



## FEBRUARY 2022

### SNIPPETS WAGE SUBSIDY UPDATE

While wage subsidy rounds and resurgence support payments are at an end, the Leave Support Scheme and the Short-Term Absence Payment Scheme are still available to assist in paying employees who are unable to work from home when required to stay home - to await test results or are required to self-isolate. Applications can be made at [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

The Leave Support Scheme is now a weekly payment in recognition that the period of self-isolation has changed. To be eligible for the one-week payment under the Leave Support Scheme, your employee needs to have been advised to self-isolate for at least four consecutive calendar days and is unable to work from home.

If your employee needs to keep self-isolating for at least 11 calendar days or more and cannot work from home, the employer can apply for a second week's payment under the Leave Support Scheme. Third and subsequent Leave Support payments for every further seven days of self-isolation can also be applied for.

The Short-Term Absence payment is available to employers to pay employees who are required to be absent from work while awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test in line with the Ministry of Health guidelines. Employers can only apply for this payment once for each employee within any 30-day period.

Applications for the Small Business Cashflow (Loan) Scheme remain open until 31 December 2023.

### HORTICULTURE INDUSTRIES TO SUPPORT RECOVERY IN TONGA

The horticulture and wine grape industries in New Zealand are collecting donations to assist with the recovery in Tonga following the recent tsunami.

The industry labour collective, comprising NZ Apples and Pears, NZ Kiwifruit Growers, NZ Wine and HortNZ amongst others, are using the Growers' Relief Fund to collect donations to support the economic recovery in the Islands. Money donated by these industries will be used to help small businesses such as market gardens, recover and in some areas, donations will be used to rebuild community buildings, particularly medical centres and schools.

Efforts are also ongoing to ensure that the approximate 1,000 workers from Tonga, currently employed in New Zealand, are well-supported now and in the coming months. Growers, employers and other sectors of the horticulture industry can donate via Horticulture New Zealand's website.

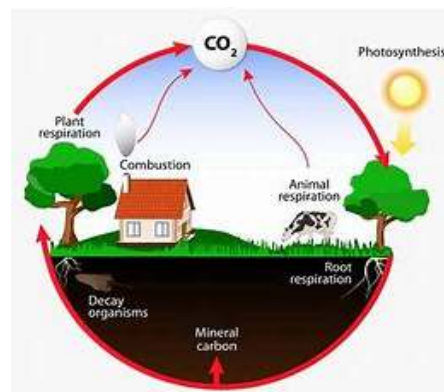
### CARBON??

Carbon sequestration, pine plantations, overseas' investors and grazing land sold for forestry conversions, are all hot topics right now but what exactly is carbon to the lay person?

Carbon is of course a chemical element like hydrogen, oxygen, lead or any of the others in the periodic table. It is a very abundant element, and it exists in pure or nearly pure forms, such as diamonds and graphite, but can also join with other elements to form molecules. It is these carbon-based molecules which are the basic building blocks of humans, animals, plants, trees and soils. Humans are 18% carbon; plants are 45% carbon!

Some greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub> and methane also consist of carbon-based molecules, as do fossil fuels which are largely made up of molecules composed of hydrogen and carbon. However, when the talk is about carbon in relation to climate change, 'carbon' is usually shorthand for carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas that works to trap heat close to Earth.

In a simple form, CO<sub>2</sub> helps Earth retain some of the energy it gets from the sun by not allowing it to leak back into space. So up to a point, CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases are necessary and serve Earth well. However, historically when the Earth's CO<sub>2</sub> levels have increased, so has the temperature of Earth and when Earth heats, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise even more.



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## FARMER VOICES VITAL ON AGRICULTURE EMISSIONS PRICING OPTIONS

The Primary Sector Climate Action Partnership – He Waka Eke Noa – have recently released a discussion document, with two key options as alternatives to the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS) for farmers to consider over the next few months. It is critical farmers grab this opportunity to play a key part in developing an alternative and credible agricultural emissions pricing framework that the primary sector will recommend to the Government in April this year.

The Government has already legislated to put agriculture into the NZ ETS. NZ ETS pricing would be out of farmers' control with farmers facing a broad-based tax, calculated at a processor level initially.

