
Northland Regional Council
Environmental Management Committee Meeting

Tabled Item

Tuesday, 30 July 2013
at 9.30 am

ISSUE: Tabled Item for the Environmental Management Committee meeting – 30 July 2013**ID:** A557176**To:** Environmental Management Committee, 30 July 2013**From:** Peternel McLean, Committee Secretary**Date:** 29 July 2013**Summary** The purpose of this report is to place before council the tabled item:
(13) Update on Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) in Northland
The report concludes with the recommendation that the tabled material be received.**Report:**

A "Report to Stakeholders July 2013" was made publicly available by the TBfree Northland Committee last week, subsequent to this committee's agenda having been distributed. As the information contained in the report is considered of value for the committee to consider at this stage, rather than to delay it until the next committee meeting (September), it is presented as a tabled item.

Recommendation:

That as permitted under section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the tabled item:

(13) Update on Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) in Northland

be received.

ISSUE: Update on Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) in Northland - tabled item

ID: A556930

To: Environmental Management Committee, 30 July 2013

From: Don Mckenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager

Date: 28 July 2013

Summary The purpose of this report is to update the committee on incidents and management of Bovine TB in Northland. This includes the recent TBfree Northland Committee meeting held during July, and a recent presentation given by TBfree NZ staff to council which provided an update on the new structure of TBfree NZ and the TB status in the Far North.

Report Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Normal operations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision
Purpose:	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public service	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative function	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual\Long Term Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low

Background:

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) is caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* which is an ancient and worldwide disease of cattle and many other mammals. The disease is closely related to the main cause of human tuberculosis and could be passed on as a consequence of close contact with infected cattle and consumption of unpastuerised milk.

All actions to manage TB throughout New Zealand are subject to a National Bovine Tuberculosis Pest Management Plan which is funded by central and local government and from levies on dairy, beef and deer farmers. All costs associated with funding the Plan are set out by way of regulation under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and an order in council which was created in 1998.

The Management Agency responsible for implementing the Plan is TBfree New Zealand (formerly known as the Animal Health Board). This company's primary role is to manage the implementation of the National Pest Management Plan for Bovine TB, with the aim of eradicating the disease from New Zealand. Tbfree NZ administers 14 regional committees throughout New Zealand, one of which is Northland. Regional representatives from dairy, beef and deer farming sectors as well as the Northland Regional Council make decisions on regional practices aimed at safeguarding Northland from TB. The Northland Regional Council representative is Councillor Ian Walker. The minutes of the July TB free Northland meeting are attached and the following is a summary of the main points from the meeting and from a recent presentation to NRC by TB free NZ staff. The "Report to Stakeholders" from its July meeting is **attached** for the committee's information.

TBfree NZ has recently become part of a larger organization called OSPRI (Operational Solutions for Primary Industries). This limited liability company merges the business of Tbfree NZ and the industry-owned company responsible for implementing New Zealand's National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) scheme. A structure diagram of OSPRI is attached.

Cost savings are expected as a result of the merger and the objectives of eradicating TB from New Zealand by 2026 have not changed.

In terms of TB in Northland, there are currently seven herds in the Awanui and Kaitiāia area which have tested positive. A high level of TB infection has been found in young stock and there has been the movement of infected calves traced to a farm south of Kaitiāia.

The response by TBfree NZ has included enforcement of stock movement controls, increased TB testing regimes within a 10km radius of the infection (refer Map 1), increased publicity to raise awareness, and wildlife surveys to assess infection in wild animals such as possums and wild pigs. To date, 47 pigs and 340 possums have been sampled from the Awanui area and no TB infection has been found in wild animals. Further survey work to collect possum and pig samples for culture is being planned by TBfree NZ.

TBfree NZ are still investigating the possible reasons for the infection and have a focus on the trace-back of sources of cows from dairy herds and the genetic typing of TB strains isolated from cattle. The findings so far show that dairy cattle sales and stock movements are very complex and that Northland TB strains are slightly different to those found in 2009. They have advised that it is too soon to form any definitive conclusions on the source of TB infection.

Reducing the risk of further TB introduction and disease spread

The Northland Regional Council and Tbfree NZ emphasis the following:

Don't release wildlife such as wild pigs or deer (potential vectors of TB).

