left it there."
Pete Oswald

He saw a "little bundle of wool" tumbling head over feet over a rocky ridge and down the mountain.

The sheep landed 100 metres from Oswald and, fearing the sheep had been killed, he skied over for a closer look.

"The sheep's head was bent underneath its body. I put the sheep upright and it was bleeding from the nose. It was trying to walk but was totally exhausted. It

wouldn't have survived if I had left it there."

Oswald squatted down and lifted the 40-kilogram ewe on to his legs and skied slowly down the slope.

"It was really hard to ski, there was a lot of wool in my face when I carried it."

He nearly fell over a few times travelling down the mountain before leaving the lucky sheep on a flat, grassy area where it could feed. The sheep slowly walked off

unperturbed by its snowy ride.

His father, John Oswald, a former farmer from the Awatere Valley, told him the sheep could have been up there since the start of winter. Its wool had not been shorn and was inches deep.

"They are pretty resourceful animals," Oswald said. The sheep was fully grown, a female and was tagged.

"It's a bit of a yarn. It is definitely the oddest thing I have found skiing."

Oswald is a semi-professional skier and cinematographer based in Innsbruck, Austria.

During his career he has seen mountain goats, marmots in France and bears in North America but the sheep is his favourite find.

TODAY



NEWS 3

Under pressure

The proposed recreational fishing marine park for the Marlborough Sounds does nothing to change the rules fishermen are angry about, fishing advocates say.



NEWS 5

Hot seller

Wine drinkers are lapping up a new wine produced for British talk show host Graham Norton, with 6000 bottles sold in the first week.



ARTS 10

Glass art

Arts reporter Angela Crompton talks to British glass lecturer Caroline MacDonald-Haig ahead of a talk at the Marlborough Decorative and Fine Arts Society.

HOT TOPIC

Children guzzling addictive sugary drinks are ruining their teeth, with toddlers as young as 18 months old being taken to clinics to have rotten teeth pulled.

Water is free! The whole Coke is cheaper than milk call makes me so angry.

Lazy parenting. Poor kids, they don't know any better.

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