The cross Agri sector partnership, which includes Beef+Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, Federated Farmers, as well as Government and iwi groups, objective is to come up with a better system for agriculture. Their key objectives are:

- the de-linking of the methane price from the carbon price to reflect the different effects of the gases on warming, and the separate greenhouse gas targets in the Climate Change Response Act;
- getting more recognition of the sequestration planting, including riparian, happening on farms;
- the ability for farmers to be recognized and incentivised for progress made on reducing emissions; and
- for revenue raised by the pricing scheme to go back into R&D for innovative solutions to reduce emissions.

The two emissions pricing options are:

**Farm-level levy:** This levy would calculate emissions using farm specific data and the farm would then pay a price for its net emissions. This option would reward eligible on-farm sequestration additional to that currently included in the NZ ETS that could offset some of the cost of the emissions levy. Any additional revenue raised through the levy above the scheme costs would be invested back into the Agri-sector for further emissions reductions and R&D work.

**Processor-level hybrid levy:** This levy would calculate emissions at the meat, milk and fertiliser processor level, based on the quantity of product received from farms, or in the case of fertiliser, sold to farms. It would be paid at a processor level, and likely collected by the processor charging through to the farmer. Farms (individually or in collectives) could choose to enter into an Emissions Management Contract (EMC) to get a payment for reducing emissions and/or for sequestration on-farm.

Under the NZ ETS, costs for farmers would continue to increase each year alongside increases in the carbon price, despite work to reduce emissions. Also, most on-farm vegetation (e.g. riparian areas, shelter belts and small woodlots) are not currently recognised in the NZ ETS and so farms would not receive recognition for these plantings.

## RESOURCING ISSUE FOR RURAL POLICE

A new report from the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) has revealed major issues in the resourcing of small community police stations. The report

"Thematic Review – Policing in Small Communities" was released late last year.

It identified 12 main issues faced by officers in small communities. One issue identified is that of support from specialist officers for critical incidents and serious offence investigations. The nature of policing in a rural community means the role of a rural officer will never be black and white and from time to time they will come across incidents that require specialist services. The Rural Policing Enhancement Project (RPEP) set up in February 2021, will look at rural training requirements, deployment and support functions from specialist workgroups as part of the project.



Another issue was that of burnout among officers. The 24/7 nature of a rural policing role, along with constant scrutiny from the community, had the potential to create feelings of overwork and burnout,

especially within one-person stations. The IPCA argues for a national resourcing model to ensure that small communities have a sufficient number of officers and relievers to prevent officer burnout. The findings in the IPCA report are being addressed by RPEP. IPCA will continue to monitor the progress of RPEP and the police's implementation of recommendations arising from this project.

## LAUNCH OF NEW SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SET TO BOOST SALES OF SUSTAINABLY SOURCED WOOL

The launch of a new tech start-up and social enterprise (Comfi) is to provide a brand new single bed, mattress base and pillow to a Kiwi child in need for every five beds they sell. The concept was developed after a struggle to find suitable single beds online during the first Covid lockdown, an immense dislike of bed shopping and a very real desire to give back to the community.

The manufacturers, aware that one in 10 children in New Zealand do not have their own beds, or either sharing with others, sleeping on make-shift arrangements on a couch or the floor, have teamed up with sheep farmers in the Taupo region who will supply the environmentally friendly wool for use in the manufacture of these 'sleep solutions'. These will be distributed through Woven Earth, a charity that works with NZ Police, Victim Support, Shine and Island Charitable Trust across the upper North Island region.

## THE MORE WE SIT.....

### THE HIGHER THE HEART DISEASE RISK!

The number of New Zealanders sitting more and moving less is on the rise as more people work from home, putting them at greater risk of heart disease, according to new advice from the Heart Foundation.

For many industries, working from home is more common in the Covid-19 era and it is likely to have a big impact on the amount we are moving during the day, which is affecting our health. People who sat the most had a risk of

heart disease that was 29% greater than those who sat the least.

The latest New Zealand Health Survey shows that around one in eight adults do less than 30 minutes of physical activity across the week.

People who engage in high physical activity versus low physical activity are 20-22% less likely to develop depression and anxiety.

Current guidelines recommend accumulating at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) a week, of physical activity that makes it harder for you to breathe than normal but still capable of talking, with greater heart health benefits the more we do.



Heart Foundation tips to sit less and move more when working at home:

- Stand up and stretch throughout the day ie two minutes of stretching every hour.
- Find an online workout or yoga class to do during your lunch break.
- Schedule short bursts of physical activity into your day (either before, during or after work).
- Take phone or video calls while standing with headphones on.
- Set a daily or weekly goal for physical activity and celebrate small wins as you go.