- Especially risky when relocation of wild animals is from outside the region

Dispose of dead stock properly

- Use best practice for dead stock disposal and don't allow wild animals such as pigs to access open offal pits - this could result in TB transfer to wildlife.

Register stock herds and keep to the rules when selling and buying stock

- Record, retain and complete your Animal Status Declaration cards (ASDs) correctly when selling stock
- Be aware of your TB testing requirements
- Test early if you are moving or selling
- When buying stock complete due diligence
- Ensure NAIT tag and ASD compliance
- Service bulls - check TB history and if in doubt get them tested. It is free.

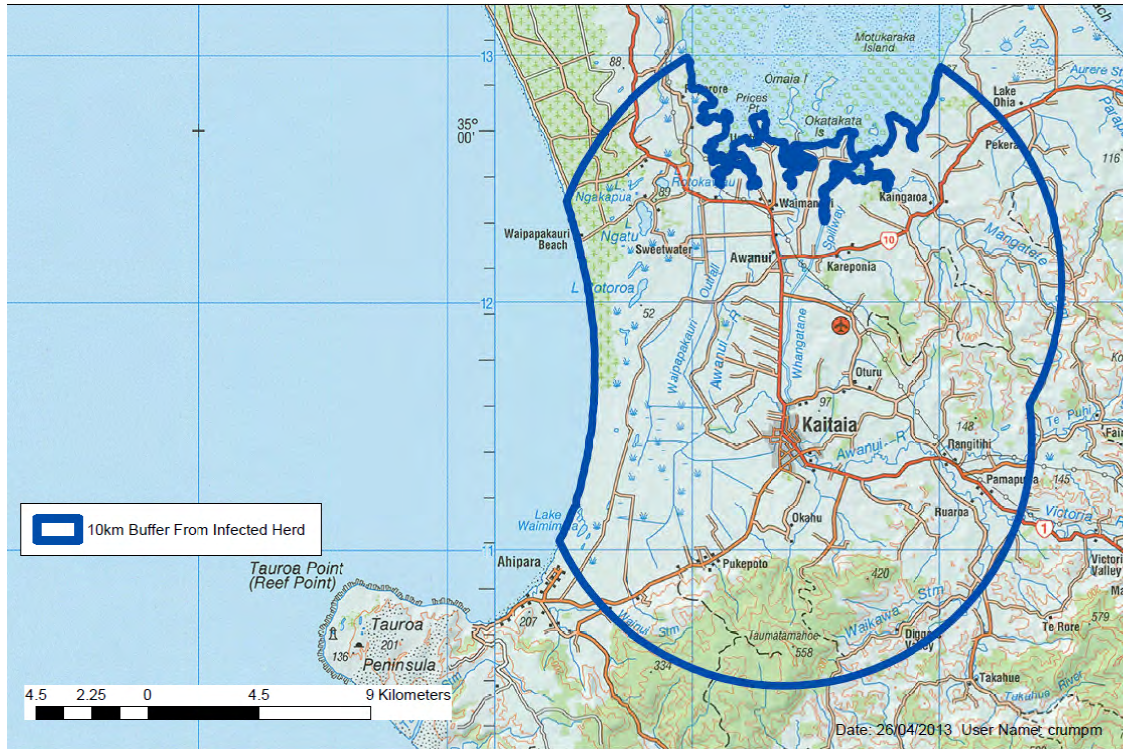
Legal Compliance and Significance Assessment:

In relation to section 79 of the Local Government Act 2002, this issue is considered to be of low significance under council policy because the report does not seek a decision other than that information be received.

