20 FEB 2017

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

OIA17-0023

Gary Stephenson
Care of FYI website

Dear Gary Stephenson

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 23 January 2017 relating to the importation and approval for the use of the Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) as a biological control of the wild rabbit population. You specifically asked:

- *Could you please advise if there has been any RHDV1a-K5 Virus imported into New Zealand for testing?*
- *Could you also please advise if RHDV1a-K5 has been imported and approved for use as a biological agent?*
- *Could you please also advise how Marlborough Council can discuss the Autumn release of RHDV1a-K5 before any public submission?*
- *Is the release of RHDV1a-K5 a predetermined and planned exercise?*

At the time of writing, RHDV1-K5 has not been imported into New Zealand for testing, research, or for use as a biological control agent.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) does not hold information on discussions that Marlborough Council may or may not have had regarding an "*autumn release of RHDV1a-K5*". As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), as the information requested is not held by the department or Minister of the Crown.

As advised in your previous correspondence with MPI officials, and Hon Nathan Guy, Minister for Primary Industries, RHDV1-K5 still requires approval for registration under the Agricultural Compounds & Veterinary Medicines Act 1997 (ACVM).

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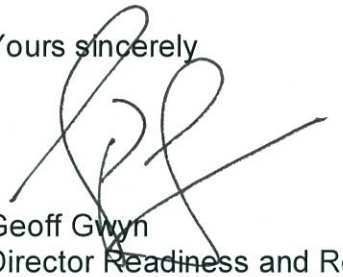
Under the ACVM Act, in assessing whether to approve the application, MPI must be satisfied that the risks associated with the use of the product are adequately managed and that associated costs to the public are minimised. MPI will assess the risks to public health, animal welfare and agricultural security and trade impacts. Applications for new products under the ACVM Act are publically notified to allow the New Zealand public to have their say before the application is assessed.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of our decision to refuse parts of your request.

Yours sincerely



Geoff Gwyn
Director Readiness and Response Services