### INJURIES CLAIMS GALORE IN LOCKED-DOWN NEW ZEALAND

Popular hobbies and chores such as spring gardening, riding new e-bikes, lawn mowing, running, and climbing ladders ended in tears for many in lockdown and resulted in 113,960 accident claims by Aucklanders alone during last year's 107-day lockdown in that area.

More than 90 percent of these accidents were preventable and almost all were predictable.

The activities that drew the highest number of claims are:

- Home – 76,217 claims in this category. Slips, trips and falls being the most common.
- Exercise – 2,558 claims in this category. Strains and sprains being the most prominent arising from incorrect techniques and no warm-ups.
- Gardening – 1,691 in this category. Mitre10 reported that potting mix was the chain's biggest seller over the lock down period –as improving the scene from the deck at home by growing plants and vegetables became increasingly popular. Gardening injuries generally related to heavy lifting, moving things digging and generally not using the right approach when bending, squatting or shovelling resulted in lower back injuries.
- Running – 1,166 in this category. A lot of these injuries tended to be ankle rolls, sprains or damaged knees.

- Lawn mowing – 554 injuries in this category. No specific details provided in this category aside from cutting toes off!
- Digging – 505 claims in this category. The majority of injuries in this category were strains, sprains and injuries to backs.
- Painting – 214 claims in this category. Falls from the incorrect use of ladders were the main cause of these claims as the renovations and general clean-ups claimed the attention of homeowners.
- E-scooters – 117 claims. E-scooters were more dangerous than E-bikes.
- E-bikes – 62 claims. Going 30km/h without even peddling can be dangerous in busy environments.
- DIY – often caused by inappropriate use of equipment.

### HOPING TO RETIRE?

The retirement gap is growing and 65% of Kiwis are worried about having enough to retire on.

A recent survey revealed Kiwis are concerned about affording retirement. It showed that around 70% of NZ adults think they may need to work past retirement age. Even more concerning, 65% are worried they aren't on track to have enough money to enjoy the retirement they dream of, or to be able to afford where they want to live.

For many of us it is difficult to know exactly how much you need to have saved to fund your retirement years. Massey University regularly produces a report called "The New Zealand Retirement Expenditure Guidelines" which shows the cost of living in retirement for a one-person and two-



person household in both metropolitan and provincial areas of New Zealand. It provides for two kinds of retirement lifestyle – "No Frills" (the bare basics) and "Choices (which is not lavish but includes a few extras like

the odd restaurant meal and a bottle of wine included in your groceries).

The latest report (June 2021) showed household expenditure for a two-person household in a metro area costs approximately \$865 per week for a "no frills" lifestyle and \$1,470 for a "choices" lifestyle. Standard NZ Super for a couple (where both qualify) is currently \$672 per week. That does not even cover a "no frills" retirement, let alone any extras. So how do you close the gap? The same research suggests a two-person household living in a metro city would need to save \$809,000 to fund a "choices" retirement and \$511,000 if living in the provinces. And that is after accounting for NZ Superannuation payments.

Further research in 2020 by Financial Services Council entitled "Money and You", showed that New Zealanders who get advice save more, invest more, travel more and overall have improved wellbeing. It also showed that those who seek advice have KiwiSaver balances over 50% larger than those who don't and have greater peace of mind and confidence in making financial decisions.



## CATNIP!

A man was driving for hours through desolate country when he passed a farmhouse, and before he could react, a cat ran out in front of him and \*splat\* — he flattened the cat. Out of kindness and consideration, he stopped, turned around and drove back to the farmhouse to notify the occupants.

When the housewife came to the door, he said, “Pardon me ma’am, but I just ran over a cat in front of your house, and assumed that it must belong to you. I know this might be hard to hear, but I wanted to let you know instead of just driving off.”

“Not so fast,” she says. “How do you know it was our cat? Could you describe him? What does he look like?”

The man promptly flopped down on the ground, and said, “He looks like this” as he gave his best shot at a dead cat impression.

“Oh no, you *horrible* man,” she replied.

“I meant, what did he look like *before* you hit him?”

At that, the man got up, covered his eyes with both hands and screamed, “Arrrrrgggghhhhhhhh!!!”