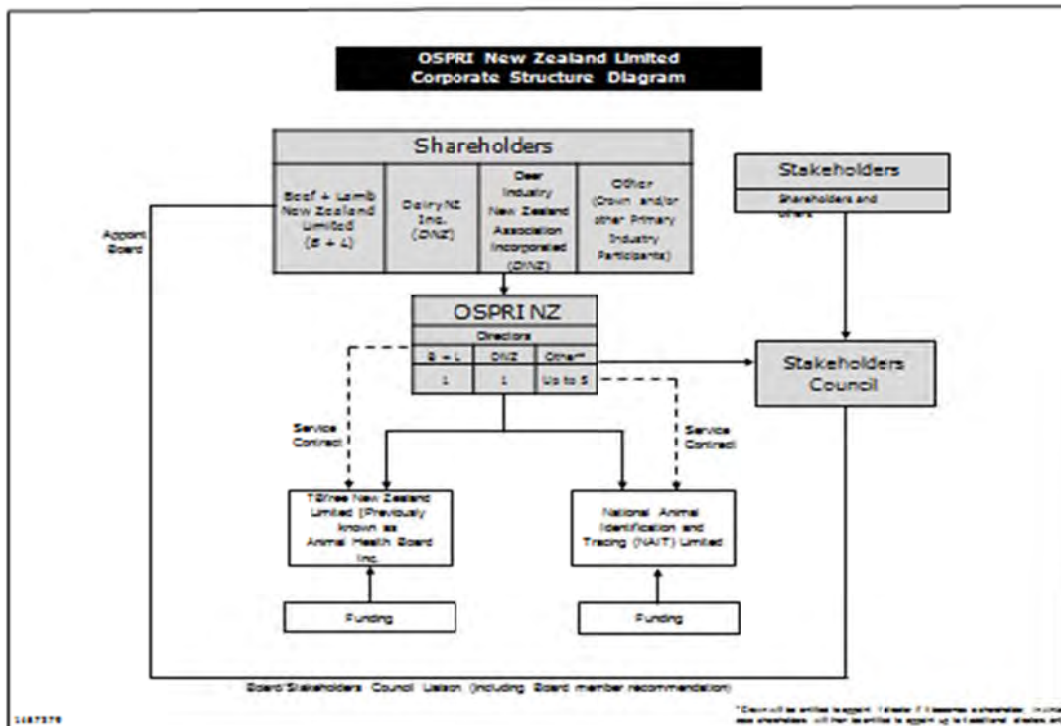
Recommendation:

-
1. That the report Update on Tb in Northland -supplementary item by Don Mckenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager and dated 28 July 2013, be received.
-

Map1 showing the area where increased herd testing is underway



Structure diagram of OSPRI





TBfree Northland Committee
85 Church Road, Pukete
Hamilton 3200
PO Box 10522, Te Rapa
Hamilton 3241
Tel: 07 849 8913

22 July 2013

TBfree Northland Committee
Report to Stakeholders July 2013

Members in attendance

Neil MacMillan QSM	Wayne Ward	Grant Soich	Matt Long
Denis Anderson	Winston Kake		

OSPRI New Zealand - Update

As of 1 July 2013 OSPRI and its corresponding organisational structure has come into effect.

The functions of TBfree New Zealand will continue under the new organisational structure although there have been some changes to the shareholder and stakeholder formats.

OSPRI will have three primary shareholders representing the major funders of the TBfree and NAIT programmes. These include Beef & Lamb, Dairy NZ and one other (such as Deer Association NZ). The Crown has also been offered a position as a shareholder but has declined at this time. OSPRI will also include a wider industry stakeholder council than existed under the old Animal Health Board structure.





NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OBJECTIVE

The main aim of TBfree New Zealand's TB control programme is to eradicate bovine tuberculosis (TB) from wildlife, mainly possums, across 2.5 million hectares – or one quarter – of New Zealand's at-risk areas by 2026.

Primary objectives

- Establish feasibility of eradication from wildlife populations by:
 - Eradication from two extensive bush areas
 - Continued freedom from TB in areas already eradicated
- Eradicate TB from wildlife from at least 2.5 million ha of Vector Risk Area (VRA) by June 2026
- Prevent establishment of TB in possum populations in Vector Free Area (VFA) during the strategy

Secondary objective

- Maintain national TB infected annual period prevalence at lowest possible level and at no greater than 0.4 per cent during the strategy

PROGRESS TO STRATEGY OBJECTIVE – Northern & Central North Island

Eradication

Objective:

- Achieve eradication from approximately 120,000 hectares by June 2013: Whareorino VRA, Waikaka, Waikaka South, Waitaanga Extension, Tatu Haeo, Tokirima, and Maungatautari VRA

Progress:

- Eradication was achieved and approved in Waikaka, Waikaka South, Waitaanga Extension, Tatu Haeo, Tokirima, and Maungatautari VRA which was a combined area of 102,685 ha.
- The Whareorino VRA didn't reach the required level for revocation of its VRA status and a plan is being developed to progress this further.
- Work will now commence on reviewing the areas being proposed for eradication in 2013/14.



TB Free Area Protection

Objective:

- Prevent establishment of TB in possum populations in TB Vector Free Area during the strategy.

Progress:

There are currently six infected herds confirmed in the Taranaki region and seven in the Northland region. Investigations are currently underway in order to identify the cause of these recent breakdowns.

The following actions have been taken in the areas surrounding Inglewood, Opunake, Awanui and Kaitaia:

- “Special Testing Area” (STA) about 10km around the area of concern will become annual testing of everything over 12 months, as all three areas were surveillance triennial testing.
- A vector control programme will be started (BLIP) around each area to prevent establishment of infection back into the wildlife and to investigate whether or not this has already happened.
- Careful communications in each region specific to each breakdown.

Infected Herd Objective

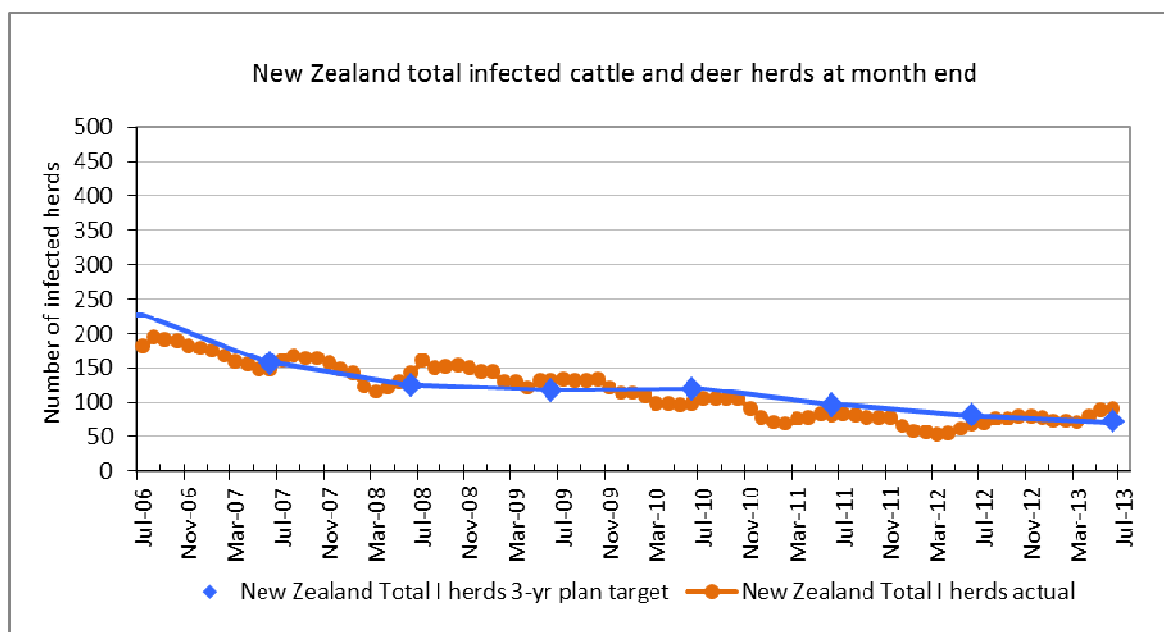
Objective:

Reduce infected herd numbers in the Northern and Central North Island to below five by 30 June 2013:

Progress:

This objective will not be achieved due to the recent breakdowns in Northland, Taranaki and Waikato.

NATIONAL DISEASE SITUATION – July 2013



	Cattle	Deer	Total
North Island	19	0	19
South Island	67	5	72
National	86	5	91

Infected herds by type at July 2013

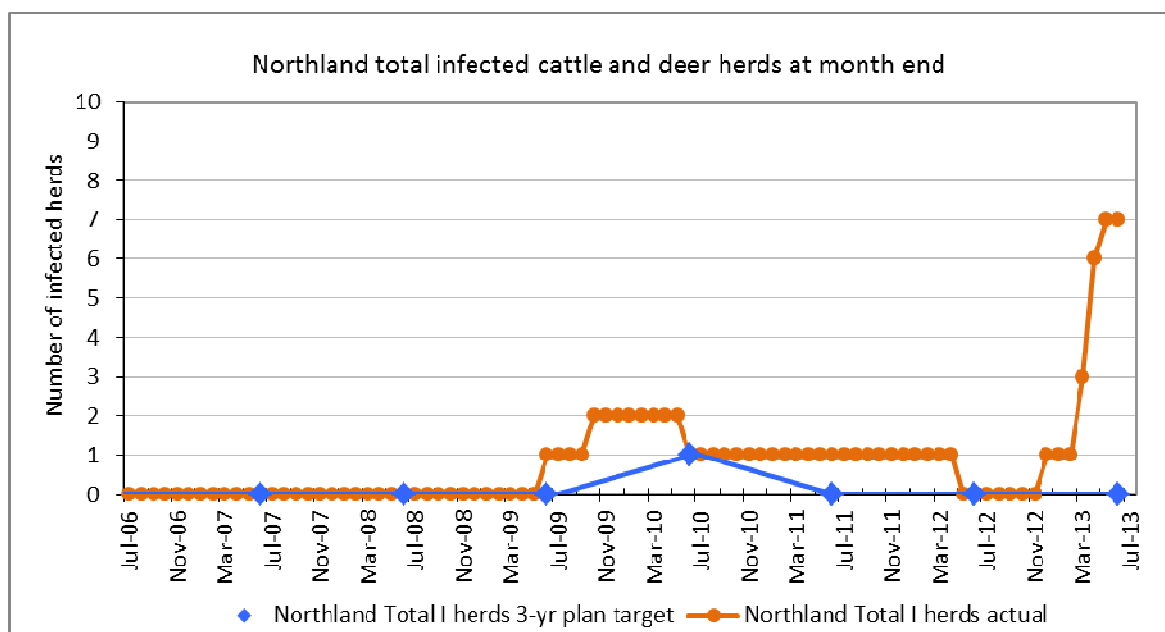
Herd Type	Beef Dry	Beef Breeding	Dairy	Dairy Dry	Deer Dry	Deer Breeding
Number	8	21	54	3	0	5

Infected herd levels in the above graph are currently sitting above the level predicted in the three year plan. This poses a potential threat to TBfree's planned objectives and a primary focus is now the containment and investigation of the recent vector free area (VFA) herd breakdowns.

These figures represent a significant increase in infected herds in the North Island but also a small increase in the South Island. At the time of this report the North Island has 19 infected herds (at 0.06 per cent period prevalence) and the South Island has 67 (at 0.56 per cent period prevalence). The total per cent period prevalence is currently 0.21. This figure sits above the previous target set by the National Pest Management Plan of 0.2 per cent period prevalence.

There are currently no infected deer herds in the North Island.

NORTHLAND TB INFECTED HERDS – July 2013



Infected herds- Regional – NCNI – July 2013

	Vector Risk Area	Vector Free Area	Total Herds
Northland	0	7	7
Auckland	0	0	0
Waikato	1	1	2
Bay of Plenty	0	0	0
Taranaki	0	6	6
Total	1	14	15

As can be seen above the Northland area is currently sitting well above the predicted level of herd infection set out by the initial three year plan target.

These infections began with the diagnosis of one herd in the Awanui area in December 2012. Stock movements prior to infection being detected have since been traced by TBfree New Zealand and resulted in the subsequent diagnosis of TB in six linked herds.

TBfree New Zealand takes these recent breakdowns very seriously as they represent a potential threat to the maintenance of the Northland VFA as well as the current National Operational Plan.

To date the wildlife surveys implemented by TBfree New Zealand have resulted in no TB being detected. This is a positive outcome for these surveys as it means that TB does not appear to be present in the local wildlife population.

Taking all of this information into account investigations are on-going in order to identify the source of the recent infections. These investigations have been extremely useful in identifying the potential source of the current infections as there are no current links between these recent infections and previous infections in the Awanui area.



VECTOR CONTROL

To date 47 pigs from the Awanui area and 132 pigs from wider Northland have been surveyed for the presence of TB, to date no TB has been identified.

TB infection has been identified in a dairy herd in the Awanui area and has raised concerns that TB may be present in the local wildlife; a 2,373 hectare possum survey has been undertaken in the Awanui area with 340 possums and three stoats captured.

To date no wildlife TB infection has been identified.

Ongoing possum and pig surveys will be undertaken in this area in consequent years.

Contracts for the 2013/14 programme have been tendered and awarded to contractors.

COMPLIANCE

At the time of this report there are 16 cattle herds 180+ days overdue for testing. This equates to 15 per cent of the national total for overdue tests. A number of these herd owners have been in discussions with the North Island Compliance Manager as they are unable to muster their stock or they have become feral. TBfree New Zealand is continuing to work with these farmers in order to muster stock or slaughter feral cattle.

There are currently no deer herds 180+ days overdue for testing.

Unregistered herds are also of concern in the Northland region. Anyone who owns or runs cattle or deer are required to be registered with TBfree New Zealand. Any concerns regarding unregistered cattle should be directed to either TBfree New Zealand directly or your TBfree representative (below).

DISEASE CONTROL

As part of the management process for the recent breakdowns in Northland the Area Disease Manager has put in place two STAs 10km around both the Kaitaia and Awanui areas. All cattle in these areas over 12 months of age will be required to test on an annual basis. All deer over 15 months of age will also be required to test on an annual basis. Direct neighbours of the infected herds have been tested since the breakdowns occurred.

As well as these increased testing requirements TBfree New Zealand also points out that sensible measures need to be taken when disposing of dead stock. Open offal pits can exacerbate potential risks to the spread of TB in wildlife. If TB becomes present in domestic stock and that stock is able to be scavenged by wildlife this can then lead to the spread of infection into the wildlife population.

Similarly the release of wild animals (especially pigs) from outside the area can also lead to the spread of TB, and it is illegal. Hunters should be aware of the potential implications of wild animal release to the Northland community as a whole.



COMMUNICATIONS

Northland Farmer Meeting:

TBfree New Zealand recently held a farmer meeting in Kaitaia. Invitations were sent to all of those herd owners affected by the recent testing changes in the region.

These meetings gave affected farmers an opportunity to gain further insight into the new National Operations Plan as well as ask any questions they may have regarding the current TB situation in the area.

TBaction Newsletter:

During June/July a TBaction newsletter was sent to all registered herd owners and managers in the Northland region (approximately 6,200 farmers). This newsletter was put together in order to clarify the current TB situation for farmers, as well as provide some best practice information moving forward.

SUMMARY

Investigations into the cause of the recent Northland breakdowns have made significant progress. It will be important moving forward that TBfree New Zealand works closely with farmers and stakeholders in order to manage those herds affected by TB in the area.

As this report outlines, the vector surveys conducted in the areas surrounding these breakdowns would suggest there is no TB present in the areas wildlife population.

Within VFAs such as Northland movement of stock from higher risk areas is generally the primary source of TB. This should be a significant factor that stock owners, managers, and agents need to consider when purchasing or shifting stock.

As mentioned previously the mitigation of risk is essential given the current situation in Northland. Practices which potentially increase the risk of the spread of TB should be avoided, and openly discouraged. This includes unregistered stock, the use of improper stock disposal methods, and wild animal release.

The support of local communities is vital in getting through TB breakdowns and ensuring our work is effective – this is particularly important in scenarios such as Northland is currently experiencing. Given that VFA areas are not always used to the controls necessary to control TB breakdowns communication and support of best practise methods between TBfree, farmers, agents and stakeholders is essential. Any concerns or information regarding wildlife, stock, or practices which present a potential TB risk should be passed on to either the TBfree New Zealand or your local TBfree representative.



Name	Location	Contact Number
Neil MacMillan QSM (Chair)	Okaihau	09 401 9232
Bill Guest	Te Kopuru	09 439 1775
Wayne Ward	Tangiteroria	09 439 4125
Grant Soich	Hikurangi	09 433 8245
Matt Long	Whangarei	09 434 3370
Denis Anderson	Whangarei	09 434 6551
Winston Kake	Whangarei	09 436 2205
Ian Walker	Kaitaia	09 408 0855
Katherine Tucker	Wellsford	09 422 1885

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil MacMillan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a faint dotted line.

Neil MacMillan
Chairman
TBfree Northland

For all TB enquiries such as herd TB status, area status, pre-movement testing and information on TB control please contact TBfree New Zealand on 0800 482 4636 or via email info@tbfree.org.nz